

Opinion-8

Case study

DUDLEY COUNCIL – Early adopter of good practice customer feedback technology

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*“Opinion-8 surveys allow us to **gain the information we need in moments**, and give us real time feedback on how well we are doing.”*

*“It is a bonus to see that the type of customer feedback tool we have had in place for the past 3 years has been identified as **an example of good practice**”,*

- Sue Bills
Contact Centre
Manager
Dudley Council

The Organisation

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Councils Repairs Management Centre provides a first point of contact to all tenants to enable them to report a repair. The service is available 24 hours 365 days per year. In line with the recommendations of the Varney Review, Dudley has recently set up a single point of contact for information and queries on any council service.

The Challenge

Local authorities have always needed to gain feedback from their local communities, but never more so than now. The Varney Review of public services has led to the development of a new Performance Framework for publicly funded contact centres and helplines, comprising 26 performance indicators. As a tool for service improvement, the government is suggesting that public sector contact centres should develop systems for measuring performance on these new indicators, and by the end of 2008, achieve external accreditation that these indicators are being implemented. Customers are centre stage within the new performance framework, and four of the performance indicators require customer feedback on the service provided: First Contact Resolution, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Consultation Impact, and Customer Confidence Index. At the same time, the government is expecting significant efficiency savings from local councils, meaning that any new initiatives to gain customer feedback need to be highly cost-effective.

The Solution

When Dudley Council decided to gain contact centre customer feedback in 2004, Opinion-8 had just been shortlisted for Best New Product in the European Call Centre Awards. Dudley was one of the few local authorities to make the most of this new technology by using it to gain real-time feedback from customers on different aspects of the service

Opinion-8

has recently been shortlisted for the

**Market Research
Society Technology
Effectiveness Award
2007**

The Award is presented jointly with the Association for Survey Computing, and aims to promote greater recognition of :

“outstanding innovation in the application of software or technology to market, opinion and social research in achieving greater effectiveness in research”

provided, as well as on the ethnicity of callers. This allowed Dudley to evidence the good customer service they were providing to all ethnic groups within their local community, as well as identify areas for improvement. Data are now available for the last three years, giving Dudley Council a head start in terms of gaining the information they need to respond to the Varney agenda. Sue Bills, Contact Centre Manager at Dudley states: “Because we are already using Opinion-8 we are in a strong position to respond to the government agenda for developing customer-centric services.”

The Opinion-8 survey system is simple to use. Dudley Council staff ask a given number of callers if they would like to participate in a short survey at the end of the call, and if they agree they are then transferred to the surveyline at the end of their call, where they answer some pre-recorded questions by pressing the buttons on their keypad. The survey takes no more than one or two minutes, and people can leave open comments at the end. Once the caller has hung up, their survey feedback is automatically compiled and analysed. Instant graphic reports can be seen by Dudley Council staff via log-in to a secure website.

The Benefits

Dudley Council staff can access performance reports for any given time period via the internet, to see how satisfied customers are with the services they are providing. Sue Bills comments: “Opinion-8 surveys allow us to gain the information we need in moments, and give us real time feedback on how well we are doing.” Reports over time allow better understanding of how and why customer satisfaction varies as well as how customers respond to any changes in service. Listening to the comments left by Dudley’s service users offers vivid soundbites which can also be used as a motivation booster for contact centre staff.

IVR surveys are mentioned as an example of good practice in many of the documents published by the Contact Council – both the Varney Review itself, the detailed performance indicators document, and the ‘Blueprint’ with examples of how different public sector contact centres have dealt with the challenges of running a customer-centric service. As an early adopter of post-call IVR survey system Opinion-8 Dudley is therefore in an excellent position to start measuring performance against the new performance indicators set out by the government.

“It is a bonus to see that the type of customer feedback tool we have had in place for the past 3 years has been identified as an example of good practice”, concludes Sue Bills at Dudley.

About Square Systems and Opinion-8

Square Systems is a UK-based developer of integrated software solutions for contact centres. Square Systems specialises in leveraging open source technology for application in contact centres, and has developed and manages the Opinion-8 survey system. Opinion-8 is available both as a hosted service and as customer premise equipment for companies who wish to purchase the system in house.

Opinion-8 is also available through a number of resellers in different market sectors including contact centre technology, market research and HR.

Please visit www.opinion-8.com for more information about Opinion-8, or see www.squaresystems.co.uk