

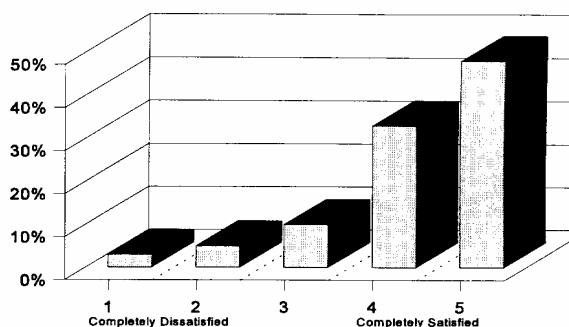
NTEA ENDO FAX

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A Business Perspective: Customer Service

Customer Satisfaction Indices



A typical business customer satisfaction index is shown above. If the satisfied (4) and completely satisfied (5) customers total 81%, should the directors of this company be content? Should a business concentrate its resources on increasing the satisfaction of the very dissatisfied customer or try to raise the merely satisfied customer to a completely satisfied level? A study by Xerox Corporation found that customers who were completely satisfied were six times more likely to repurchase a Xerox product than those that were merely satisfied. Furthermore, other studies have shown that it is far cheaper to raise the customer with a satisfaction index of from 3.5 to 4.5 to a 5 than a very dissatisfied customer to a higher level. (Harvard Business Review, November-December, 1995). Many businesses spend a disproportionate amount of resources on a small percentage of customers that are almost impossible to please. Pursuing these customers also may hurt company morale and will disperse the company to other potential customers.

What impact does this have on your dental practice? Dental patients who are delighted with your services are more likely to be loyal "apostles" of your practice than those who are just satisfied. This relationship is called the "satisfaction-loyalty link." One way to measure the satisfaction of your patients is to use a survey. This tool can point out areas that you can improve such as front desk operations, office hours, parking, etc. We have surveyed patients over the years, and have found the data to be very helpful in fine tuning our service.

Once you have identified areas that need corrective action, be prepared to create an action plan to fix the problem. Remember, a problem exists if the patient perceives a problem. Problems can be fixed and loyalty maintained if the problem is fixed quickly. It has been shown that 95% of customers will repurchase if the problem is fixed on the spot, 78% of customers will repurchase if the problem is fixed within 24 hours.

Dr. David E. Witherspoon was recently honored by the American Association of Endodontists as the outstanding Endodontic Educator. Dr. Witherspoon received the Edward M. Osetek Educator Award at the recent American Association of Endodontists Annual Meeting. This award is given to an individual for earning esteem and respect from students and faculty associates; for the impact on Endodontists that former or current students have made; and by presenting endodontic seminars at other educational institutions.

Endo Fax is produced by North Texas Endodontic Associates, Drs. Gary Harris, Dr. Joel Small, and Dr. David Witherspoon, and is intended to aid the practitioner in the management of endodontic conditions. Practitioners must always use their own best professional judgement. We neither expressly or implicitly warrant any positive results associated with this material.