

Customer ServiceStyles™ Survey [CSSS]



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Organisational Development

Delivering a great customer experience is critical for organisational success. Great customer service comes from a unique blend of skills and behaviours, supported by empowering organisational systems and structures. Many organisations achieve limited improvement in customer service because they only focus on skills training, systems and structures, without identifying (and addressing) the predominant patterns of customer service behaviours that shape perceptions of quality and influence satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy (word-of-mouth).

Great customer experience derives from well-trained employees supported by a Constructive culture

The Customer ServiceStyles™ Survey (CSSS) provides a unique perspective into these forces by measuring the service styles that impact the experience of customers as well as the effects of these styles on customers' attitudes and future purchasing intentions.

The CSSS is a flexible tool for engaging employees and leaders in the imperative of improving service behaviours. Developed in a wide range of industry sectors, with internal and external customers, the CSSS complements organisational diagnostics such as the Organisational Culture Inventory® (OCI) by quantifying the experience of customers.

The CSSS Research Base

Updated in 2007, the CSSS's norm uses data from Australian, New Zealand, United States and European organisations. The norm consists of 1,199 customers describing 87 organisational units (i.e., 'service providers'). It is representative of a variety of industry segments including internal customers and 'business to business' relationships.

The Process

The CSSS measures the way people in the organisation typically treat customers.

The inventory consists of 48 statements that describe some of the behaviours or "styles" that might be exhibited by sales representatives, customer service agents, or others who deal directly with customers.

These twelve Customer Service Styles are arranged on a circumplex similar to the other Human Synergistics circumplex diagnostics, such as the OCI.

For example, the Achievement Customer Service Style translates into solution-oriented and consistently good, solid customer service. Service providers do the job right the first time, suggest "extras" that anticipate the customer's future needs, and work to meet the needs and expectations of both their organisation and the client.

In addition to assessing customer service styles, the CSSS measures different dimensions or aspects of service quality that can help to illustrate some of the implications of a service provider's style:

- ▶ Customer satisfaction (including whether customers' expectations were met)
- ▶ Customer loyalty (including whether customers intend to use the organisation's products or services again)
- ▶ Customer advocacy (including whether customers would recommend the organisation to other potential customers or clients)

Once all customers' data are collected, their feedback is compiled and presented in a report that contains customer service style profiles, service quality barcharts, and tables with the item-by-item results as well as interpretive information, comparative profiles, and recommendations.

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The Results

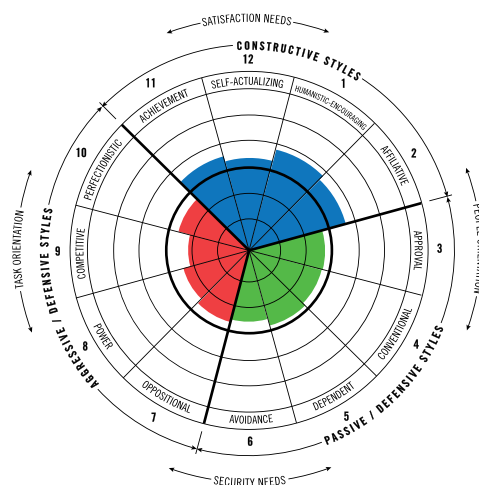
The CSSS provides leaders and employees with powerful insights into their customers' experience. Armed with data, collaborative analysis and action planning can produce tangible improvements to the way customers are treated. After 12-24 months, the CSSS can be used to assess the impact of change initiatives on customers.

Ideally, the CSSS should be used in conjunction with the Organisational Culture Inventory® (OCI) and Organisational Effectiveness Inventory™ (OEI) results. The OCI is particularly useful in understanding the behavioural norms and expectations that define the organisation's culture and drive its customer service behaviours, whilst the OEI provides a quantification of the organisation's cultural drivers.

Applications

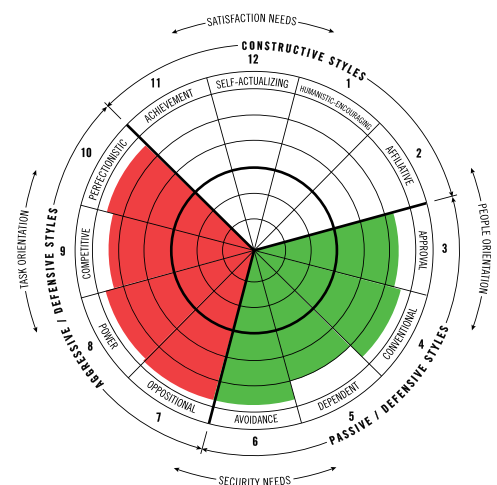
The CSSS is suitable for a wide range of customer situations. Experience shows CSSS applications go beyond traditional customer service situations, for example, retail service; other opportunities include:

- ▶ "Business to business", for example, franchisor to franchisee relationships
- ▶ Call centres
- ▶ Internal customers, for example, management's perception of an HR department



Service styles experienced by customers most likely to choose to do business again with the service provider

Research and development by Robert A. Cooke, Ph.D. and J. Clayton Lafferty, Ph.D. © Human Synergistics International (and designs)



Service styles experienced by customers least likely to choose to do business again with the service provider

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