



Media Contact: Lesly Cardec
800-422-3819
leslycardec@sfnngroup.com

CONSUMERS MORE LIKELY THAN EVER TO SHARE OPINIONS ON CUSTOMER SERVICE, FINDS SPHERION SURVEY

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., December 19, 2011 — When consumers have a positive customer service experience, they are more likely than ever before to share their opinions than in previous years, especially via social media, online review sites, and with the company itself.

A recent Spherion Staffing Services survey shows that when consumers have a good customer service experience, 47 percent are likely to tell a company representative; 17 percent will express their opinions via social media; and 15 percent will write a review. The same survey from 2010 showed that only 40 percent of consumers were likely to share a great experience with a company representative—proving that consumers are becoming more vocal with companies they interact with. If consumers have a poor experience, 36 percent are willing to write a complaint directly to the company, and one in four will express their opinions on social media. Nineteen percent, the same statistic as last year, will choose to write a review online.

In addition, about one in 10 people are even willing to reach out to the media about their experiences. If they're unhappy, nine percent will contact the media to report it, up one percent from last year. Those who have great experiences are less likely to make news, with five percent calling for media attention, also up one percent from last year.

"Because of the extreme connectivity that the growth of social media has spurred between consumers and companies, people are more willing than ever to speak up about the way they feel about a particular brand," says Sandy Mazur, Spherion's senior vice president of the franchise and licensee division. "So many companies have cut corners in this economy when it comes to customer service, but the impact of those decisions is greater than ever as people decide to speak up about who treats them well... and who doesn't."

Most consumers also feel that companies could stand to improve their customer service skills. When asked what percentage of their experiences was good over the last several months, 41 percent of people had good experiences less than 60 percent of the time. Only 26 percent had positive experiences 80 percent of the time or more, a statistic that fell from 32 percent last year.

"People expect more pleasant, personalized interactions with companies, and they want to feel positive about the way they are treated. They're more careful than ever about where they spend their money, which means that in a competitive market, customer service is more important than ever," says Mazur.

Consumers are also remaining loyal to the businesses that treat them well. Ninety-seven percent said a great experience makes them more likely to buy more of a product or repeat a service, similar to last year's 98.6 percent. However, once their trust is lost, it's hard to earn back. Twenty-two percent want a simple apology, 10 percent want a complete refund, and eight percent would want incentives or coupons. Forty-six percent, however, said that it would take all three, which means earning repeat business after a bad experience is costly and time consuming. Fifteen percent said absolutely nothing would amend their bad experience.

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Consumers who have had poor experiences also tend to talk with friends about it, and their friends listen. Half (49 percent) of consumers are “very unlikely” to do with business with a company based on a bad recommendation from someone they trust. If someone has a great recommendation, though, 61 percent are equally as likely to choose that company in the future.

“Taking emphasis off customer service may seem like a good idea for the bottom line when budgets get tight, but in the long run, it’s infinitely more expensive to get people to trust you again,” says Mazur. “There is also always the possibility that nothing you do will bring customers back, which makes customer service one of the most important investments a company can make.”

Communication was the most important service quality, with 85 percent rating it as important. Courteous and well-mannered treatment was a close second at 84 percent, followed by the ability to resolve issues quickly at 83 percent.

[Click here for the Methodology](#)

About Spherion Staffing Services

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