

South Staffordshire Water
Customer Challenge Group (CCG) Customer Research Task Group
Minutes
Wednesday, 27th June 2012

Attendees:

Colin Greatorex	CCG Deputy Chair and Lichfield Councillor
Matthew Lewis	Finance and Regulation Director South Staffs Water
Rachel Barber	Customer Operations Director, South Staffs Water
Barbara Julye	Head of Customer Engagement, South Staffs Water
David Wurr	Consumer Council for Water
Philip Hulme	Environment Agency
Paul Le Masurier	MVA Consultancy

Apologies:

Jacky Atkinson	Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)
Ray White	Walsall CAB
Alison Cotton	Beechdale Community Housing Association

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair (Barbara Julye) outlined the purpose of the meeting to discuss and agree the survey methodology and questions of the tracking survey with MVA.

Each member of the CCG Customer Research Task Group introduced themselves.

South Staffs Water's Customer Operations Director (Rachel Barber) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposed PR14 customer engagement process and confirmed South Staffs Water's intention to conduct further customer research early in 2013 which would include customers' Willingness to Pay (WtP) research.

2. Survey Objectives

The Chair reminded attendees that the objectives of the tracking survey are to:

- determine current levels of satisfaction among customers
- identify the areas of the company's operations that are important to customers
- understand the propensity of commercial customers to switch water supplier; and
- understand the needs of commercial customers from their water supplier

3. Survey Methodology

Paul Le Masurier from MVA explained the process for collecting data for this research which would include online and face to face interviews.

The group sought reassurance that an online survey methodology would not produce a biased survey result due to the exclusion of non-internet users/'hard to reach' customers from this survey.

Paul Le Masurier clarified that the inclusion of face to face interviews would ensure this research was statistically robust.

Barbara Julye explained that SSW had circa 70,000 customer email addresses and this should be sufficient to obtain the agreed sample size.

4. Sample Size

The quantitative sample size of 400 domestic customers (300 online and 100 face to face) and 200 business customers was amended to 600 domestic customers (450 online and 150 face to face) and 100 business customers.

It was also agreed to include 15 qualitative business customer in-depth interviews.

5. Survey Design

Paul LeMasurier explained that the quantitative survey design would, firstly, find out customers' uninformed and, secondly, determine customers' informed (using show cards explaining existing service levels and average water only bill) level of satisfaction with the existing service; overall value for money and customers' priority ranking of different service aspects.

Phil Hulme said the show cards failed to reflect comments made by the EA. Barbara Julye confirmed that, although all comments were appreciated and taken into consideration, SSW was unable to accommodate all feedback when developing the show cards.

David Wurr suggested that SSW considers a joint approach or discussion with Severn Trent, since potentially SSW customers are unlikely to be represented in their research.

6. Survey Pilot

Paul Le Masurier gave details of the proposed pilot which would test the design and logistics including customers' responsiveness to different incentives and introductory emails.

7. Survey Timeline

The timeline was reviewed with attention to when the pilot would be available for a task group review and agreement on the progression of the research. The projection put the timeline out by two months.

8. AOB

Colin Greatorex suggested that the survey be called Customers' Service Priorities. This was agreed by all attendees.

9. Date and time of next meeting

To be advised.