

*Simply
Better!*

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Voice of the Customer

WORKBOOK

Self-Assessment System

Service by Design

■ *The Voice of the Customer*

Measuring Success

Customers in Focus

Case Studies in Quality

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Foreword

This *Voice of the Customer Workbook* is a product of the **Simply Better!** project. **Simply Better!** is a movement of employment and training program professionals and organizations committed to continuously improving their performance by uncovering and acting on what best satisfies their customers—the nation’s employers and jobseekers. **Simply Better!** has produced a number of practical tools—guidebooks, training workshops, case studies, peer-to-peer assistance networks—designed to help employment and training agencies implement quality management and continuous improvement principles.

The Voice of the Customer (VOC) is a **Simply Better!** activity which examines the tools and techniques of measuring customer satisfaction and integrating the resulting information into program planning and decision-making. The *Voice of the Customer Guidebook* gives an overview of this topic and discusses informal research techniques, use of focus groups, design of survey instruments and data analysis. This *Voice of the Customer Workbook* contains step-by-step instructions, flow charts, diagrams and blank forms to help local agency staff design and implement program improvements to increase customer satisfaction. Staff are encouraged to read the *VOC Guidebook* before beginning this process.

Simply Better! has also prepared several training workshops, ranging from one to three days, on the Voice of the Customer techniques. The *VOC Guidebook*, *VOC Workbook*, *VOC training workshops* and all other **Simply Better!** products can be ordered from **Simply Better!**’s Regional Representatives, whose names and phone numbers are listed on the back cover of this book.

Other **Simply Better!** products include:

- The *Self-Assessment System* uses the Baldrige Award criteria to help agencies better understand how they function and to uncover hidden problems.
- *Customers in Focus* is a guide to conducting and using the results of focus groups.
- *Service by Design* lays out a seven-step process for solving organizational problems and improving results.
- *Case Studies in Quality* provides examples of continuous improvement in organizations like yours.

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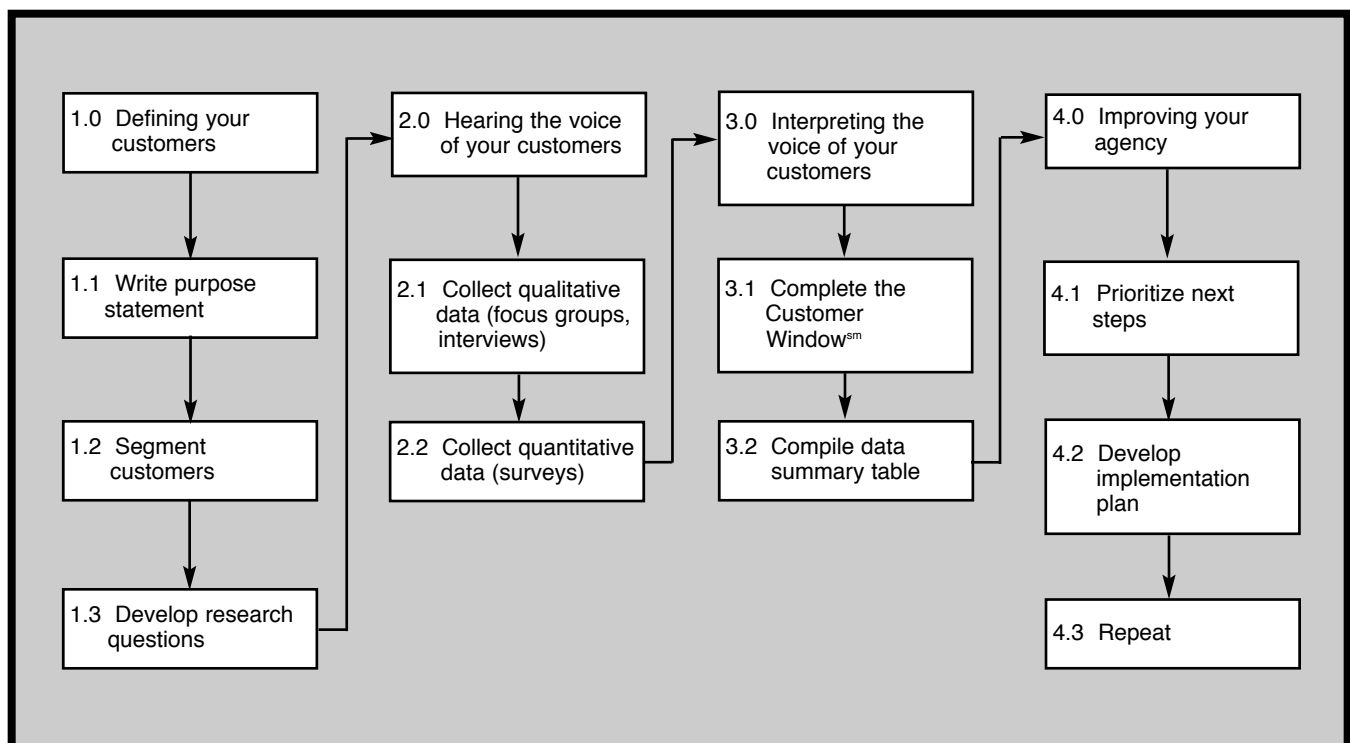
Introduction

Welcome to **Simply Better!**'s *Voice of the Customer Workbook*! This *Workbook* will help you to determine what your customers—employers and jobseekers—want and expect from your employment and training programs. The collection and analysis of this information is the best starting point for making meaningful improvements in your organization and your programs.

The **Voice of the Customer** is a hands-on, do-it-yourself research process for measuring how your customers feel about the services you are currently providing: what is important to them and how satisfied they are. This *Workbook* contains step-by-step instructions for following the Voice of the Customer process and learning how to make your programs better. A companion work, the *Voice of the Customer Guidebook*, gives a more detailed overview of all the techniques of customer satisfaction measurement. Another **Simply Better!** product, *Service by Design*, sets out a seven-step process for making changes and program improvements based on the customer information you have uncovered.

This *Workbook* also contains fill-in-the-blank worksheets to help you define and “segment” your customers, listen to their comments, analyze what you hear and make a plan based on that analysis. These worksheets are designed to be copied and filled in as you move through each step of the Voice of the Customer process.

The Simply Better! Voice of the Customer Process



Getting Started

Before you undertake a customer research project, be sure to thoroughly consider the following issues. Performing these “first steps” may well mean the difference between success and failure for your entire customer satisfaction effort.

- *Identify a target.* What services and/or customers do you want to study? Do high dropout rates or low placement numbers clearly mark some of your programs as needing improvement? Are you underserving any particular client group? Has there been criticism from employers or community leaders? Are you thinking of starting a new program or service and want to know how it will be received?
- *Decide exactly what you want to learn from your customer research.* Focus groups and surveys can't answer every question. Don't go to the trouble of asking customers for information you may already know or that you can find out in other ways. For example, if you want to know how long clients wait in line, use a stopwatch. If you want to know how they *feel* about waiting in line, then you must ask them. Put your target and your research objectives in writing and refer to them frequently.
- *Secure the support of your top management.* Lack of this support will undermine your entire effort, particularly if your research results in suggestions for major changes in programs and processes that are currently “owned” by the boss.
- *Assemble a team.* Customer research is too visible and too complicated to be a one-person project. Your team should include front-line staff who are closest to the customers and “experts” in the services you are studying. Team members should be willing to commit sufficient time to the project.
- *Ask advice along the way.* Have a dialog with customers about the services you are studying. Reach consensus on how you will use the research results to improve their satisfaction or the quality of the particular service. *Test* your assumptions and your interview questions and surveys with a small knowledgeable group before rolling them out to the general public. *Validate* your research findings by corroborating them with data from other sources. *Be realistic* about the difficulty and the costs of implementing any program or process changes you suggest.

The Simply Better! Voice of the Customer Process

1.0 Defining Your Customers

Who are your customers and what do they want? In this first step you document your current knowledge including:

- whom you serve,
- what opportunities and problems you face and
- what customer information you need.

2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

Next, conduct interviews to hear your customers describe, in their own words, what they like best and like least about your programs. We call this linguistic (or word) data. Take notes during the interviews and afterwards transfer key ideas to index cards so you can sort similar ideas together. Now you will have several stacks of index cards, each with customer comments on a specific topic.

Next, take certain items and develop a written survey asking;

- “How important is this item?” and
- “How well do we deliver it?”

The answers to these questions can be rated as “very important, somewhat important, or not very important.” Using numeric ratings, you can create charts for interpretation.

3.0 Interpreting the Voice of Your Customers

Topics from the interviews and survey mentioned above can then be summarized in a table as follows:

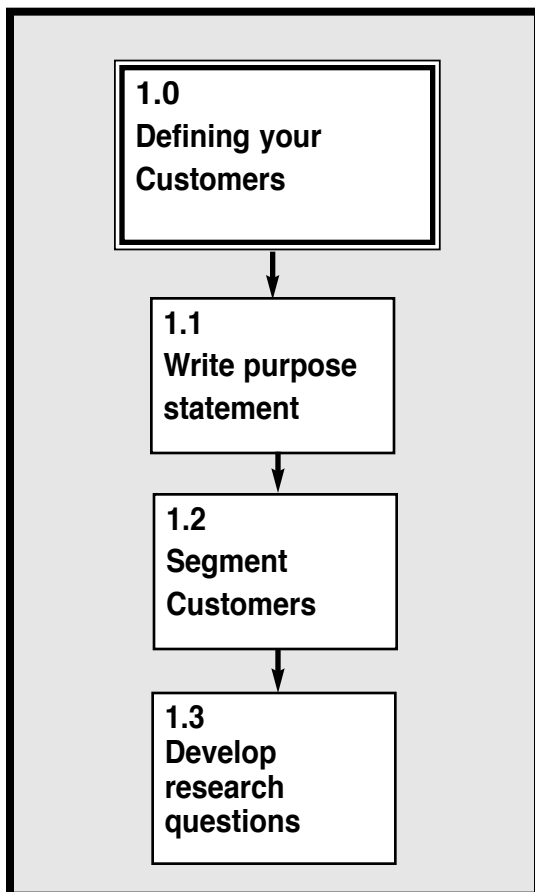
- What did the customer say?
- What do we think it means?
- Is this a priority, in our view?
- Do we measure it? How?
- What improvements, if any, will we make?

4.0 Improving Your Organization

From the information you have gathered, prioritize the suggestions and improvements you want to make in your services and prepare a detailed implementation plan. **Simply Better!**'s *Service by Design* process can help you develop a continuous improvement strategy for your agency.

Step 1.0 Defining Your Customers

Step 1.0 identifies and clarifies why you are studying your customers. It focuses our study on key customer segments, helps document existing knowledge and helps you think through your research questions. See worksheets W-1 through W-4.



1.1 Write purpose statement

Purpose Statement Worksheet Completing this worksheet identifies your various customers, their problems and opportunities. This focuses your attention on those areas that need improvement.

It is a good idea to post the **purpose statement** where it can be seen. The team can refer to it as they progress in the study. The statement can be revised as more is learned about your customers.

1.2 Segment Customers

Segmentation Pie Chart Arranging customers into related groups that are further subdivided reduces large groups of customers to manageable targeted segments.

Segmentation Profile Matrix After identifying targeted segments, further clarify the segments, recording what you know and do not know about your customers.

1.3 Develop Research Questions

Step 1.0 ends with a set of theories about your customers' needs and how you are serving them. This forms the set of **Research Questions** for your next step.

Benefits of Completing Step 1 — Defining Your Customers

- Defines the purpose and direction of your project.
- Clarifies what you do and for whom you do it.
- Groups customers into meaningful segments according to their needs.
- Organizes what you know and what you do not know about your customers.

Case Study: A Training Vendor Studies Employers' Needs

This case study illustrates how a team from a hotel industry program used customer research to design a cooking school.

Often teams will rush into customer research by designing a questionnaire. We recommend that before designing surveys, **Simply Better!** teams use worksheets such as these to think through their targeted segments and research questions.

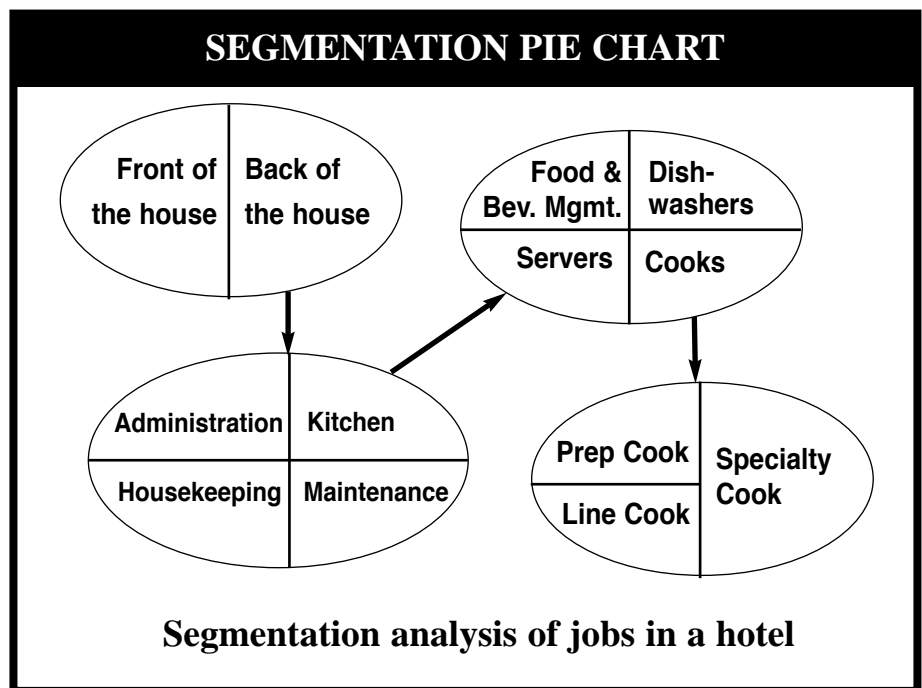
1.1 Purpose Statement

The Purpose Statement summarizes the team's intuitive knowledge of their customers and provides direction for the study. The team in this case study identified the needs and wants of the hotel industry.

PURPOSE STATEMENT WORKSHEET		
Whom do we serve?	What opportunities and problems do we face?	What customer information do we need?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economically disadvantaged • Dislocated workers • Hotels • SDAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provided workers to hotels for many years • Hotel industry is growing • We provided classroom training and OJT training with an 88% placement rate • But nationally, OJT funding was cut, because of negative article in <i>Reader's Digest</i>, so we have to switch from OJT to classroom training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other types of training are needed? • Without OJT how can we still add value to the hotel industry?
<p>Purpose Statement: Why study our customers? We will do a customer study to determine how we can be of value to the hotel industry.</p>		

1.2 Segment Customers

First segmentation is by "front" and "back" of the house (hotel). The "back" can be sub-segmented by administration, housekeeping, maintenance and kitchen jobs. The kitchen jobs can be sub-segmented as shown until we get to a level of detail that is useful for our purpose.



1.2 Segment Customers

Next, existing knowledge is documented, and what we don't know becomes our research questions. In this case, we knew what hotels "wanted" and "got", but we didn't know how many cooks were needed.

SEGMENTATION PIE CHART			
<i>Segment Description</i>	Segment #1	Segment #2	Segment #3
Name	Hotel Cooks		
How many needed?	Research will determine if a classroom should be funded		
Percent of total	10%		
Demographics	M & F		
What they want	Qualified cooks with good work habits, low turnover		
What they get	Cooks with various skill levels, poor work habits, high turnover		

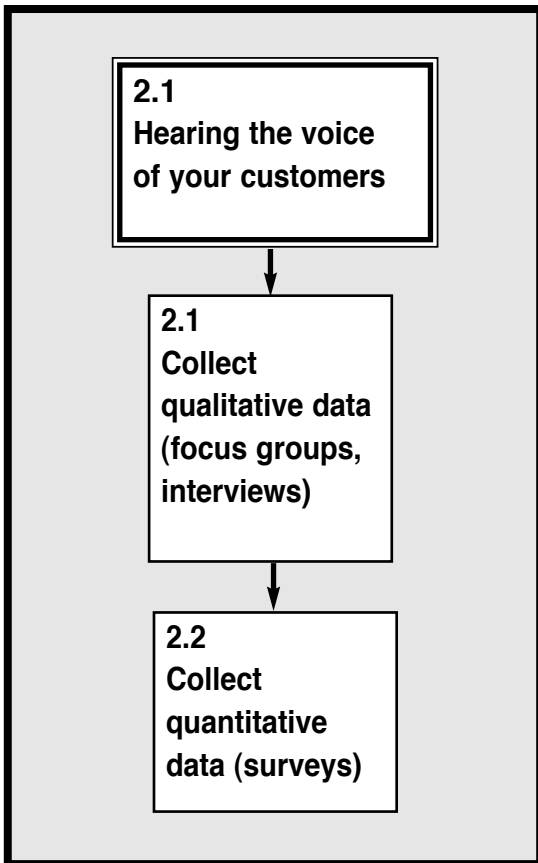
1.3 Write Research Questions

In this step, we examine our purpose, our segments, any knowledge gaps and our theories. In this case we believed that hotels needed cooks, but did restaurants, hospitals and schools also need cooks? We also wanted to know what potential employers wanted in the curriculum.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS WORKSHEET	
Purpose Statement: (Why Survey our Customers?) How can we be of value to the hotel industry?	Customer Segment: Cooks
Knowledge Gaps & Theories Hotels need kitchen staff, especially cooks	Research Questions Do others also need cooks? What should be included in a cooking curriculum?

Step 2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

Step 2.0 is an action step to gather data. This is your opportunity to talk with the customers and gather a picture of your customers' needs and their perception of your performance. See Worksheets W-5 through W-10.



2.1 *Collect Qualitative Data (word data)*

Qualitative data is linguistic data that explores customer wants and needs. It is obtained through interviews and focus groups. We will interview customers and use an **Interview Guide and Interview Schedule**. A good interview results in good notes. Use the interview guide for note taking and transfer the notes to **Voice of the Customer (VOC) Cards**.

2.2 *Collect Quantitative Data (numeric data)*

Quantitative data includes numeric data that can be plotted on a graph showing what customers “want” and what they “get”. This particular type of analysis is called the **Customer Windowsm**. It is obtained through a paper and pencil questionnaire that can be administered in person, over the phone or by mail. Other types of analysis are also available.

Benefits of Completing Step 2 — Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

Qualitative Data Collected by Interviewing

- The customer’s needs are defined by the customer in their words.
- The interviewer can explore issues, trends or new ideas.
- Unclear responses can be probed and clarified.
- Relationships will be improved and trust established.

Quantitative Data Collected by Surveying

- Help you to clarify or expand on information collected in the customer interviews.
- Identify the product and service features most important to our customers.
- Identify any new or changing customer needs for products or services.
- Determine how satisfied your customer is with your products or services.

Sampling

In conducting qualitative interviews you can select a representative sample and reduce the cost and time spent in interviews. Sampling must be random. This means that each person in the population has an equal chance of being chosen.

The following is a guide for determining the number to sample when conducting interviews and surveys.

Number of customers in the segment.	<5	5-19	20-49	50-99	100+
Number of customers to interview	ALL	5	7	8	9-20
Number of customers to survey	ALL	5	10	12	15-25

Response rate refers to the percentage of people contacted who actually complete their interview or survey. Because the number to interview and survey may be small, the key is to get a response from each person in the sample.

2.1 Collect Qualitative Data (Word Data)

“An interview is a conversation with a purpose.”

Use the following structured 6-step **Interview Guide**. This format asks key questions and provides flexibility for probing.

Opening: Explain the purpose of the interview.

- 1. General:** In general, please tell me about your experience with the _____ program.
- 2. Likes:** What, if anything, did you like about the program?
(Listen for “top of mind” responses, then probe for more meaning.)
- 3. Dislikes:** What, if anything, did you dislike about the program?
(Listen for “top of mind” responses, then probe for more meaning.)
- 4. Specific:** Now I would like your comments on the following specific aspects of the program.
- 5. Sensitive:** Please give me your opinion about _____?
- 6. Anything else:** What questions would you have liked me to ask that I didn’t?

Summary: Summarize the key findings to check your notes.

Tips for Writing Questions

- Ask: how will we use this information.
- Ask: what actions will the customer expect us to take and does the question create expectations that can not be met.
- Write simple questions, balancing open-ended and closed-ended questions.
- Avoid theoretical, leading and complex questions.
- Sequence questions from general to specific.
- Ask only what you really need to know.
- Use the Purpose Statement to check the appropriateness of each question.
- Pretest the questions with a friendly customer.

Tips for Conducting a Customer Interview

- Set an appointment for the interview at the customer's convenience.
- Create a friendly, informal atmosphere to set the customer at ease.
- Use the Customer Interview Guide to keep the interview on track.
- Begin with an introduction explaining the purpose.
- Clarify the customer's responses. Ask the customers what they mean until you hear tangible and measurable needs. Probe meanings.
- Don't be defensive. Be open to hearing the good and bad.
- Pace the interview. Observe body language.
- Tell the customer what the follow-up action will be.
- Summarize the interview and thank the customer.
- Take accurate notes and immediately transfer to VOC cards.

Tips for Taking Notes

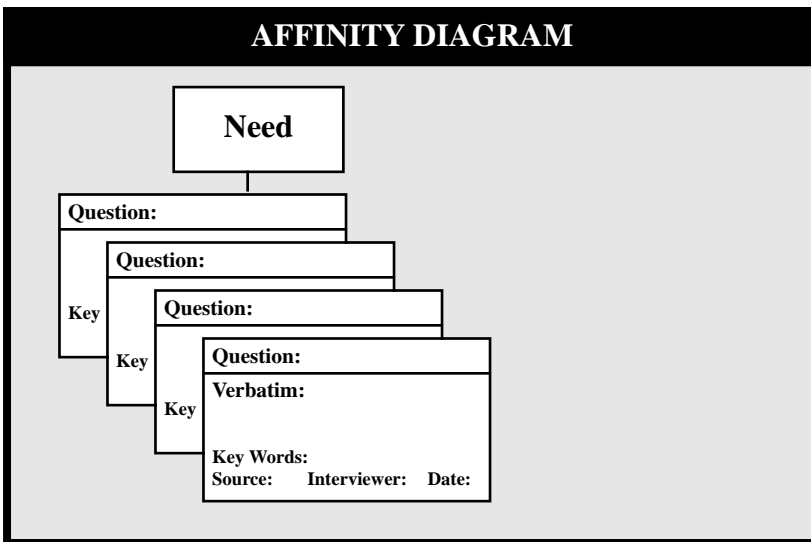
- Do not pre-judge customer responses.
- Avoid uncommon abbreviations.
- Record verbatim what people say. Record key words, phrases and descriptions of specific events.
- Use the Interview Guide to take notes and if additional space is needed remember to relate notes to the appropriate question.

Voice of the Customer Workbook

VOC CARD		
Question:		
Verbatim:		
Key Words:	Source:	Interviewer: Date:

Voice of the Customer Cards

VOC cards are used to collect data from multiple interviews. They can be designed to include identifying information and contextual elements of the interview. Choose a format and make up blank cards prior to the interview. Ordinary 3x5 cards are also good for this purpose. After the interview, write one key customer comment on each card.

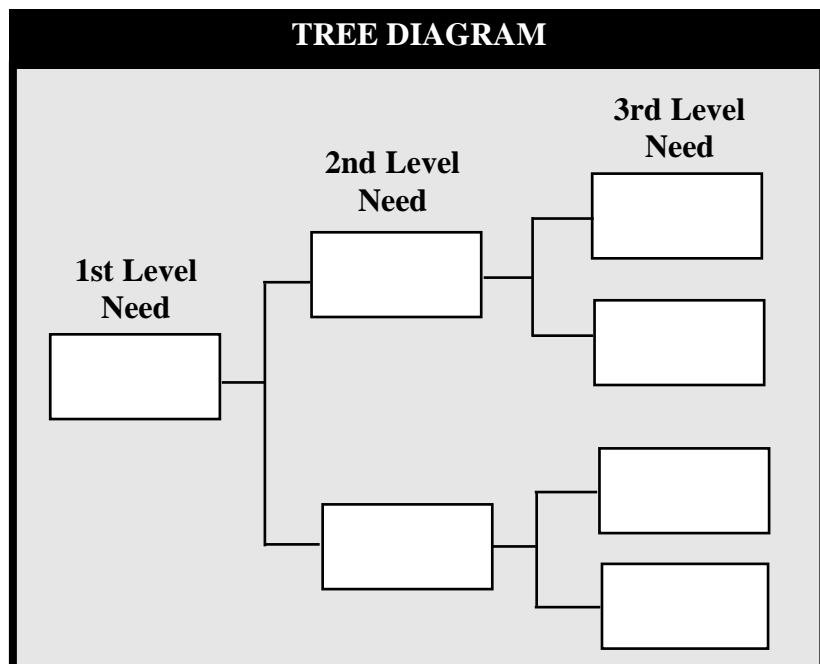


Affinity Diagram

When all interviews have been completed, gather all VOC cards and sort them into groupings of similar ideas. Select a group title header card representative of each group. These groupings are called an Affinity Diagram.

Structured Tree Diagram

In the Affinity Diagram, customer needs are grouped with the key ideas broken out into first, second and third level detail. These needs will become the **program characteristics or attributes** to be rated on our quantitative questionnaire.



2.2 Collect Quantitative Data — The Customer Windowsm Questionnaire Outline

Numeric data is usually collected by completing a written questionnaire. Similar to the Interview Guide, the questionnaire follows an outline. An outline format should include:

Introduction: Explain the purpose of the survey and what action will be taken as a result of the survey.

Importance and Satisfaction Ratings: Ask the customer to rate each need/attribute/quality characteristic for its importance and the extent to which the customer is satisfied with your performance. Record the levels of importance and satisfaction on separate sheets.

Overall Satisfaction Rating: Ask the customer to evaluate their overall satisfaction.

Clarify Importance and Satisfaction Ratings: Ask the customer to clarify why they gave high or low ratings to the questions on specific need/attribute/quality characteristics.

Specific: Ask the customer any additional specific questions. This is also an opportunity to ask for improvement ideas.

Sensitive: Ask any sensitive questions at the end.

Summary: Any additional comments and words of thanks.

Refer to the *VOC Guidebook*, page II-10 through II-13 for a detailed explanation of the Customer Windowsm process.

Case Study - Step 2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

2.1 Collect Qualitative Data

Step 1 of this Case Study led us to interview hotels and other organizations, i.e. hospitals, schools, large businesses, that employed cooks. We needed to find out if they were successful in filling cooks' positions and if not, what were the difficulties. We also wanted to identify the key components in a cook's curriculum.

Interview Guide

The interviews began with an "open-ended" question. If no cooks were needed, the interviewer decided whether to close the interview or continue asking about other needs. If cooks were mentioned, the interviewer proceeded with the more specific questions. The sensitive question requesting a letter of support was kept to the end. Hand written interview notes were kept during interview.

VOC Cards

Immediately after each interview, team members wrote verbal comments on a VOC Card. The source of the comment and key words in the comment were also written on the VOC Card. When all the interviews were completed, the team sorted the VOC cards into natural groupings. Each grouping was given a title or header card identifying the content of the group. This is also called an Affinity Diagram.

Interview Guide

Opening - Hello, my name is _____. I'm from the ABC training center. I would like to ask you a few questions about employment and training issues for your business.

1. General

What jobs, if any, are you having trouble filling?
(If cooks are not mentioned, you can end interview).

2. Like Question

What traits do you want in a cook?

3. Dislike Question

What traits don't you want in a cook?

4. Specific Questions

What topics should be included in a training program for cooks?

5. Sensitive

If we set up a government funded training program with the topics you mentioned, how many new cooks will you hire in the next 12 months from this program? Will you give us a letter of support?

6. Anything else

Is there anything else we can help you with?

Closing - We appreciate your help. When we complete our research, we would like to send you a course outline.

VOC Cards

They must be able to deal with the public. You'd be surprised how many of our

customers want to meet cially for weddings and

Key Words: Good skills
Source: TLC Caterers

We need cooks that know the basics of cooking, all the names of the season-

ings, pots and pans, proced actual recipes I provide. I've special menu that I have bui years.

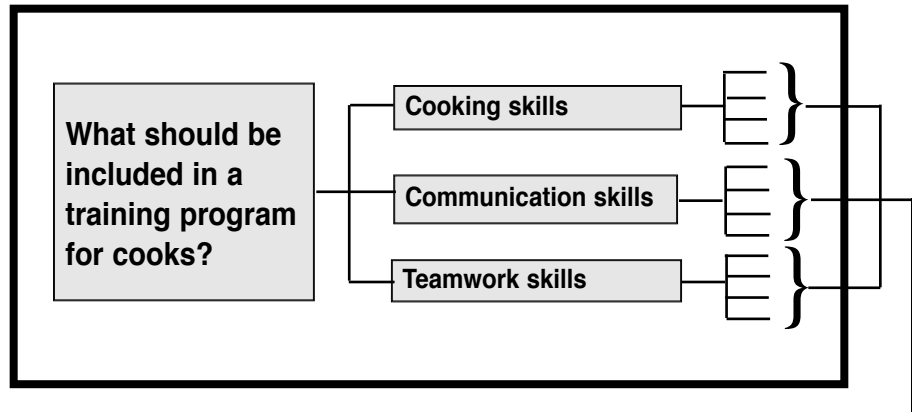
Key Words: Cooking basics

They've got to pass the test on sanitation. That is critical. Without knowing sanitation, forget it. That includes the rules on temperature, surface washing, etc. If I ever had a case of salmonella I would be out of business.

Key Words: Sanitation

Tree Diagram

Using the VOC Cards, the team built a **Tree Diagram**. We used the question to form the first level and the header cards the second level of the branches. We continued to fill in the branches with the key VOC cards from each group.



2.2 Collect Quantitative Data - The Customer WindowSM Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was created from the data gathered in the interviews. We had identified the key attributes/quality characteristics for hiring a cook using the branches of the tree diagram.

These attributes were listed on the questionnaire to be rated as to how **important** each attribute was and how **satisfied** were the organizations with their ability to hire employees with these attributes. The team decided to use a 5 point rating scale.

- A. Can read cookbooks
- B. Comes to work on time
- C. Follows directions
- D. Dresses appropriately
- E. Maintains eye contact
- F. Has sanitation certificate
- G. Knows how to cook specific dishes

How IMPORTANT are the following skills and qualities in your hiring of cooks.

	LOW		HIGH	
A. Can read cookbooks	0	0	0	0
B. Comes to work on time	0	0	0	0
C. Follows directions	0	0	0	0
D. Dresses appropriately	0	0	0	0
E. Maintains eye contact	0	0	0	0
F. Has sanitation certificate	0	0	0	0
G. Knows how to cook specific dishes	0	0	0	0

How SATISFIED are you with your ability to hire cooks who:

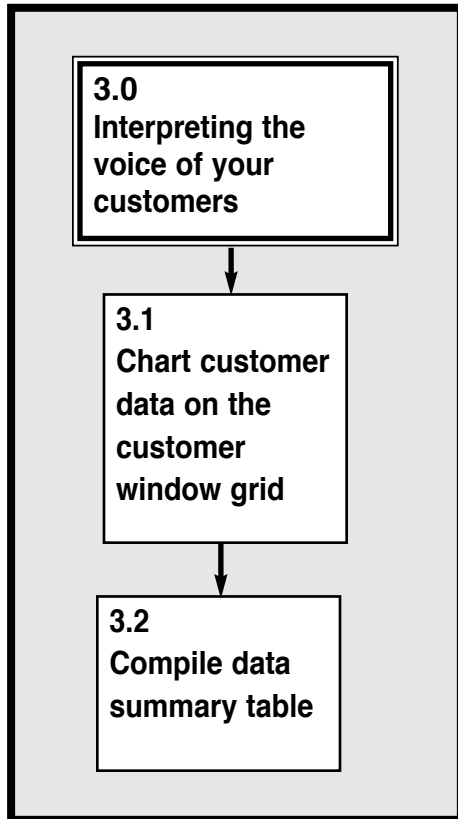
	LOW		HIGH	
A. Can read cookbooks	0	0	0	0
B. Comes to work on time	0	0	0	0
C. Follows directions	0	0	0	0
D. Dresses appropriately	0	0	0	0
E. Maintains eye contact	0	0	0	0
F. Has sanitation certificate	0	0	0	0
G. Knows how to cook specific dishes	0	0	0	0

Tools

- **Interview Guide**
 - Introduction
 - Open-ended questions
 - Closed-ended questions
- **Interview Notes**
- **VOC Cards**
- **Affinity Diagram**
- **Tree Diagram**
- **Attributes**
- **Questionnaire**
 - Importance
 - Satisfaction

Step 3.0 Interpreting the Voice of Your Customers

Step 3.0 is the analysis step to evaluate and summarize the data from interviews, surveys and other sources. See Worksheets W-11 through W-14.



3.1 Chart Customer Data (Quantitative)

As your survey questionnaires are returned, they should be checked for readability and accuracy. Review the scores and enter them on the **Importance Spreadsheet** and the **Satisfaction Spreadsheet**. For each program attribute or feature, calculate the average scores for importance and for satisfaction. Then plot the average scores on the **Customer Window Grid**. The vertical axis of the Customer Window grid measures how *important* your survey respondents view each program feature. The horizontal axis measures how *satisfied* they are with your performance on that attribute.

The resulting chart can be divided into sections. The upper right-hand quadrant (high importance, high satisfaction) shows those things you are doing well. **Bravo!**

The upper left-hand quadrant (high importance, low satisfaction) displays program attributes or features to which you should **pay immediate attention**.

Attributes or features in the lower half of the grid are those which your customers consider less important. You might want to consider shifting resources away from them to more high priority items. If a feature thought to be less important is in fact truly

essential, you may need to educate your customers about its value or necessity. **Cut or communicate!**

3.2 Compile Data Summary Table

Completing a summary table pulls all the data together.

Column #1 - What did the customer say? - Comments from the interviews, plotted points from the Customer Windowsm and data from other sources.

Column #2 - What did the customer mean? - Our translation of what the customer has said in our organization's language.

Column #3 - Discussion - Priorities, barriers, and opportunities connected to the customer's wants and needs.

Column #4 - Action Steps - Opportunities for improvement based on quantitative data and our prior knowledge gained from the qualitative data interviews.

Case Study - Step 3.0 Interpreting the Voice of Your Customers

3.1 Chart Customer Data – Customer Windowsm

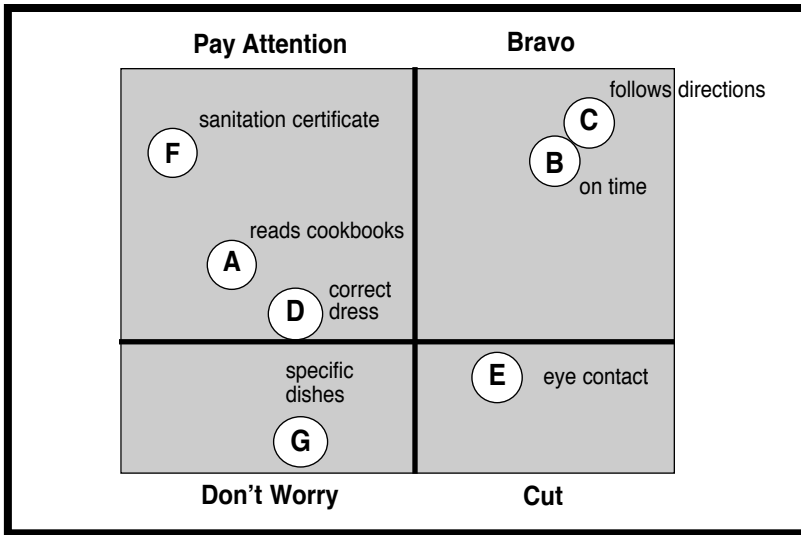
In this case, after reviewing the survey questionnaires, we entered the data on a spreadsheet. We listed each quality attribute on the left column, using both a letter and key word to identify the attribute. We filled in the response for each questionnaire, being careful not to put a zero in for a non-response. We calculated the average for each attribute. Also, we calculated the “grand average” for importance and satisfaction to determine where to place the cross-hairs of the Customer Windowsm.

Plotting the data, we began to analyze the attributes that employers were looking for but not getting in new hires. They wanted and were getting new hires who followed directions (C)

and were on time (B). They wanted and were **not** getting new hires who dressed properly (D), read cookbooks (A) and had a sanitation certificate (F). Making eye contact (E) was something they didn’t really care about, but got anyway. They were not getting cooks who cooked specific dishes (G) but didn’t want this anyway. This made sense as they probably wanted to teach the cooking of specific dishes themselves.

IMPORTANCE		RESPONDENT CONTROL NUMBER																
ATTRIBUTE		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOT	AVG
A read cookbooks		4	3	3	4	5	6	3	5	3	5	3	4	4	3	3	57	3.3

SATISFACTION		RESPONDENT CONTROL NUMBER																
ATTRIBUTE		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOT	AVG
A read cook books		2	3	3	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	32	2.1
B on time		4	5	4	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	62	4.1
C follows directions		5	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	63	4.2
D correct dress		2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	2	3	2	3	2	3	41	2.7
E eye contact		4	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	59	3.8
F sanitation certificate		2	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	23	1.5
G specific dishes		2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	37	2.5
GRAND AVERAGE																	3.0	



The Customer Windowsm

Upper Left Quadrant = Attention needs to be paid (High importance, Low satisfaction).

Upper Right Quadrant = Bravo (High importance, High satisfaction).

Lower Right Quadrant = Cut or communicate (Low importance, High satisfaction).

Lower Left Quadrant D = Don't worry (Low importance, Low satisfaction).

3.2 Data Summary Table

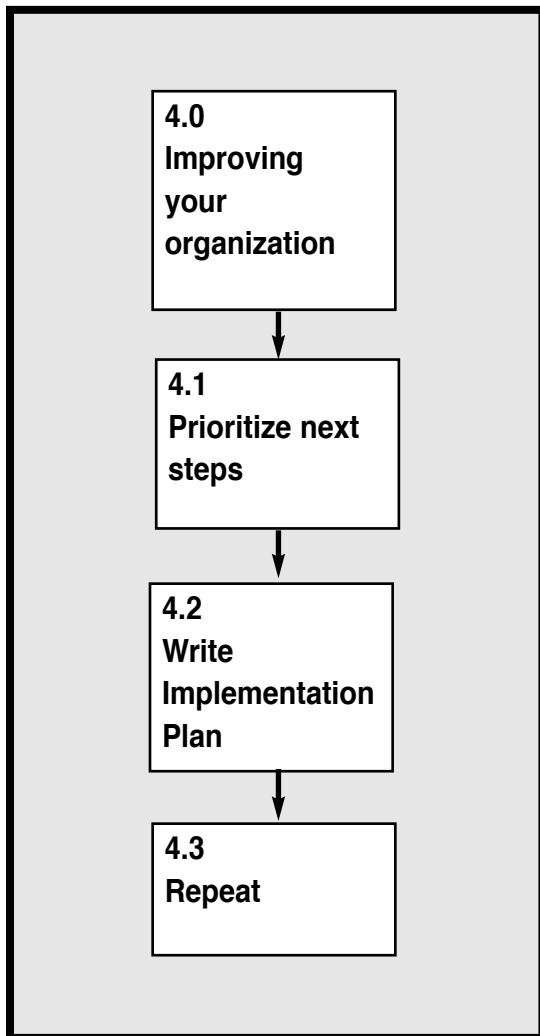
In reviewing the data collected the team prepared a summary table with the following observations.

- Column #1 - What did the customer say?** - Summarized the commitment to hire from the organizations interviewed.
- Column #2 - What did the customer mean?** - Noted the importance of a sanitation certificate.
- Column #3 - Discussion** - Noted the priority of a sanitation certificate in a training curriculum.
- Column #4 - Action Steps** - Described the process to design a cooking curriculum that included a sanitation certificate.

1 <i>Customers say</i>	2 <i>Customers mean</i>	3 <i>Discussion</i>	4 <i>Action Steps</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotels, hospitals, restaurants want cooks with sanitation certificates. • 18 of 23 restaurants will hire. • 15 gave letters of commitment 	<p>Cooks with a sanitation certificate are needed in the labor market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our training should teach what is needed for a sanitation certificate. • We should take students to state health department examine center. • Obtain \$50 per person exam fee from funding source. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter a team to design cooking course, including a sanitation certificate.

Step 4.0 Using VOC to Improve Your Organization

All too often, organizations collect customer information and then do nothing with it. After you have analyzed what your customers are telling you about your program, you are not finished until you have developed a plan to use this knowledge to improve your performance. Other Simply Better! tools can help with this task.



4.1 Prioritize Your Next Steps

Based on the information in your Data Summary Table, there may be many different types of action you can take. Your team should discuss the results of your data-gathering and identify possible responses:

- *Is the feedback highly positive?* Then be sure to make this information known to your staff, customers and agency stakeholders. Perhaps a celebration or a press conference is in order. Communicating effective and successful practices is important for your customers and yourselves.
- *Have you highlighted specific problems?* Often, your customers will identify a particular program or “process” area where you need improvement. **Simply Better!**'s *Service by Design* process is a useful tool to understand and fix service problems.
- *Are you communicating?* Sometimes your customers do not understand the true value of what you do. Customers may have unrealistic expectations and then are disappointed when you can not do the impossible. Again, *Service by Design* will help you find the root causes of your communications problems and develop creative solutions.

• *Customers just don't care?* Sometimes your customers will tell you they just don't care about a product or service, and you can't think of a good reason why they should. Discontinue the service and focus your resources elsewhere.

- *Responses are confused?* Sometimes the VOC process can lead you to a possible problem but you don't really have a good understanding of what your customers are saying. Their voices may be confused or the issues may be very complex. **Simply Better!**'s *Customers in Focus* will help you design focus groups to enable you to understand your customers' needs and wants more clearly.
- *You have multiple problems?* Your organization may face the unenviable dilemma of having so much contradictory or negative customer feedback that you don't really know where to begin. Organizations which don't have a clear understanding of their systems frequently face this kind of problem. **Simply Better!**'s *Self-Assessment System* is a very valuable tool for understanding how well your entire organization functions, for identifying opportunities and priorities for improvement, and for creating or strengthening a culture of open communication and shared responsibility throughout your entire agency.

4.2 Write an Implementation Plan

Once you have come to a consensus about what actions you need to take, then ask yourselves:

- What steps need to be taken to implement this action? How quickly can they be accomplished? In what order should specific tasks be scheduled?
- What approval, buy-in or involvement of other partners is needed? How will we get it?
- Who will be responsible for what, when, where and how?
- How will we surmount major obstacles?
- What staffing, equipment or other resources will we need?
- How will we measure whether or not we have succeeded? How will we follow-up with our customers to verify our improvements?

4.3 Repeat

Then repeat this process with another program, service cycle or set of customer expectations. Continuous improvement never ends. Nor does the need to understand your customers.

Voice of the Customer

W O R K S H E E T S

W O R K S H E E T S

W O R K S H E E T S

W O R K S H E E T S

W O R K S H E E T S

1.0 Defining the Your Customers

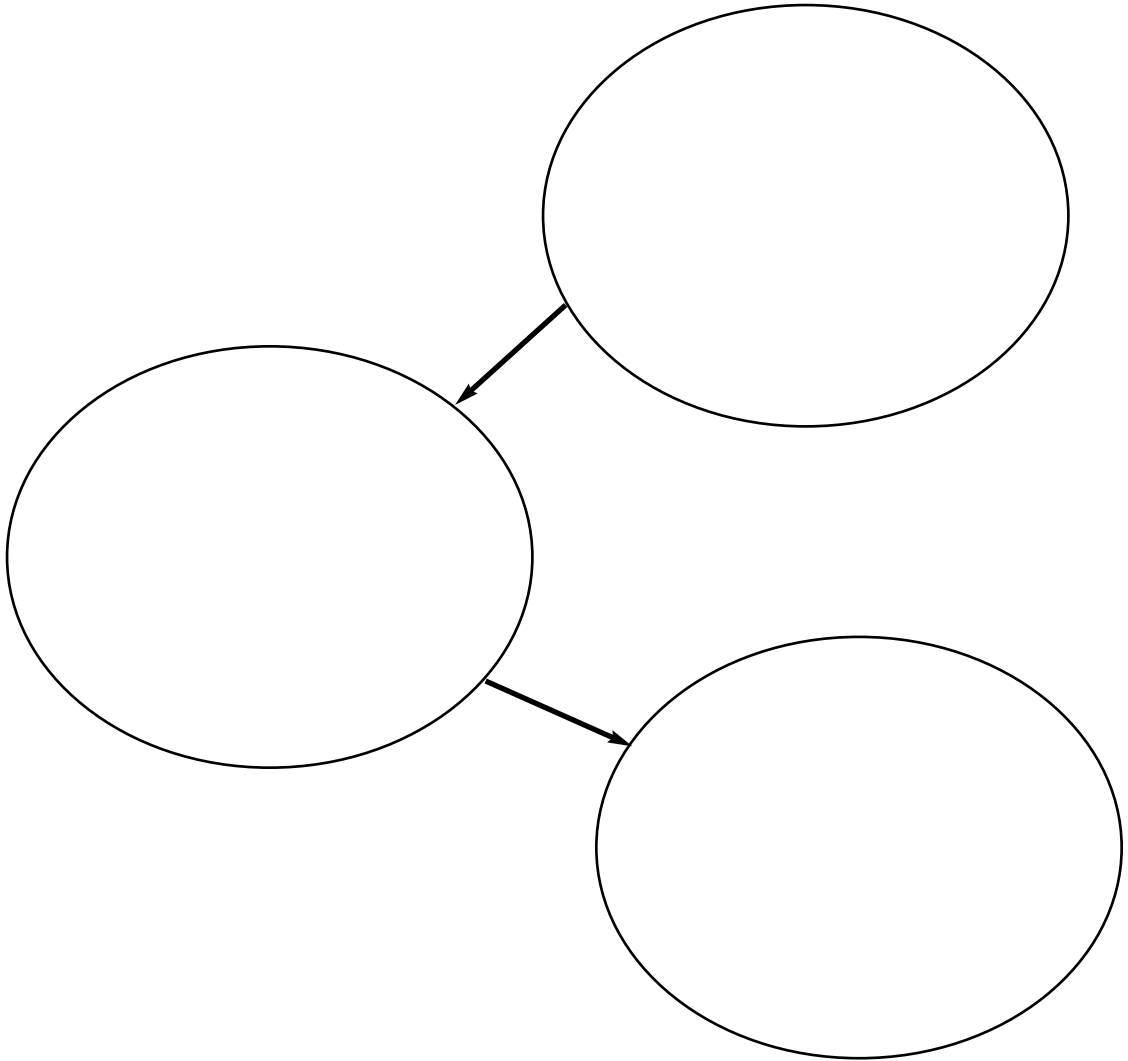
1.1 Purpose Statement - Identify Problems and Opportunities

Whom do we serve?	What problems & opportunities do we face?	What customer information do we need?

Purpose Statement: Why are we conducting a customer study?

1.0 Defining the Your Customers

1.2 Segment Customers – Segmentation Pie Charts



1.0 Defining Your Customers

1.2 Segment Customers – Customer Profile Matrix

Segment Description	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Products & Services Offered to Them Name:			
Segment Size, Demographics			
What they want:			
What they get:			
How the customer uses our products and services:			

1.0 Defining Your Customers

1.3 Research Questions

1.3 Research Questions	
Purpose Statement:	Customer Segment:
Knowledge Gaps & Theories (from current knowledge)	Research Questions (what new knowledge do we need?)

Step 2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

2.1 Qualitative Data - Customer Interview Guide

Opening: Explain the Purpose of the Interview		Date:
		Interviewer:
1. General: In general, please tell me about your experience with the _____ program.		
2. Likes: What, if anything, did you like about the program? (Write responses in this area.)	<i>Probe</i> (Write responses)	
2. Dislikes: What, if anything, did you dislike about the program? (Write responses in this area.)	<i>Probe</i> (Write responses)	
4. Specific: Now, I would like your comments about specific aspects of the program _____ _____	<i>Probe</i>	
5. Sensitive: Please give me your opinion about _____ _____	<i>Probe</i>	
6. Anything else: What questions would you have liked me to ask you that I didn't?		
Summary: Summarize the interview. Include a statement regarding the confidentiality of the interview if appropriate.		

Step 2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

2.1 Qualitative Data - Customer Interview Schedule

#	Customer Segment	Customer Name, Address, Phone No.	Date	Time	Location of Interview	Interviewer(s)

Step 2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

2.2 Quantitative Data - The Customer Windowsm Questionnaire

Date _____ Respondent Number _____ Page 1

We are talking to our customers to learn what we might do to improve our products and services. We began by interviewing our customers to identify their needs and improvements that we would like you to evaluate. Please rate these needs according to their importance to you, and your perception of how well we are performing.

Your evaluation will be kept confidential. The results of the survey will be compiled and we look forward to providing better services.

Importance

Please evaluate these needs according to their importance to you. Please circle your response.

Table with 7 columns: How important is:, Not Important, and Very Important. It contains 10 rows of evaluation items with a 1-5 scale.

Are there additional needs that you would like to add? If yes, please explain each additional need and rate each on importance to you from 1-5 as above _____

Two horizontal lines for providing additional information or answers.

Step 2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

2.2 Quantitative Data - The Customer Windowsm Questionnaire

Date _____ Respondent Number _____ Page 2

Satisfaction

Please evaluate these needs according to your satisfaction with our performance.

Please circle your response.

How satisfied are you with:	Not Satisfied				Very Satisfied
1. _____	1	2	3	4	5
2. _____	1	2	3	4	5
3. _____	1	2	3	4	5
4. _____	1	2	3	4	5
5. _____	1	2	3	4	5
6. _____	1	2	3	4	5
7. _____	1	2	3	4	5
8. _____	1	2	3	4	5
9. _____	1	2	3	4	5
10. _____	1	2	3	4	5

Are there additional needs that you would like to add? If yes, please explain each additional need and rate each on satisfaction from 1-5 as above _____

Overall how satisfied are you with our performance: **Not Satisfied** **Very Satisfied**

1 2 3 4 5

Step 2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

2.2 Quantitative Data - The Customer Windowsm Questionnaire

Date _____ Respondent Number _____ Page 3

Specific Ideas for Improvement

Please rate the following ideas for improvements according to how much they would benefit you and how feasible to implement (if known).

Please circle your response.

Table with 5 rows and 6 columns. Headers: Little Benefit, Great Benefit. Rows 1-5 with blank lines for input.

Table with 5 rows and 6 columns. Headers: Not Feasible, Very Feasible. Rows 1-5 with blank lines for input.

Is there anything else you would like us to do? Yes, No

If yes, please describe _____

Summary

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Step 2.0 Hearing the Voice of Your Customers

2.2 Quantitative Data - Customer Survey Schedule

Type of Survey: <input type="checkbox"/> Person, <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone, <input type="checkbox"/> Mail				Customer Segment:	
#	Date	Name	Address, Phone Number	Interviewer(s)	Notes

Step 3.0 Interpreting the Voice of Your Customers

3.1 Customer Data - Customer Windowsm Importance Spreadsheet

Importance		Respondent Number																										
#	Attribute	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	total	avg
1																												
2																												
3																												
4																												
5																												
6																												
7																												
8																												
9																												
10																												
																									Total			
																									Grand Average for Satisfaction			

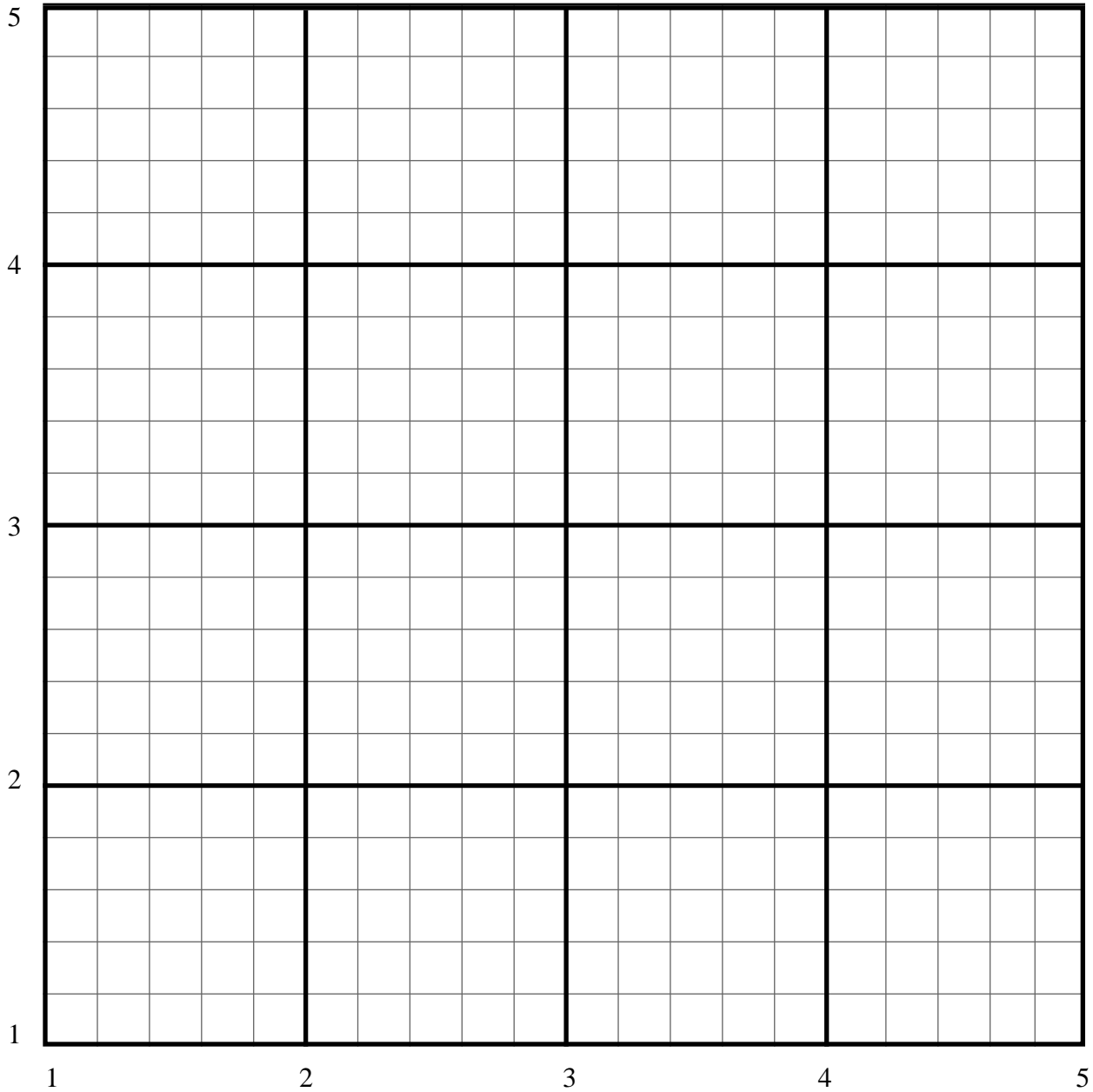
Step 3.0 Interpreting the Voice of Your Customers

3.1 Customer Data - Customer Windowsm Satisfaction Spreadsheet

Importance		Respondent Number																											
#	Attribute	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	total	avg	
1																													
2																													
3																													
4																													
5																													
6																													
7																													
8																													
9																													
10																													
																									Total				
																									Grand Average for Satisfaction				

Step 3.0 Interpreting the Voice of Your Customers

3.1 Chart Customer Data - Customer Windowsm



Step 3.0 Interpreting the Voice of Your Customers

3.2 Data Summary Table

Customers say	Customers mean	Discussion <i>Priority/Measurement</i>	Action Steps

THE VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

For More Information

If you would like additional copies of **The Voice of the Customer** or more information about other **Simply Better!** products, or if you need assistance with your continuous improvement journey, please call or fax the **Simply Better!** representative at the nearest regional office of the Employment and Training Administration or visit our Web site at <http://www.ttrc.doleta.gov/simplyb>

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