

Does your customer service measure up?

Organisations are failing to achieve excellence in customer service because directors and managers frequently do not fully understand what is going on within their businesses, argues the Institute of Customer Service (ICS).

To help organisations across all sectors keep on top of this crucial situation, the ICS has developed an online tool to assess their customer service. "When we carried out the National Complaints Culture Survey last year directors said that, in 2005-6, they would be concentrating on customer service excellence," said Robert Crawford, ICS executive director. "However, how can they fully understand or improve their service if they don't measure it?" ICS ServCheck helps organisations review their current customer service, benchmark their performance against other organisations and develop improvement plans.

The views and priorities of over 200,000 customers featured in its development. ICS ServCheck begins with an online questionnaire completed by a representative sample of people within an organisation. Questions cover, for example, methods for measuring customer perceptions and priorities, the focus on customer service in staff recruitment and induction, and processes for creative improvements. Answers to the questions are collated and scored. A downloadable report is produced detailing overall scores for each question, which can be compared across cross-sections of the organisation, divisions within the organisation, or other organisations by sector or geography. The questionnaire in ICS ServCheck is based on a model developed by the ICS around the premise that all organisations need to pay full attention to three criteria: Strategy & Culture, People, and Processes, in order to deliver world class customer service." Every organisation, whether a large financial or retail business, local council, or charity, should be asking itself whether its customer service delivery is better than that of competitors and how it can be improved," said Robert Crawford. ICS ServCheck costs £3,000, with free use or substantial discounts available to ICS members.
