

Measuring Customer Input

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Abstract

One of the secondary benefits of the BPR effort led by the Business and Finance Division of the University of West Georgia was the development and implementation of customer satisfaction surveys for each department within the division.

Questions were devised by an independent committee and the surveys were electronically administered at separate intervals during Fall 2004 and Spring 2005.

The survey results were posted on our division website and action plans to address those results were developed and incorporated into our goals and objectives for 2006.

Introduction of the Organization

The University of West Georgia (UWG), a charter member of the University System of Georgia (USG), is a selectively-focused, comprehensive institution providing undergraduate and graduate public higher education in arts and sciences, business, and education, primarily to the people of West Georgia.

UWG offers a range of disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and professional programs at the baccalaureate level. It is also a major provider of graduate education at the master's and educational specialist's levels; further, a doctoral program is offered in education. In addition to being accredited as an institute of higher education, the University has earned national accreditation or recognition in most undergraduate and graduate fields of specialization.

The purpose of UWG is to provide opportunities for intellectual and personal development through quality teaching, scholarly inquiry, creative endeavor, and service for the public good. The University aspires to preeminence in providing educational excellence in a personal environment through an intellectually stimulating and supportive community for its students, faculty, and staff.

The Division of Business and Finance (B&F) is one of four major divisions that reinforce that community. Responsible for the administration of UWG's fiscal, physical, human resources, and safety requirements, B&F provides service and support to 10,216 students and 1,000 faculty and staff.

Statement of the Problem/Initiative

Through our 2004-05 division effort in Business Process Redesign (BPR), questions on value-added vs. non value-added steps within the processes under review led to discussions on what our customers actually perceive as being of value within our services. Folded into these discussions was our responsibility and commitment to the SACS reaffirmation process by implementing systematic and regular procedures to evaluate student and customer satisfaction. Since one of the areas was already obtaining this data using surveys, the decision was made for each B&F area to develop their own survey to determine which methods to improve.

A separate committee was formed and assisted the directors of each area in developing a questionnaire to measure customer satisfaction. The intent of the questionnaire was twofold:

- (1) To obtain the information that was desired without burdening the customer; and
- (2) To develop a formal method to obtain feedback that is necessary for us to measure our performance and improve our support services.

Design

A committee was selected to evaluate different formats of questionnaires that were utilized by other institutions. They also examined different methodologies for administering surveys. Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan was contacted for permission to use the layout that was designed by their Purchasing Department, and they supplied us with information on the software that had been used. The cost of licensing the software was \$350.00.

The surveys were developed using a combination of multiple choice and fill-in responses. The average length of time for completion was two minutes.

Implementation

Since the departments within the division share many of the same customers, the questionnaires were scheduled over a 6-month period rather than all at once. This helped to reduce the repetition and make it less burdensome to complete. Questionnaires were administered via an e-mail and link from the office of the Vice-President for Business and Finance, William Gauthier, to the faculty and staff. Questionnaires to students were administered through the student portal on the UWG website. The closing section of the questionnaire informed all participants of the date that the survey results would be posted to the B&F website.

Results from the survey were reviewed by the area director and a summary was posted on the B&F website. Based on these results, goals and objectives that were submitted for the 2006 fiscal year contained action plans for tracking and improving those areas where responses indicated weaknesses.

Benefits

On behalf of UWG, B&F sent a signal to their customers that they are interested in their input and that they are willing to develop ways to improve. This process has helped us to

- Collect data to measure and quantify customer perceptions rather than to estimate
- Obtain a better understanding of our customer needs
- Develop goals and objectives based on customer input

- Create an environment that promotes teamwork, empowerment, and organizational trust

“Not only was the data helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of our core processes” exclaimed Director of Auxiliary Enterprises, Jerry Mock, “it was a morale booster to the staff!” “They were thrilled to learn what their customers thought of them!”

The surveys results also provided Mr. Gauthier with an assessment of the B&F areas (Human Resources, Purchasing, Public Safety, Auxiliary Enterprises, Student Financial Services and the Controllers Office) and a better focus for determining which ones needed improvement.