

Specsavers puts customer care in focus with in-store touch screens from IBM and CRT

Overview

Customer challenge

Specsavers wanted to capture customer feedback at the point of experience in its retail stores. The survey needed to be automatic, engage with a representative sample of both customers and shop browsers, and deliver incisive analyses and rapid reports.

Solution

Specsavers contracted IBM Business Partner, Customer Research Technology (CRT) to provide IBM AnyPlace™ Kiosks equipped with CRT's ViewPoint software. CRT tailored survey screens to capture instant in-store feedback fed over the Internet to CRT headquarters for analysis and reporting.

Customer benefits

- Feedback from the point of experience
- 55000 shoppers surveyed
- Net Promoter yardstick of customer satisfaction
- Fully managed service.



Voted optician of the year for the past eight years in the Reader's Digest Most Trusted Brands, Specsavers is showing no let-up in its dedication to customer care. The market-leading international eye-care specialist has capitalised on innovative developments from IBM and IBM Premier Partner, Customer Research Technology Ltd (CRT), to obtain a powerful insight into the thoughts and feelings of customers and those simply browsing through its stores. The combined solution from the two companies has enabled Specsavers to install self-service touch screen systems to capture immediate and incisive feedback from within its 620 stores across the UK, ROI and the Channel Islands.

In just six months, the new in-store kiosks have given Specsavers direct feedback from over 55000 customers and browsers. "The customer survey information is captured through the IBM screens and analysed via CRT software. It tells us accurately what our customers and shoppers are thinking," Susannah Hart, Communications Manager at Specsavers, explains. "The combined solution from these two companies lets us deliver real value to our store owners, giving them instant feedback to help sustain the highest standards of customer service."



The touch screen survey includes Net Promoter, a research industry standard for rating customer satisfaction levels. “Net Promoter gives us a valuable yardstick to contrast our internal performance between stores and to compare Specsavers’ service levels against others in the retail industry,” says Susannah Hart.

Explosive impact

Specsavers’ business model is based on setting up joint venture partnerships with local opticians who are responsible for the day-to-day running of individual stores.

For several years, the company used an external market research company to conduct telephone interviews with a selection of customers from each store. The two biggest drawbacks of this survey method were the time delays and the inability to gain feedback from ‘lost’ customers.

The process of collating customer details from the tills and scheduling calls through an external agency meant that several weeks transpired before the customer could be contacted. Feedback relied on memory and did not reflect the actual retail experience at the time of the customer’s store visit. There was no opportunity to capture feedback from browsing shoppers who did not purchase any product or service.

Revitalising customer feedback

Specsavers recognised that the telephone surveys were delivering limited value to the business. It decided to review its survey processes.

Coincidentally at this time, IBM was reinforcing communications for the powerful solutions it offers to midsize companies through a series of marketing campaigns with Business Partners. Demonstrating that IBM Retail Stores Systems stretch far beyond till systems, one such campaign was conducted with Customer Research Technology Ltd. The campaign aimed to increase awareness of CRT ViewPoint – a powerful solution for the capture of customer satisfaction survey results, patient experience tracking and public consultation feedback.

CRT has incorporated a touch screen, IBM AnyPlace Kiosk, within an ergonomically designed and portable stand. It is ideally suited for the retail environment of Specsavers stores, and fully compatible with CRT ViewPoint software. The software collects data at the point of customer experience and transmits it over the Internet to a central point for analysis and the production of rapid reports.

“We were impressed with the speed and automation in this method of capturing customer feedback,” Susannah Hart explained. “After a short pilot, we contracted CRT to provide 100 IBM AnyPlace Kiosks equipped with CRT’s ViewPoint software tailored to our needs. CRT has managed the migration of these self-service devices around our regional stores on a monthly cycle.”

“The teaming of IBM AnyPlace Kiosks with CRT ViewPoint software and services has given us an efficient and accurate means of capturing customer feedback at the point of experience.”

– Susannah Hart, Communications Manager at Specsavers

Fully managed service

CRT created survey screens that cover all aspects of Specsavers products and services: frames, contact lenses, eye tests and the newer hearing services. CRT's ViewPoint technology also enables Specsavers to change surveys easily as requirements develop over time.

Survey data collected in the stores is fed over the Internet to CRT headquarters where it is analysed. Weekly reports are sent back to the individual stores, where store owners are able to monitor how customers perceive their in-store experiences. Individual responses are time stamped, making it easy for store managers to praise good performance and take corrective action should customers report service falling below the highest standards at certain times of the day.

Recent value-added feedback from CRT's analysis includes practical store-level information such as:

- What is most important to customers, in a prioritised action list
- Patterns in customer service fluctuations throughout the day for action
- Identified Customer Service 'Hotspots' for action
- Analysis of waiting times and the effect on Customer Service
- Analysis of powerful open-ended 'voice of the customer and browser comments'

"CRT provides us with an efficient fully managed service for the touch screens, covering installation, software, support, central Internet data collation, rapid analysis and report generation," Susannah Hart continues. "We have been very impressed with all aspects of the products and combined services of IBM and CRT at both central and store levels."

For Specsavers, an important additional value of the in-store devices is that they enable point of experience feedback to be captured from the over 60's, an important category of spectacle wearers. The older generation is less likely to have access to the Internet at home and would be excluded from providing feedback through online surveys used by some retailers.

High value results

Specsavers' store owners run their outlets as individual profitable businesses and are extremely aware of costs. Feedback from the vast majority of stores indicates that they find the survey analyses and reports very valuable, with more than two-thirds suggesting that the touch screens should be used more frequently or become a permanent feature in their stores.

According to one store owner: "The combination of IBM touch screens and CRT's survey solutions is like having a dozen mystery shoppers reporting their in-store experiences every day."

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One unique and clever feature of the CRT ViewPoint software is designed to maximise the quality of the data collected. CRT has analysed how people normally interact with its survey screens and incorporated within its ViewPoint software algorithms that identify misuse. Such misinformation is filtered and quarantined by the software before the data is analysed and reported to Specsavers.

CRT has provided Specsavers with optional language versions of the touch screen surveys, including popular Asian languages and Welsh. This enables local stores with a high population of non-English speaking customers to capture survey responses in the customers' preferred languages.

"The teaming of IBM AnyPlace Kiosks with CRT ViewPoint software and services has given us an efficient and accurate means of capturing customer feedback at the point of experience," Susannah Hart concludes. "We are encouraged to know that we are achieving a performance level well above the industry norm. The excellent reports provided by CRT are enabling us to highlight areas for continued improvement, and cascade the practices of our best performing stores across the entire Specsavers' network."

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