

## The *Ultimate Question* to ask...when doing Service Research.

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**“At best, research is dangerous, especially when you are playing with your Account Manager’s performance bonus.”**

Lets also not forget the reason we do research – which is to make informed decisions to answer Management dilemmas, problems and hypotheses.

Probably the most brilliant recent marketing/sales study was the USA HR Chally Group’s 10-year survey, which exposed the below characteristics of a *world-class* sales organisation (contact Growth Partners in Johannesburg for the full report, 011-807-3469). Note that 3 of the 8 Best Practises were *service* related!

### 8 Best Practices for World Class Sales

Only 17 of 7,300 sales teams surveyed, were world-class.  
They shared 6 of 8 ‘best practices’ in the following areas.

1. Establishing a customer driven **culture to serve**
2. Customer **feedback** and measuring customer **satisfaction**
3. Sales, **service**, and technical support systems
4. Recruiting and selecting right salespeople
5. Market segmentation
6. Managing adaptability/change
7. Information technology (IT)
8. Training and development

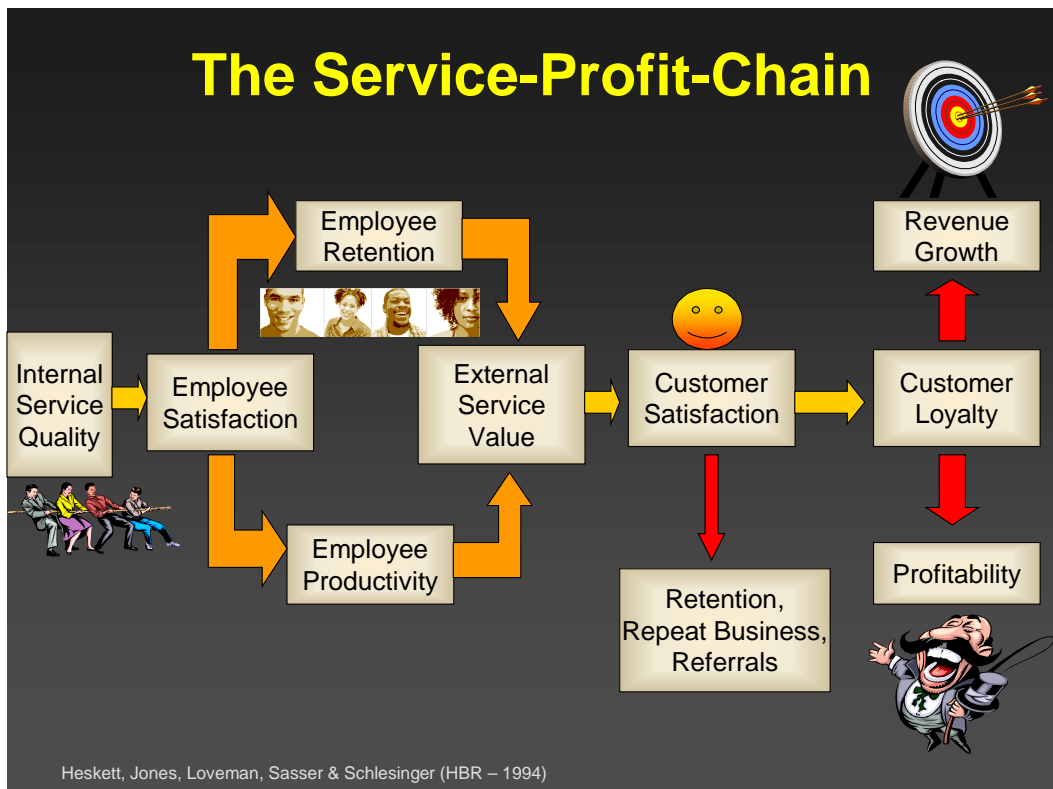
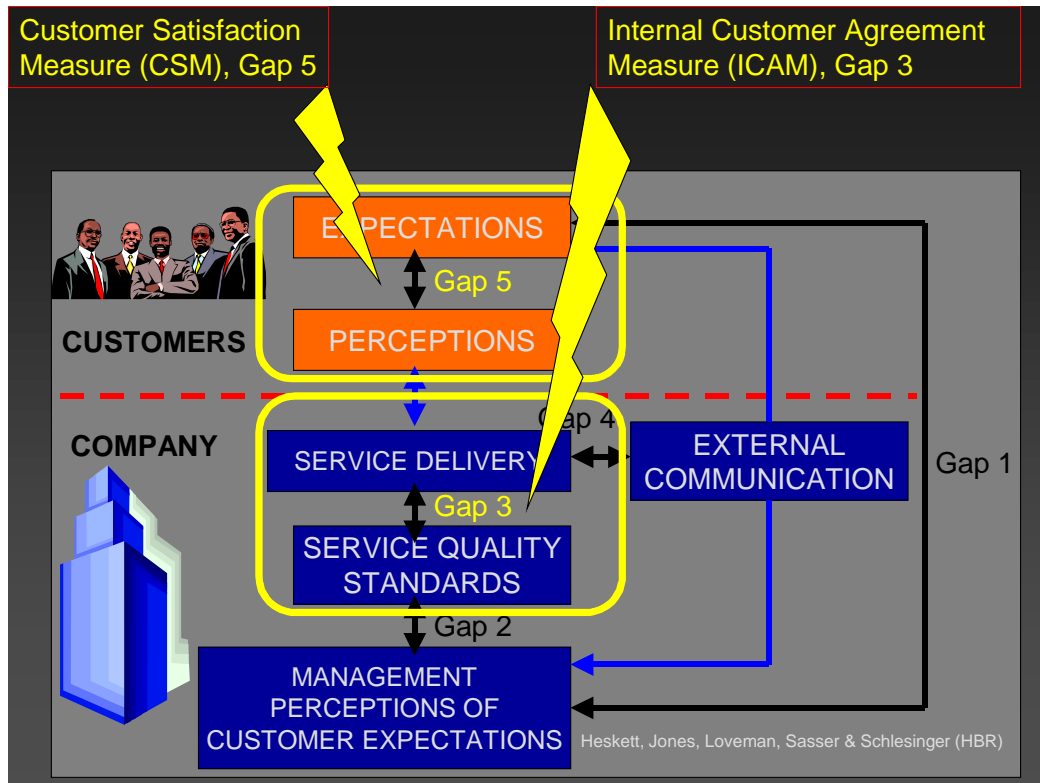
Source: HR Chally Group, Howard Stevens



- So if service **touch-points**, **moments-of-truth** and **CEM** (Customer Experience Management) are so important, we should collect feedback on critical impact points
- What is the ultimate question to ask your Customers to close ‘The Gap’?

# Depth-probing your Customer Service 'Gap':

Gap #5 below is the most common gap surveyed.



The Ultimate Question...?

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## The Ultimate Question, for accurate depth-probing:

### Most important predictor of Growth (Harvard Business Review)

“How likely is it that you would recommend a Company/Person to other people.”

(Use 0 -10 Likert Scale: 0-6 Detractors, 7-8 Ambivalent, 9-10 Supporters)

## Danger of using the wrong rating scale.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Extremely Likely	Highly Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Maybe Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Maybe Likely	Likely	Very Likely	Highly Likely	Extremely Likely

	Yes or No	
1	YES	
2	YES	
3	YES	
4	YES	
5	YES	
6		NO
7		NO
8		NO
9		NO
10		NO
	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>

	Above Scale (0-10)	
1	10	
2	10	
3	10	
4	10	
5	10	
6		4
7		4
8		4
9		4
10		4
	70/10	<b>Ave 7 = 'Likely'</b>

	Above Scale (0-10)	
1	6	
2	6	
3	6	
4	6	
5	6	
6		1
7		1
8		1
9		1
10		1
	35/10	<b>Ave 3.5 = 'Unlikely'</b>

When depth-probing Customers attitudes, research can be dangerous business. **Look how inaccurate the 'yes or no' scale above-left is when compared to what could have really been going on inside your Customer's mind.** From a 50/50 situation on rewarding an Account Manager for Customer Service, the reality could be anything between 'Likely' or 'Unlikely'. The 'Dichotomous' Yes or No would obviously speed up the research, but would be unfair to both Client and Account Manager.

Therefore:

1. When depth-probing for accurate feelings/attitudes of your Customers or Staff, use the most reliable rating scale, the Labelled Likert Scale. (Cooper & Schindler, Research Methods)
2. Give your respondent the option of a **middle point** i.e. on a scale of 0 -10 = 5
3. The Average of all the respondents offers you much more insight into what's really going on, i.e. **6.7 = 'Likely'**
4. Likert can also be expressed as a **range**, i.e. 50% said '6', 50% said '1', thus range 1-6
5. Further depth-probe Customer, why did you not give him/her a '9', and then transcribe their 'qualitative' (words) reasons

**Summary:** Service Research is part of CEM (Customer Experience Management)

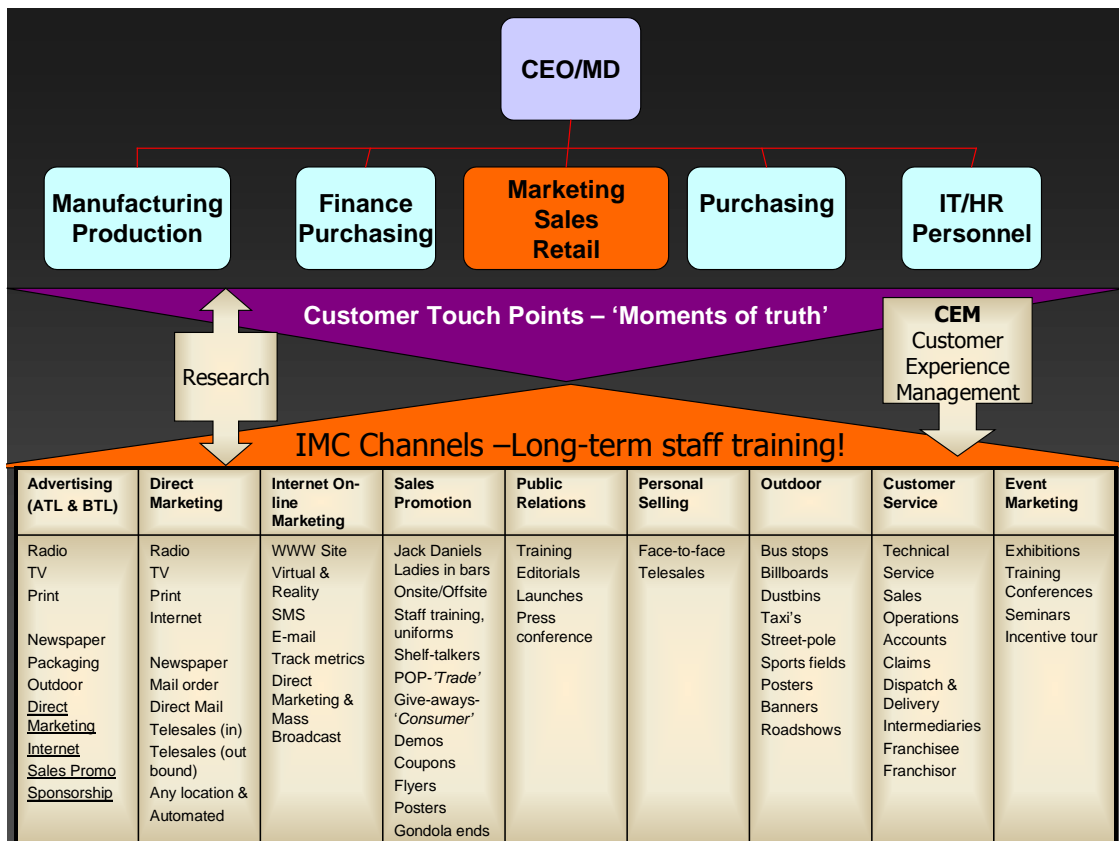
## Likert or Summated Scale

Very reliable for testing attitudes, especially when labeled. I.e. 10 is 'Extremely Likely', not *just* a "10" but a specific statement.  
(Cooper & Schindler, Business Research Methods, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition)

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Extremely Likely	Highly Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Maybe Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Maybe Likely	Likely	Very Likely	Highly Likely	Extremely Likely

When testing your Client's attitude towards your company or your staff, it's very dangerous to use a 'yes' or 'no' Dichotomous Rating Scale:

- Customers don't have a middle-point above I.e. 'neutral'
- You are forcing them to go completely "Black or White"
- Customers may want to give a '4/Maybe Unlikely' however, because they do not have that option, they will rather give a 'Yes' as they don't want to slate *your* staff that badly by a 'no'. Forcing really skewed research, I.e. 'No' now becomes a 'Yes'.



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