



**GUIDE**

**How to find  
out what  
people think of  
your business**

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# How to find out what people think of your business

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cathy Hayward is managing director of Magenta Associates, and a communications specialist with more than 18 years' experience in a range of journalistic, publishing and marketing roles. She founded Magenta in 2011 after a journalistic career spanning a number of different titles including *FM World*, the award-winning magazine for the British Institute of Facilities Management, *Marketing Week*, *Financial Management*, *Soccer Analyst*, *Supply Management*, *Unions Today*, *People Management* and *Director*. She holds a Masters degree in journalism, as well as the Chartered Institute of Public Relations' post-graduate diploma in PR.

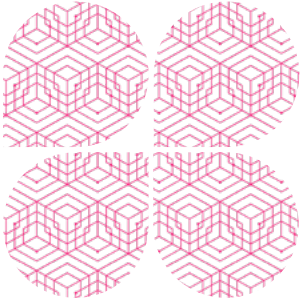
## Introduction

Discovering what people think of your business can be an unnerving prospect, but it's an important exercise for any organisation that wants to improve on its performance. For those working within the built environment it can be tempting to resort to simply ensuring that key performance indicators (KPIs) or service level agreements (SLAs) are being met; or assuming that as long as there's no really bad news you must be doing something right.

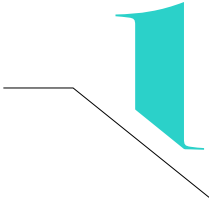
This attitude could result in some very unsatisfied customers who – instead of waiting for your organisation to notice that something is wrong, find another company that makes the effort to determine what they could be doing to create a more fruitful client relationship.

Given the service-orientated nature of much of the built environment it is worth following the example of the hospitality industry, where it is in their DNA to fathom the customer experience by carrying out regular 'health-checks'. Below we look at some practical ways of finding out what people really think of your business.

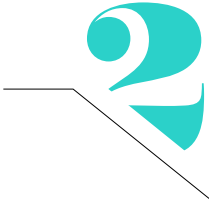




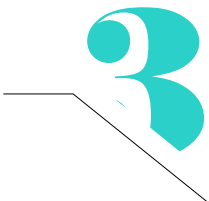
# This short guide takes you through the process.



You'll first need to determine whose opinion you want to garner; clients and customers, your employees, potential recruits, the external supply chain, the media? Once you've a clear idea of whose opinion you want and why you want it you can begin.

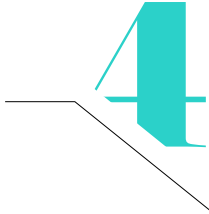


Ask for people's opinion. The most efficient and illuminating approach is to carry out a series of perception audits which will really help you to discover what people think of your business. Begin with their overall rating of your performance by asking them on a scale of 0 - 10, where 10 is excellent, how they would rate your company's work for them (see example below). If you're part of a large corporate organisation this process may be carried out by another department, but if you're a smaller organisation it is best to appoint someone to carry out the research for you as you don't want to make a client uncomfortable by making them talk with someone with whom they've already got a business relationship.

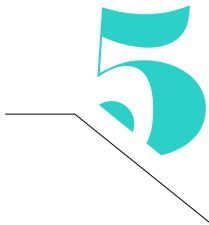


Ask your front line staff to help you gauge opinion. The people who work on reception or run security can be an invaluable link to gathering feedback on your business, so give them the tools they need by supplying these staff with customer feedback forms or encouraging them to take a more informal approach and ask customers what your business does right and where it could do better.

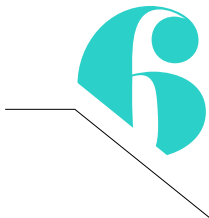




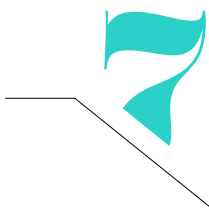
Be your own ‘mystery shopper’. Approaching the client experience by literally putting yourself in the customer’s shoes is a brilliant way of gauging your company’s effectiveness. One leading facilities management services company actually employed someone to do just that by taking on a covert customer role for a couple of months before unveiling themselves to their new team. This provided the supplier with some invaluable data on how their team was performing on the front line; including reception, security, cleaning, maintenance, and at management level, how well their people were being motivated to deliver excellence.



Focus groups. These will enable you to obtain more detailed feedback on the performance of your business and to delve a bit deeper into areas such as the quality of your account management, whether your organisation offers an innovative approach and what suggestions customers would make to improve your relationship. You will need to hire an outside facilitator for this process as it requires someone experienced in running focus groups who isn’t embedded into your business and can take a more neutral stance.

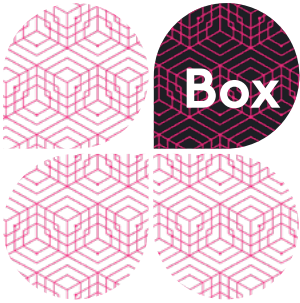


Listen and respond to the results. If you’ve gone to the trouble of finding out what people think of your business, do something with the information. Ignoring what the client says is the worst possible response to finding out what people think of your business, because if the client has taken time to talk to someone about what they think, they’ll expect someone to come back and say, “thanks very much for your feedback, we’re going to do X, Y and Z better.” For example when a services provider carried out a survey on the quality of their cleaning they discovered that any objections to their cleaners working during office hours could be negated by carrying out noisier tasks, such as vacuuming before nine, and that clients actually preferred having the toilets and meeting rooms cleaned throughout the day. They implemented this change and discovered later that while they’d been meeting their SLAs; until opinions had been sought and responded to, the level of complaints on the state of the toilets during the day had been leading the customer to consider moving contracts.



It is only human to baulk at asking people for their opinion because sometimes the truth hurts, but in the long run it is a much better idea to discover what you’re doing wrong before it impacts on your business. And the good news is that you’ll also discover what you’re doing right.





# Client satisfaction audit

1. Overall, on a scale of 0 - 10, where 10 is excellent, how would you rate OUR work for you?
2. Please could you explain why you have given that score?
3. What two things could COMPANY NAME do to improve the score?
4. Why did you start working with COMPANY NAME?
5. Did it deliver on that promise?
6. Is that still the main reason you work with COMPANY NAME?
7. What do you consider to be the main benefit of working with COMPANY NAME?
8. On a scale of 0-10, where 10 is excellent, how would you rate COMPANY NAME for:
  - a. Delivery
  - b. Planning
  - c. Account management
  - d. Proactivity
  - e. Creativity
  - f. Quality
  - g. Fairness
  - h. Responsiveness
9. Which of these would you most like to see improve?
10. Are you satisfied with the COMPANY NAME team working on your behalf?
11. Do you have any suggestions for improving it?
12. Do you believe that COMPANY NAME offers good value for money?
14. What additional services could COMPANY NAME offer that would be of benefit to your organisation?
15. On a scale of 0 - 10, how likely is it that you would recommend our company to a friend or colleague?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?







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