



Spokane

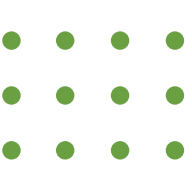


Tools, Tips & Best Practices



Collecting Customer Feedback

Delivered in partnership with the
Spokane County Library District





SCORE | Spokane

Starting a business is exciting but can also be overwhelming. And staying in business means you're faced with many new challenges, growing pains and sometimes threats. As a SCORE client, your business success is our focus and you are not alone on your journey.



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The Agenda

Customer feedback is one of the most valuable yet underused resources in small business decision-making. Many entrepreneurs rely on instinct or anecdotal comments, but systematic feedback helps reduce uncertainty and guide business improvements.

1 Why customer feedback matters

2 Different ways to collect feedback

3 Tools that small businesses can use today

4 Best practices for turning feedback into action



Why Customer Feedback Matters

Customer feedback helps businesses:

- Understand customer needs and expectations
- Improve products and services
- Identify problems in the customer experience
- Build stronger customer loyalty
- Make better business decisions



Businesses that listen to their customers are better positioned to adapt and grow.

Customer Feedback



Customer Feedback





The Risk of Not Collecting Feedback



Without customer feedback, businesses often rely on:

- Assumptions
- Personal opinions
- Limited conversations with a few customers
- Internal perspectives rather than customer perspectives

This can lead to:

- Missed opportunities
- Declining customer satisfaction
- Products or services that don't meet customer needs

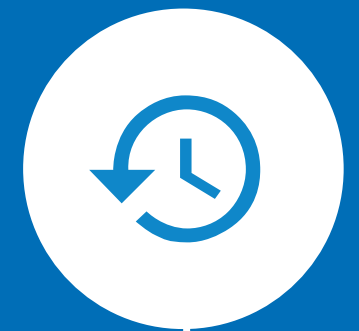
Customer feedback reduces guesswork.



Customer Satisfaction?



Customer Complaints?



Employee Effectivity?

Are You Customer Centric?

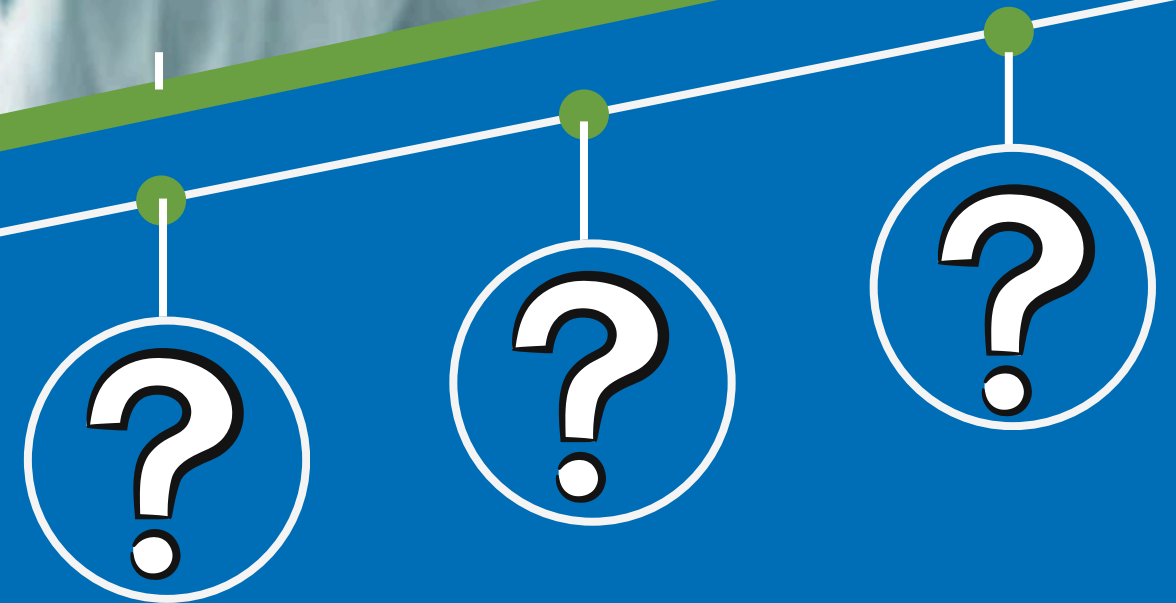


What Customer Feedback Can Reveal

Customer feedback helps answer critical questions such as:

- Why customers choose your business
- What nearly stopped them from buying
- What frustrates them about the experience
- What improvements they would value most
- How your business compares to competitors

These insights help businesses prioritize improvements that matter most to customers.



Case Example

Restaurant Menu Changes

A neighborhood restaurant noticed declining lunch traffic but did not know why. The owner began asking customers a simple question: **“What would make lunch better here?”**

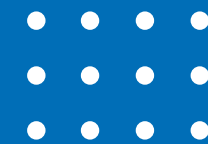
Customers consistently mentioned:

- Wanting lighter lunch options
- Needing faster service during work breaks

The restaurant introduced a smaller lunch portion option and a “15-minute lunch menu”

Lunch sales increased within two months.

Lesson: Small feedback insights can lead to meaningful improvements.



Key Insights

Customer feedback allows businesses to move from guessing to learning. Instead of asking: “Why aren’t customers buying?”

Feedback helps businesses understand:

- What customers want
- What needs improvement
- Where opportunities exist



Organizations like SCORE emphasize that understanding the customer experience is a key driver of long-term business growth.



Common Sources of Customer Feedback



Customer feedback can come from many different places.

The most common sources include:

- Customer surveys
- Direct conversations with customers
- Online reviews
- Social media interactions
- Customer behavior and purchasing patterns



Using multiple sources provides a more complete understanding of the customer experience.



Surveys

Surveys are one of the most structured ways to collect feedback. They allow businesses to gather feedback from many customers at once. Common survey uses:

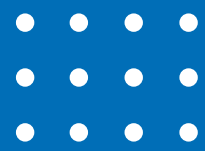
- Post-purchase feedback
- Event or service evaluations
- Product feedback
- Customer satisfaction measurement

Common tools include:

- Google Forms
- SurveyMonkey
- Typeform

Short surveys often produce the highest response rates.





Direct Customer Conversations



Some of the most valuable insights come from simply talking with customers. Conversations allow businesses to explore:

- Customer motivations
- Expectations and needs
- Frustrations with products or services
- Ideas for improvement

These discussions are sometimes called “voice of the customer” interviews.

Organizations like SCORE often recommend direct customer conversations as one of the most insightful feedback methods.

Online Reviews

Online reviews are a major source of customer feedback. Customers frequently share experiences on platforms such as:

- Google Reviews
- Yelp
- Facebook
- Amazon

Online reviews often highlight patterns in:

- Customer service quality
- Product satisfaction
- Common complaints or frustrations

Monitoring reviews regularly helps businesses identify issues early.



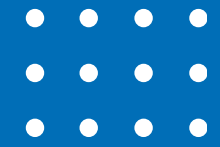
Social Media Feedback

Customers often share opinions through social media. Examples include:

- Comments on posts
- Direct messages
- Tagged posts about the business
- Community discussions

Social media feedback can provide real-time insight into customer experiences. It can also help businesses respond quickly to concerns.





Behavioral Feedback



Customer behavior can provide valuable indirect feedback. These signals can reveal obstacles in the customer journey or opportunities for improvement. Behavioral feedback is especially valuable for online businesses.



Abandoned online shopping carts



Repeat purchases



Website navigation patterns



Frequently asked questions



Case Example

E-Commerce Store

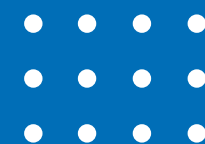
An online clothing retailer noticed a high number of abandoned shopping carts. The owner implemented a short exit survey asking: “What prevented you from completing your purchase today?”

Customer responses revealed:

- Shipping costs were unclear
- Delivery times were uncertain

The company clarified shipping policies and introduced flat-rate shipping. Cart completion rates increased.

Lesson: Customer feedback often reveals barriers that businesses may not recognize.

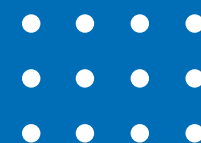


Designing Effective Feedback Questions

The quality of customer feedback depends heavily on the questions you ask. Well-designed questions help businesses:

- Uncover customer frustrations
- Identify improvement opportunities
- Understand purchasing decisions
- Measure customer satisfaction

Poor questions often produce vague or unusable feedback.

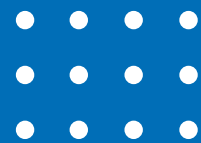


The Goal of Good Feedback Questions

Effective feedback questions should help you learn:

- Why customers chose your business
- What nearly stopped them from purchasing
- What problems they experienced
- What improvements customers would value most

The goal is to gather actionable insights, not just opinions. Organizations like SCORE emphasize that surveys should focus on questions that produce useful, decision-making information.



Weak Feedback Questions

Some questions produce feedback that is difficult to use. Examples:

- “Did you like our service?”
- “Was everything okay today?”
- “How did we do?”

Problems with these questions:

- Answers are often too general
- Customers may simply say “yes”
- They provide little insight into what should change



Stronger Feedback Questions

Better questions encourage more detailed feedback.
Examples:

- “What nearly stopped you from purchasing today?”
- “What could we improve about your experience?”
- “How easy was it to do business with us?”
- “What is one thing we could do better next time?”

These questions reveal specific opportunities for improvement.



Types of Feedback Questions



Most surveys include a mix of three types of questions.



Rating Scale

Examples:

- Rate your experience from 1–10
- How satisfied were you with your purchase?

Purpose: Measures customer satisfaction levels.

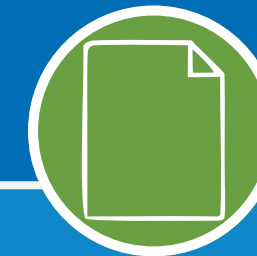


Multiple Choice

Multiple choice questions help identify patterns. Examples:

- How did you hear about our business?
- What was the main reason for your purchase?

Which feature was most valuable to you?



Open-Ended

Open-ended questions allow customers to explain their experience in their own words. Examples:

- What could we improve?
- What did you like most about your experience?
- What nearly stopped you from purchasing?

Case Example

Fitness Studio

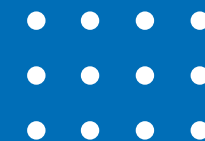
A fitness studio asked members to rate their experience from 1–10. The owner noticed some low scores but did not know why. The survey was updated to include an open-ended question: “What would improve your experience?”

Customer responses revealed:

- Music was too loud during certain classes
- Parking signage was confusing

After addressing these issues, customer satisfaction improved.

Lesson: Open-ended questions often reveal the most actionable feedback.



Tools for Collecting Customer Feedback

Many small businesses believe customer feedback systems require complex technology. In reality, there are many simple and affordable tools available. These tools help businesses:

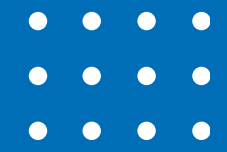
Gather feedback consistently

Reach more customers

Track feedback over time

Identify patterns and trends





Simple Tools Anyone Can Use



These methods are inexpensive and easy to implement. They work particularly well for: retail stores, restaurants, service providers, and event-based businesses.



Comment cards at checkout



Email feedback requests



QR codes linking to surveys



Short online forms



Online Survey Tools



Online surveys are one of the most common feedback tools. They allow businesses to collect feedback from many customers quickly. Popular survey tools include:

- Google Forms
- SurveyMonkey
- Typeform

Benefits of survey tools:

- Easy to create
- Automatic data collection
- Built-in charts and reports

Short surveys typically receive the highest response rates.



Reviews Platforms

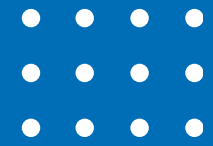
Online review platforms are a powerful source of customer feedback. Customers frequently share their experiences publicly. Common platforms include:

- Google Reviews
- Yelp
- Facebook
- Amazon (for product businesses)

Monitoring reviews regularly helps businesses:

- Identify recurring issues
- Recognize strong performance areas
- Respond to customer concerns





NPS & Customer Experience Tools



Net Promoter Score

Businesses measure loyalty using NPS. The core question is: “How likely are you to recommend our business to a friend or colleague?” Customers respond on a 0-10 scale.

Customer Experience Tools

- CRM-based surveys
- Website feedback widgets
- Customer experience platforms

NPS = Customer Loyalty

Promoters (9-10)
Passives (7-8)
Detractors (0-6).

Simple Feedback Systems

- Track feedback over time
- Integrate customer data
- Identify long-term trends



Case Example

Retail Store QR Code

A small retail store wanted more feedback but found customers rarely completed email surveys. The owner placed a QR code on receipts linking to a two-question survey. Customers could respond in less than 30 seconds.

The survey asked:

- “What did you enjoy most about your visit?”
- “What could we improve?”

Within weeks, the store collected dozens of responses and identified several improvements for the store layout.

Lesson: Making feedback easy increases participation.





Customer Centric Culture

Turning Feedback Into Action

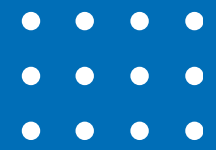
Collecting feedback is only valuable if businesses use it to improve. Many organizations collect surveys or reviews but never analyze the results or make changes. Customer feedback should be treated as a tool for continuous improvement. The goal is to turn customer insights into better products, better services, and better experiences.

Data Exploration



Decision Making





Feedback Action Cycle



Gather feedback through surveys, reviews, or conversations.



Look for recurring comments or common themes.



Focus on improvements that will have the greatest impact.



Make practical adjustments to processes or offerings.



Let customers know their feedback made a difference.



Individual comments may vary, but patterns often reveal the most important insights. Patterns help businesses focus on the most meaningful improvements. Not all feedback requires immediate action. Small improvements in high-impact areas can significantly improve customer experience. Customers Appreciate knowing their feedback made a difference. Acknowledging customer feedback builds trust and strengthens customer relationships.



Patterns

- Customers repeatedly mention slower service
- Confusion about pricing or policies.
- Requests for additional products or services
- Recurring compliments about a specific feature.



Prioritize

- Effect many customers.
- Create barriers to purchasing.
- Impact customer satisfaction.
- Improve efficiency or service quality.



Communicate

- Respond to online reviews.
- Share updates on improvements.
- Thank customers for their suggestions.

Case Example

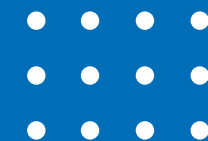
Landscaping Business

A landscaping company received frequent complaints about scheduling delays. Customers said it was difficult to reach the office during business hours. After reviewing feedback, the owner introduced:

1. Online Appointment Scheduling
2. Automated Appointment Reminders

These changes reduced missed appointments and improved customer satisfaction.

Lesson: Feedback often highlights operational improvements.



Customer Feedback

Common Mistakes

Collecting customer feedback can be extremely valuable. However, many businesses unintentionally make mistakes that reduce the effectiveness of their feedback efforts.

Understanding these common pitfalls can help businesses gather more useful and actionable insights.



Mistakes



Only listening to positive feedback

Negative feedback often provides the most valuable learning opportunities. Businesses that view criticism as a useful insight often improve faster.

Asking too many questions

Long surveys discourage customers from responding. Shorter surveys often generate higher response rates and better-quality feedback.



Mistakes



Collecting feedback too frequently

Businesses sometimes overwhelm customers with frequent survey requests. Feedback should be requested strategically: after purchases, service experiences, or major interactions.

Ignoring the feedback

Customers quickly notice this. Ignoring feedback can lead to: declining trust, frustrated customers, and missed opportunities to improve.





Creating a Simple Customer Feedback Plan

Customer feedback programs don't need to be complex. Many successful small businesses start with simple, consistent feedback practices. A basic feedback plan helps businesses:

- Gather insights regularly
- Identify trends over time
- Improve the customer experience
- Make better decisions



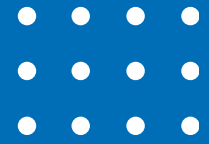
The key is to start small and stay consistent.

Methods

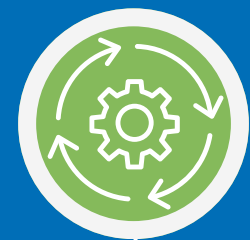
Questions

Review





A Simple Plan



Choose your feedback methods

Select 1-2 feedback channels:

- Short post-purchase survey
- Online review requests
- Customer Conversations
- QR code surveys of receipts or packaging



Review and use the feedback

- Review feedback monthly or quarterly
- Identify common themes or patterns
- Prioritize improvements that effect many customers
- Implement changes where possible



Ask a few key questions

- “How satisfied were you with your experience?”
- “What did you like most about your visit?”
- “What is one thing we could improve?”
- “How likely are you to recommend our business?”





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Key Takeaways & Closing

Customer feedback helps businesses:

- Understand customer needs
- Improve products and services
- Strengthen relationships with customers

Effective feedback systems share several characteristics:

- Simple methods
- Clear questions
- Consistent use
- Action based on insights



Thank You!

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Thank you for being a part of today's workshop. We look forward to seeing your business thrive, and remember, SCORE is here to support you every step of the way. Stay connected, stay inspired, and keep reaching for your business goals.



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