

Ask Your Customer

If you have never systematically surveyed your customers' views, you probably don't really know what they are. All of us, whether we're in small businesses or in the corporate sphere, have a vested interest in customer feedback to assess the performance of our salespeople, the quality of our products, and the value of our services. They help us improve the success of our sales calls, blunt the competition, reinforce our strengths, and compensate for our weaknesses. A well-designed customer survey can help you:

- **Assess** the company's position with its very best customers.
- **Determine** whether you are missing sales opportunities with existing customers.
- **Evaluate** the ability of your sales force to recognize and capitalize on sales opportunities from new prospects.
- **Empower** your sales managers with customer perceptions of service quality that they can use during the selling process.
- **Determine** what training aids and performance systems you may need to improve sales effectiveness.

In developing your survey, choose from your best customers, those with the greatest buying potential and new prospects. You will gain the most value from knowing how these groups feel. Finally, consider phone surveys if you want a high response rate quickly; use the US mail for efficient processing, low costs, and when anonymity is important.

Best wishes,

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