

Cheat Sheet: Easy Ways to Gather Customer Feedback

If you're using your planning day to dream up new paths for your business — or figure out how to make much-needed improvements — a good place to start is with customer feedback.

By asking for specific feedback, you'll be able to identify which areas need attention first. The key is to fine-tune which aspects of your business you want input on, and then focus your feedback request on that.

Do you feel like your product or services need to be refreshed? Do you want feedback on employee interactions with customers? Asking your customers questions about these areas will make them feel like they are being heard, which can go a long way in building goodwill and loyalty.

Here are 3 easy ways to incorporate customer feedback into everyday interactions:

EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGE SURVEYS

If you communicate over email and/or text with your customers, this is a great way to slip in some feedback questions once their service is complete.

Keep the questions short, focused and simple to answer. You can use a scale, yes-or-no prompts or write-in answers.

- **On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best, how was your haircut service with Anna today?**
- **Will you book this service again? Please respond yes or no.**
- **What's one thing we could have done to improve our service today?**

Email and text also provide an opportunity to offer a discount in exchange for feedback. For instance:

- **Reply to this text/email and tell us what you liked or didn't like about your service today. We'll send you a coupon code for 20% off your next pool cleaning.**

CUSTOMER SERVICE MOMENTS

If your clients are proactively reaching out to you for assistance, they may be in a good frame of mind to provide some valuable feedback. Here's how you can piggyback onto customer service outreach:

Live chat: If you offer a webchat on your site, ask the visitor first if he/she/they are a current customer. If yes, weave in questions, such as: Why did you start using our service? Is there another service or product you would like us to offer?

Support calls: Train your customer service representatives to be active listeners. This will prime them to ask follow-up questions when customers call for support. For instance, "Now that we've gotten your account renewed, I see that you haven't booked a consultation for our new tax service. Is this a service you may need?"

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Love it or hate it, social media is where your customers are hanging out. This is an inexpensive – or even free – space to ask for input from your customers. In fact, they may provide it without any prodding from you. Some ideas:

- **Create a question post on Facebook asking a simple question they can answer in the comments. "Would you pay for a mini-massage while waiting for your oil change?"**
- **Post a poll on LinkedIn with a few different options for answers. "Which is most important to you: Fast service, low price or friendly staff?"**
- **If a customer posts a review on social media (or on your website or anywhere else), be sure to respond, whether it's positive or negative.**

Now that you've gathered feedback from a variety of sources, organize it as urgent, nice-to-haves or low-priorities. If you see the same answers from multiple customers, this will lead the way.

If you get intriguing feedback that you don't know what to do with, consider if implementing the idea will add enough to your bottom line to make it worth the resources that it will take to make it happen.

And remember, always express your thanks to your customers, and follow up by letting them know when their ideas become realities.

