

PROSPECTUS



E SOURCE Market Research Multi-Client Study

2003 Customer Satisfaction Benchmarking for Utility Call Centers

Nationwide Benchmarks of Utility Call Center Service Among Residential End Users

In partnership with The Response Center (TRC), E SOURCE is pleased to announce the second annual benchmark study of U.S. residential customer satisfaction with the service they receive from utility call centers. For this year's survey, we'll be linking satisfaction ratings for call center performance to average speed of answer (ASA) and service level (SL). Many studies have benchmarked call center efficiency and productivity metrics, but few link those metrics to customers' perspectives on overall call satisfaction. Ours will.

By combining the knowledge and experience of the E SOURCE Utility Customer Care Service and our market research team with the advanced analytics enabled by Satiscan™, TRC's unique approach to modeling, we'll do much more than deliver scorecard measurements. We'll be able to identify key relationships among service attributes, suggest practical application of the data, and make specific recommendations for improving your call center operations.

What drives satisfaction when customers call their utility company? According to our 2002 study, it depends on why they call. We measured, modeled, and benchmarked satisfaction levels with call center service for three different types of calls: new service or transfer of service, electric outage, and high bills. Some key findings from that research include:

- On average, 88 percent of customers indicated that they were very satisfied with their call to their energy company.
- In general, customers are more satisfied with the performance of the customer service representative (CSR) than that of the interactive voice response (IVR) system.
- Customers need to call an average of 1.51 times to have their problem resolved.
- Customers need to speak with an average of 1.25 CSRs before their issue can be resolved.

Armed with information from this study, subscribers can more easily see where to invest their service improvement dollars—training their CSRs, revamping some internal process, or changing menus in their IVR system.

Study Benefits

“Customer Satisfaction Benchmarking for Utility Call Centers, 2003” will deliver strategic insights as well as operational information for key internal clients at your company.

Utility Executives

We'll explain how call center interactions affect residential customers' actions and overall perceptions of your company. The study will provide benchmark information for subscribers relative to other utilities and will include specific operational recommendations that can be linked to overall corporate goals.

Call Center Managers

Satiscan modeling will identify the key drivers of satisfaction with call center transactions and highlight prime areas for coaching and tactical improvements. You'll

have the ability to compare your service levels to levels at other utilities to improve your goal-setting and resource-allocation decisions.

Market Researchers

Industry benchmark data for broad measures, such as overall satisfaction, are readily available, but comparative measures for transaction satisfaction from the customer's perspective are hard to come by. The data from our 2003 study, coupled with your own service tracking surveys, will help you develop specific recommendations for decision-makers within your organization or the regulatory community who evaluate service levels. In addition to learning how internal performance compares with performance at other companies, you'll find out how various aspects of service link to customer loyalty.

Study Objectives

This study will give utilities a comprehensive understanding of residential customer service perceptions. Our analysis will include:

- Identifying the key drivers of customer satisfaction with call center service for five different call types: electric outage, new connects/transfers, high-bill complaint calls, billing inquires, and payment arrangements.
- Linking the customer perceptions of overall call satisfaction with key call center performance metrics.

- Delivering a clear set of models that illustrate the relationships between key call center service attributes and overall call satisfaction.
- Determining the relative importance of each key driver on customer satisfaction for each call type studied.
- Delivering a critical evaluation of each subscriber's call center performance to produce actionable recommendations for call center management.

Survey Methodology

For this study to be successful and its comparisons meaningful, several utility companies need to participate. Therefore, at least 17 subscribers are required for the project to move forward. All subscribers to this first wave of data collection need to be signed up by March 2003.

In-Depth Interviews

The base research will consist of 8- to 10-minute telephone interviews with a representative sample of residential customers of participating companies. The interviews will cover key attributes related to call center service, including CSR behaviors, internal processes, and IVR as well as customer demographics and higher-order measures of overall value and loyalty.

All survey respondents must have participated in a transaction with their utility's call center one week prior to being interviewed. Therefore, study subscribers will need to provide sample files of randomly selected customers to E SOURCE, including contact names, telephone numbers, call type, and date of call. Each subscriber will need to provide enough records to yield 500 completed interviews. This data will be considered confidential and will not be shared with other study subscribers.

Modeling

We'll be using a multivariate statistical technique developed by TRC to identify the underlying relationships that define the customer experience, while also measuring the importance of key elements in a service interaction. These elements include such metrics as "time on hold," "number of calls needed to resolve a problem," and "CSR's knowledge." The results will allow a participating call center manager to see the transaction through the customers' eyes. We'll be able to pinpoint the elements of a given transaction customers consider important to their satisfaction as well as identify the specific areas that will yield higher call center performance.

Market Segments

Residential customers in the United States are the focus of this study. We will be doing segmentation and separate analyses for five call types: electric outage, new connects/transfers, high-bill complaint calls, billing inquires, and payment arrangements.

If we receive enough subscriber interest, the study could be expanded to include a separate project focused on

small business customers. This separate study would begin after the annual residential study has been completed.

Deliverables

- Satiscan models highlighting key drivers of satisfaction with overall call center service and with five call types.
- A one-day workshop to review topline results and share best practices.
- A summary report card comparing satisfaction levels among subscribers. Individual subscriber data will be aggregated at regional levels to maintain confidentiality.
- A data notebook and compact disc containing the raw survey data, data tables, and codebook. Individual subscriber data will be coded to maintain confidentiality.
- A final report analyzing the data, presenting a critical understanding of customer perceptions, and highlighting our most interesting findings.
- A customized summary report for each subscriber that compares that company's results with the results of other subscribers plus specific recommendations tailored to the subscriber's company.

Optional Oversampling

Subscribers may elect to have us conduct additional surveys and run Satiscan models for their particular customer base. Specific analyses and results of that oversampling will be provided only to the individual

subscribing company. In order to participate, subscribers must identify the number and types of additional surveys they want by March 2003, so that effort can be coordinated with the primary study.

For More Information



E SOURCE provides information services focused on retail energy markets, services, and technologies. At our core is an exceptional team of research professionals whose technical and analytical skills and assimilation of real-world experience have earned E SOURCE international acclaim.



The Response Center is a full-service market research firm with total on-premises capabilities to handle all aspects of the research initiative. Capabilities range from the design and execution of the research project through advanced analytical techniques that translate the results into actionable business recommendations.

The Response Center concentrates on selected industries through dedicated business practices, including energy and utilities, financial services, telecommunications, healthcare, insurance, consumer products, pharmaceuticals, and associations.

E SOURCE
1965 North 57th Court
Boulder, CO 80301
tel 303-444-7788

e-mail esource@esource.com
web www.esource.com