

A Culture of Customer Satisfaction

CustomerSat™ is a Catalyst for Business Growth at SimplexGrinnell

SimplexGrinnell



Customer	SimplexGrinnell, a Tyco International Company, is a leader in fire and life-safety systems and services, with one million customers, 150 local offices, and over 200 years of history in the fire business.
Challenge	Capture, share, and act upon customer feedback in a systematic way to improve customer relationships and expand business opportunities.
Solution	MarketTools® CustomerSat™, a comprehensive Enterprise Feedback Management (EFM) platform to measure and improve customer experiences across the company.
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ability to monitor 10,000 customer satisfaction ratings and share intelligence among 150 local offices > Quick identification of customer issues; ability to respond immediately > Increased ability to anticipate and meet customer needs > Additional business opportunities through service development, recovery, and follow-up processes > Customer feedback plays a direct role in product development > Primary satisfaction indicator up 210% since program's inception

Quick response to customer issues raises primary satisfaction indicator by 210% since program's inception.

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— Jim Spicer, President, SimplexGrinnell



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It’s All About Service

Almost every company gathers customer feedback and measures customer satisfaction (CSAT) in some way. SimplexGrinnell, a leader in the fire and life-safety industry, is one company that works exceptionally hard to drive the importance of customer satisfaction into every facet of its business.

“Customer satisfaction is not simply a program here; it’s part of our DNA. We’ve always been all about service, and commitment to customers is even more important in these difficult economic times,” said Jim Spicer, president of SimplexGrinnell.

The example set by SimplexGrinnell is relevant to businesses of all types and sizes for one simple reason: SimplexGrinnell has shown that an executive focus on building exceptional customer relationships can translate directly to solid business results and new business opportunities.

Evolution of an Effective CSAT Program

The collection of customer feedback at SimplexGrinnell has come a long way in the past few years.

A few years ago, customer feedback was gathered informally via a business reply card (BRC) survey. Each district developed its own distribution process, and some districts did not distribute surveys at all. To bolster participation, the company created contests and rewarded the district that generated the most completed surveys per month. This process, however, did not provide the level of objectivity and the integrity of results that SimplexGrinnell was seeking.

In 2004 the company began an overhaul of its customer satisfaction program, led by Karl Sharicz, manager of customer intelligence. “Our goal was to get closer to the truth about our customers’ opinions, perceptions, and experiences,” said Mr. Sharicz. “We wanted to obtain, measure, and report on customer feedback in an open and honest way and establish consistent metrics so that we could monitor our progress over time. We wanted these processes to be an integral part of the way we do business so that great customer relationships are always at the heart of everything we do.”

The BRC program was replaced with an independently audited, corporate-led survey system, so customers could more openly express their views and service experiences. The survey itself was refined; questions were reduced to a total of 10 and confined to transactional service elements.

The survey platform now provides more than 10,000 individual customer satisfaction ratings and more than 35,000 verbatim customer commentaries per year.

The next phase involved developing the primary customer metrics, each derived from survey questions, that would “paint the picture” of customer satisfaction. Mr. Sharicz’s team focused on five key measurements, including overall satisfaction and net customer advocacy (NCA), which subtracts detractors from advocates using SimplexGrinnell’s scale.

“Using net customer advocacy, we have established a rallying metric that we can use to assess company performance, regional performance, and local-office performance,” said Mr. Sharicz. “NCA also allows us to assess performance based on vertical market, product line, service type, customer tenure, and a host of other variables.”

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— Karl Sharicz
Manager of Customer Intelligence, SimplexGrinnell

CustomerSat: Ensuring Value to Customers

With better survey practices and objective metrics in place, SimplexGrinnell decided to take customer insight management to a whole new level.

“We know that service is a true differentiator for us and drives value to our customers,” said Mr. Spicer. “CustomerSat is a platform that allows us to be much more proactive in anticipating customer needs—so we can consistently deliver offerings that exceed customer expectations.”

SimplexGrinnell is now more agile in addressing customer requirements on a real-time basis.

“CustomerSat gives us data about customer preferences and opinions in real time, and in some cases that translates to an ability to provide a service before the customer even makes a request,” said Mr. Sharicz. “We can have the right people armed with the right equipment—ready to deliver the right level of service, whenever and wherever it’s needed.”

In addition to proactive service delivery, SimplexGrinnell has been able to quickly adapt its offerings to changing needs. “In a compressed economy, some customers want to do more on their own,” said Mr. Spicer. “On the other hand, some customers have reduced staff and need more assistance than before. Thanks to CustomerSat, we know how to change our relationship with the customer without reducing the value they receive.”

Better, Faster Information Sharing

In addition to making the company more agile in improving the customer experience, CustomerSat makes it easier to manage and report customer insights across the company.

“The results of our daily surveys are accessible by every one of our 150 local offices for follow-up and service recovery,” said Mr. Sharicz. “That means we get a quick temperature gauge and vital signs that we can effectively monitor. If a customer needs immediate care, we can respond right away with the right remedial action. We are very serious about responding to customers—even our company’s president is part of the escalation path. If a local office hasn’t followed up promptly, it’s not unusual to get an e-mail from Mr. Spicer, asking when the customer can expect resolution.”

“From a short-term perspective, we can return customers to a satisfied state more quickly,” Mr. Sharicz continued. “And from a long-term perspective, we generate a sufficient volume of customer information to drive product and service development efforts.”

Honest Feedback, No “Black Holes”

Strong backing from senior management has raised the visibility and the effectiveness of the CSAT program at SimplexGrinnell. According to Mr. Spicer, “Unlike other companies, feedback doesn’t disappear into a black hole here. It’s shared at the Tyco board level and has become a catalyst for change across the company.”

SimplexGrinnell has also made a conscious decision to embrace constructive feedback and set high targets. “We want to focus our activities on our shortfalls,” said Mr. Spicer. “Sometimes that means we make ourselves uncomfortable. But now we objectively measure how effective our responses are, and we track our results over time. The net result is a better customer experience.”

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— Karl Sharicz
Manager of Customer
Intelligence, SimplexGrinnell

For the past three years, SimplexGrinnell has published a Customer Satisfaction Annual Report. This impressive document summarizes the results of its CSAT program, recapping what the company learned from customers over the year and how the company plans to serve them even better in the future.

“We’ve always believed that simply measuring customer feedback—without communicating and applying the results—is a program destined for a short life,” said Mr. Sharicz. “And it’s vitally important to continue measuring, communicating, and improving over a long period of time. Continuous measurement is the only way to know how you’re doing and to learn what you can and should do about it.”

The latest Customer Satisfaction Annual Report shows that SimplexGrinnell’s NCA score has risen 210% since inception. But it’s not just about the numbers, said Mr. Spicer.

“It’s all about building customer relationships—that’s what builds business,” he said. “We’ve learned that increasing customer satisfaction generates new business in ways you wouldn’t predict. When we identify and solve a customer’s problem quickly, that customer becomes an advocate for us.”

Corporate Headquarters

MarketTools, Inc.
150 Spear Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
Toll free: +1.888.396.6014
Phone: +1.415.957.2200
Fax: +1.415.957.2180
e-mail: info@markettools.com

European Headquarters

MarketTools, Ltd.
4th Floor
Crystal Gate
28–30 Worship St.
London, EC2A 2AH
United Kingdom
Phone: +44 (0) 20.7440.8500
Fax: +44 (0) 20.7638.6863

About SimplexGrinnell

SimplexGrinnell, a Tyco International Company, is a leader in fire and life-safety systems and services. The company headquarters is in Boca Raton, Florida. Corporate sales and marketing offices are located in Westminister, Massachusetts, and the company has 150 local sales and service offices throughout North America. SimplexGrinnell was formed when Simplex, a longtime leader in electronic fire alarm systems, and Grinnell Fire Protection, the premier North American fire sprinkler and suppression provider, joined forces in 2001. Tyco, SimplexGrinnell, Simplex, and Be Safe are trademarks of Tyco International Services AG or its affiliates.

About MarketTools CustomerSat

MarketTools CustomerSat is a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) Enterprise Feedback Management (EFM) solution used by the world’s leading businesses to capture, analyze, and act on feedback from customers, employees, and partners. Through the use of comprehensive analytics, action management technology, and the expert knowledge of EFM consultants, MarketTools helps clients optimize satisfaction and loyalty programs that deliver high-value business impact. For more information, please visit www.markettools.com/customersat.

About MarketTools, Inc.

MarketTools is the leading provider of software and services for Enterprise Feedback Management (EFM) and Market Research. The company is focused on providing leading organizations the actionable customer insights they need to make better business decisions that lead to high-value business impact. As the first company to make online surveys widely available on the Web, MarketTools continues its market-leading position by providing the broadest range of powerful, accurate and integrated customer insight technologies that empower companies to become the most customer-centric organizations in their industries. MarketTools’ premier portfolio of technology-based insight brands includes CustomerSat™, MarketTools.com™, TrueSample®, Zoomerang®, ZoomPanel® and ZoomPanel Tech™. MarketTools is a privately held company with corporate headquarters in San Francisco and European headquarters in London. For more information, please visit www.markettools.com.