

Can't get no satisfaction?

Finding out how you're really doing can help you be a better dealer

BY PHIL SASSO

Q Once in a while, I'll overhear guys gripe about other tool dealers. I try not to snoop, but sometimes I can't help listening to them slamming my competition. One day, it dawned on me -- how do I keep them from saying stuff behind my back?

A One way to keep them from saying bad stuff is to give them lots of good stuff to say. A satisfied customer is obviously more likely to brag on you than to rag on you. But it can be hard for you to be a true judge of customer satisfaction. It's very difficult to see ourselves as others see us.

For instance just because you're working hard doesn't mean you're meeting or exceeding your customer's expectations -- especially if you're working hard on the wrong things.

Try asking your customer "How am I doing?" Most likely you won't get a straight answer. (Sometimes even your best friend won't tell you that your breath stinks.) That's why asking face-to-face rarely helps. Most guys won't tell you to your face that they're unhappy with your service.

So, how can you find out what

your customers really think? Here's a lunchtime assignment: Stop at a fast food joint. Call it research. Eat at Burger King, Taco Bell or virtually any other fast food joint. Turn over

of yours to tally the results. Second, it's hard to read and react to the results. Just like people often won't tell you to your face what they're thinking, often on a survey they'll rank you artificially high. Even if they give you an honest answer sometimes it's not "actionable" (something you can fix).

So, why bother wasting your time? Because done well, a



your receipt and you'll probably find a request to take their phone-in survey. Take the survey and notice what they ask you.

Surveys are a big thing for big business. It helps them keep tabs on their systems and staff performance.

It can be just as helpful to you as a dealer.

Survey Says...

But, there are two major problems with most surveys: First, they're time-consuming. A survey can take a lot of your customer's time and even more

of yours to tally the results. Second, it's hard to read and react to the results. Just like people often won't tell you to your face what they're thinking, often on a survey they'll rank you artificially high. Even if they give you an honest answer sometimes it's not "actionable" (something you can fix).

What can you do to get this feedback? Create a very short survey that focuses on just one question: "How likely are you refer me to a friend?" The answer to that single question is the proven key to growth and profits according to Frederick F. Reichheld, author of *The Ultimate Question: Driving Good Profits and True Growth*.

Reichheld says the answer to



Phil Sasso is president of Sasso Marketing Inc. (www.sassomarketing.com), a technical marketing agency specializing in tools and equipment. Subscribe to his free marketing tips at philsasso.com/blog.

SALES Q & A

prohibited by law. Yada. Yada. Yada.)

If you're really into technology, you can use an online service like Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com) or Constant Contact Surveys (get a 60-day free trial at www.constantcontact.com/try-surveys) to gather and tally survey results. But you may find it more work to set up and use once you see how easy my manual method is.

To tally your results manually, put everyone with a score of 4 and over in one stack. We'll call them "Promoters." Then put everyone with a score of 3 and under in another stack. We'll call them "Detractors."

Now count your stacks. The more people in your "Promoters" stack than your "Detractors" stack, the better job you're doing. (But don't get too confident, there's always room for improvement!)

Next, thumb through both stacks

to see what advice you get in question #2, paying special attention to your "Detractors" cards. Make notes on improvements you agree you need to make and highlight issues you hear from more than one customer.

One warning: a few customers may be very negative. Try to let it roll off your back. There will always be one or two. Chalk it up to human nature and move on.

Finally, now that it feels like

you're doing a terrible job, go back through all the cards one last time and read the response to question #1. Put yourself on the back and celebrate. Then wake up the next morning and start on your list of improvements.

Take this quick survey every year. It can keep you in touch with customer satisfaction, improve your business -- and stop you from worrying about what customers are saying behind your back. ■

Scan this QR code to see an example of a survey.

To download a barcode scanner on your smart phone or mobile device, visit:

<http://i-nigma.mobi>



INCREASE SALES AND PROFITS SIX WAYS

with Hansen Socket Trays

Help your customers eliminate toolbox clutter and chaos with Hansen Socket Trays. Six convenient trays in SAE and Metric sizes, two each in 1/2", 3/8" and 1/4" drives. Best selling 3/8" drive SAE socket tray holds 26 sockets from 1/4" to 1", while the Metric version holds sockets from 6mm to 20mm. You'll see faster turns, higher profits and a guaranteed sale on your opening order. Call 920-793-5213 and ask about our space saving counter display. Or visit our website www.hansenglobalinc.com.



Hansen Global's Quik-Pik wrench racks:

- Organize wrenches while the clear labeling makes sizes easy to grab-and-go.
- Patented spring tabs in each slot keep wrenches in place.
- Low-profile rack fits 2" deep toolbox drawers.
- Made of tough polypropylene plastic
- Lifetime warranty.

Visit www.hansenglobalinc.com or call 920-793-5213 for more info.

Enter 28 at "e-inquiry" on professionaldistributormagazine.com