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Why Passenger Surveys are a Transport Operators Best Friend

By Martin Day

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Public transport operators who already use passenger surveys may not fully appreciate the multiple benefits that surveys can bring. Not only are surveys an efficient method of market research that will help identify areas of passenger dissatisfaction, they are also perfect for measuring the effects of improvements and can, at the same time, help promote new initiatives to customers using the service.

Establishing a Starting Point

When embarking on any change management programme it is always good practice to establish a base line before any changes are made. This baseline survey can serve four purposes, it will:-

- allow the proper targeting of investment
- allow measurement of the effect of change
- assist in the moral of those implementing change
- ensure that new issues are kept separate from the original plan and budget

Targeting Investment

There are many areas of any public transport system that can cause passenger dissatisfaction all of which need to be monitored to ensure that the service being provided meets, and where possible, exceeds, performance level targets.

Issues that can be of concern to passenger include:-

- safety and security
- punctuality
- fares and ticket types
- capacity and overcrowding
- quality and design of vehicle
- cleanliness

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- facilities at stations and terminals
- facilities for passengers with disabilities

Often limited resources and budgets means that investment needs to be carefully planned and properly targeted.

Passenger surveys allow operators to identify those areas that are of most concern to their customers. Through the analysis of passenger feedback the operator will be able to ensure that their improvement and investment plans are inline with passenger demands and concerns. Issues can be classified into high and low priority, as well as long and short term plans.

Some capital investment such as the building of new terminals, runways, laying new track or upgrading

air traffic control or rail signalling equipment may take years to implement. However, the initial survey is also likely to identify some high profile areas that can be implemented almost immediately at a relative low cost.

Measuring Change

From having established a comprehensive programme from an initial survey the objectives for running periodic surveys are twofold.

One objective will be to ensure that the changes and initiatives that are implemented have been effective in addressing passenger issues. A second objective will be to promote and advertise the initiatives that have been implemented and also inform and educate passengers of ongoing improvements and future plans.

Passengers will always be more positive if they can see that improvements have been made and more accepting of outstanding problems if they know that those problems are being addressed.

Keeping Moral

Those implementing change can often develop a siege mentality. Change can take time to take effect and for the passengers to appreciate any improvement.

By monitoring passenger opinion and measuring the results against earlier surveys a successful change programme should see passenger issues change over time, some issues that were problems will no longer be raised.

Passengers will take time to appreciate progress and often those working on a change project will be demoralised with constant criticism from what is often a negative public. It is important that a team implementing change can see clearly the effects of their efforts.

Identifying New and Old

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In any long term change management programme issues can change over time. Events can happen that make what was important, no longer important and what wasn't an issue, an issue.

The baseline survey will ensure that the passengers concerns are chronologically documented. Passengers are themselves an evolving group, individual travel arrangements change, fashion changes, life styles develop along with technology. Periodic surveys will allow changes in passenger attitudes to be monitored.

Online Surveys Make It Easy

Online surveys can reach a broad cross section of any travelling public. They are quick to design and implement and they provide feedback in a format that is ready for detailed analysis. The low cost and flexibility of online surveys allows passenger concern to be targeted at specific groups and particular concerns.

Online surveys provide operators with important market research data as well as a platform to promote and advertise their commitment to passenger satisfaction.

Passengers benefit by having an effective channel to raise issues and through periodic surveys will begin to appreciate that the operator is continually investing and improving the service. The following are links to samples of Passenger Surveys

Sample Passenger Survey for an Airline Sample

http://www.surveygalaxy.com/surPublishes.asp?survey_id=1166

Passenger Survey for a Train Operator

http://www.surveygalaxy.com/surPublishes.asp?survey_id=1170

Sample Passenger Survey for a Bus Operator

http://www.surveygalaxy.com/surPublishes.asp?survey_id=1167

Martin Day is a director of Survey Galaxy for more information please visit

<http://www.SurveyGalaxy.com>

A Thriving Business – Heavy Transport

By Barney Garcia

Heavy transport refers to moving heavy material from place to another. Material movers are the people who perform such transportation. These heavy transport workers need special training if they are to work with chemicals, toxic material or specialized machinery. Physical training is required where

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extreme physical exertion is required. Heavy transport workers require a good sense of balance. They must possess the ability to read, understand and judge. Possessing basic arithmetic skills is also an integral part of this business. Many employers allow experienced workers to qualify as a trainee or a supervisor.

Category of Heavy Transport Workers Workers in the heavy transport industry may be categorized into two groups: the laborers and the operators. The laborers work manually while the operators handle machinery and other equipments. These are the industrial truck and tractor operators, crane and tower operators; dredge operators, underground mining loading machine operators, pump operators and many others.

According to their designation, these workers perform their duties. Like the truck, tank and ship loaders work for loading and unloading material at the dock. The shuttle car operators are responsible for the running of electric or diesel cars in the underground mines. Machine feeders are responsible for oiling and maintaining machinery. Wellhead pump operators take care of smooth flow of gas or oil from power pumps and auxiliary equipment. Similarly, all types of workers strive to do their particular assigned jobs. They are, thus known according to the work they perform.

Heavy Transport: Nature of Work Heavy transport work is repetitive in nature. It may seem monotonous to workers. Therefore, shifting the duty time seems an appropriate option. Workers generally put in eight hours shifts and some times even longer. Many factories have round-the-clock shifts. Workers are hence required to do night shifts as well. The working conditions of heavy transport workers are at par with any other profession, when it comes to the hours put in.

Heavy transport is a thriving business. It provides employment to large number of people. It is on this business that a large number of big enterprises and factories depend.

Barney Garcia writes about many different transportation topics. For more info visit

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