

## **New Member Assessment**

**for**



by  
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Customer Service Network  
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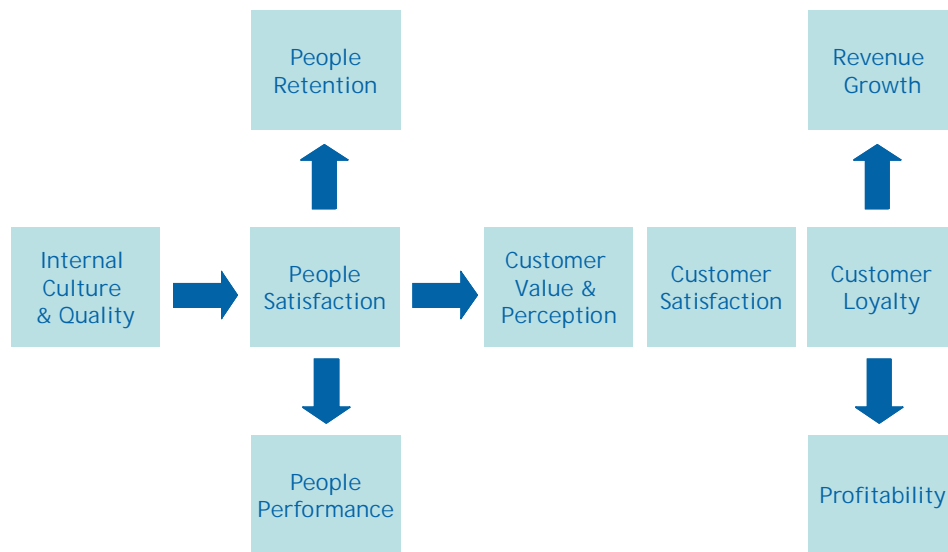
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# 1. Executive Summary

It is widely recognised that customer service is an essential factor in successful organisations. Recent research suggests that customer service will increasingly be a winning strategy. In fact, 83% of those surveyed believe that service based differentiation will succeed ahead of price.

As the quality of products and services is increasingly assumed to be excellent, customer service becomes the deciding factor in selecting a service provider. Our experience to date tells us, however, that it is very difficult to build a truly customer focused organisation.

**Figure 1. A success model for the “Customer Focused” organisation**



Source:Clicktools

Customers have to be part of all aspects of what the organisation does: recruitment, measurement, product design, pricing, learning and development, marketing and (perhaps the greatest challenge), leadership.

We hope this new member assessment will prove useful in helping you to identify areas where the performance of your organisation may be improved further. We examine some of the issues and opportunities facing organisations on the path to Service Excellence. We have included ideas, examples and reference to good practice to help you on your journey.

## 2. Introduction

Service Excellence organisations have one common philosophy: they are customer centric and they believe they can serve their way to greater profitability, reduce operational costs and keep on receiving the benefits of their investment through recession or boom.

These organisations identify and concentrate their investment on those customers who continue to buy, purchase more and different products, and on those who are willing to pay premiums to get the service they require. The traditional corporate strategies of alternating cost cutting with sales drives are challenged.

New Customer Service Network members are assessed across five categories of service excellence.

- **Customer Insight**  
How does your organisation identify customers' needs and expectations, and how you use this to guide your actions?
- **Service Delivery**  
How well do your products and services meet your customers' needs and the ease with which customers can do business with you?
- **People Involvement**  
How do you go about creating an environment at work where all your people feel capable and willing to address customers' needs?
- **Service Excellence Culture**  
What is your service excellence culture like and how do the actions of leaders embed this within the company?
- **Organisational Change**  
How successful are you at identifying and responding to the changing needs of your chosen customers and markets?

### 3. How the assessment works

The survey questions you have completed are weighted depending on their importance in achieving service excellence. Each assessment is used to create a ‘quartile rating’ with a maximum of 10 points available for each of the sections. Your score in each section of the assessment is ranked as follows:

Table 1

<b>Results</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
Performance at the low end and/or inconsistent	Bottom Quartile
<b>Results</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
Performance is average and in line with the norm for this sector	3rd Quartile
<b>Results</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
Performance is benchmarked and demonstrably at the upper end of the sector	2nd Quartile
<b>Results</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
Benchmarked as best in class	Top Quartile

## 4. Benchmarks – Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU)

### 4.1 Customer Insight

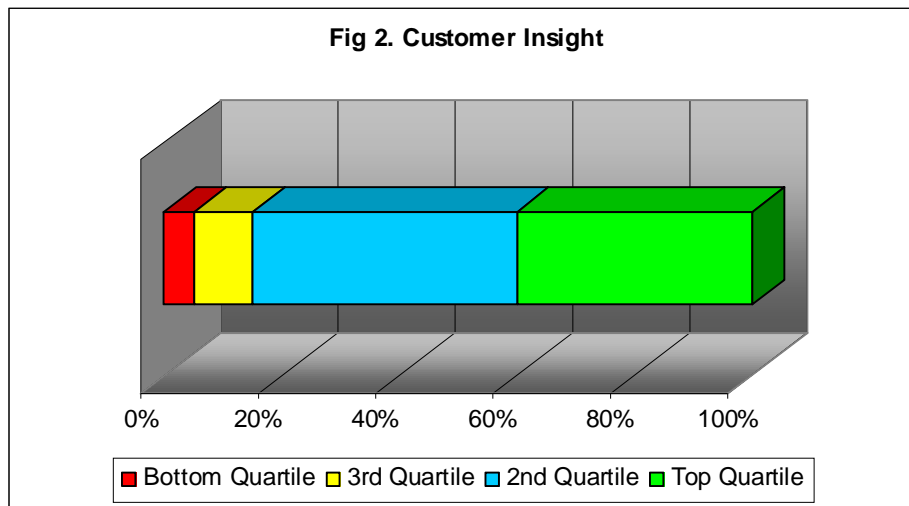
While the extent of some organisations' commitment to service excellence is a declaration of customer focus, current best practice revolves around collecting the right information from customers at the right time and using it effectively.

Service excellent organisations are questioning some of the conventions of customer engagement and beginning to understand the value of encouraging continuous customer feedback. They focus on understanding the detail behind customer perceptions and identifying the drivers of customer re-purchase and advocacy. Instead of relying on the annual survey, they collect feedback all the time and trust their front line teams to convert this into improvement information. Those companies being left behind still rely on infrequent, management-driven surveys, whose results rarely lead to sustained service improvement.

The rationale for Customer Insight

- it is the basis for service/product improvement
- strengthens customer relationships
- increases efficiency/profitability.

Figure 2 - below shows your performance for this section, relative to other members of Customer Service Network.



Source: CSN Membership Assessment Database

<b>Results</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
GCU does not appear to track customer perceptions in a way suitable for benchmarking	All successful organisations, both private and public, listen to, interpret and understand customers' requirements	Bottom Quartile

## Points to Note

- Customer delight is a standard aim in all best practice organisations. Public Sector organisations entering the 2004 Service Excellence Awards scored an average of 39% of customers delighted and 40% very satisfied with the service they receive. GCU has no accurate data to benchmark this key performance indicator.
- Whilst customers of public sector organisations have little or no choice of supplier, customer feedback is important for the development of efficient and effective processes to meet the needs of the community it serves.

Three key questions in the section are:

- Who are your customers?
- What are their needs & expectations?
- How are you delivering against needs & expectations?

To help you on your journey we have identified the following network events which maybe of interest to you or one of your colleagues. Please remember all Network, Research and Strategy club members are entitled to one free place at all networking days, site visit and workshops.

Wednesday 15 June 2005	Customer Service Benchmarking - Networking Day	London
Wednesday 19 October 2005	Best Practice Measurement - Workshop	CSN offices

Related documents in the members' area of the Customer Service Network website  
[www.customernet.com](http://www.customernet.com):



[Customer Understanding](#)



[The Annual Survey is dead?](#)



[How Surveys Influence Customers](#)

## 4.2 Service Delivery

Service Delivery, as its title suggests, examines your customers' perceptions of 'how easy it is to do business with you' and how well you build, improve and sustain your service processes.

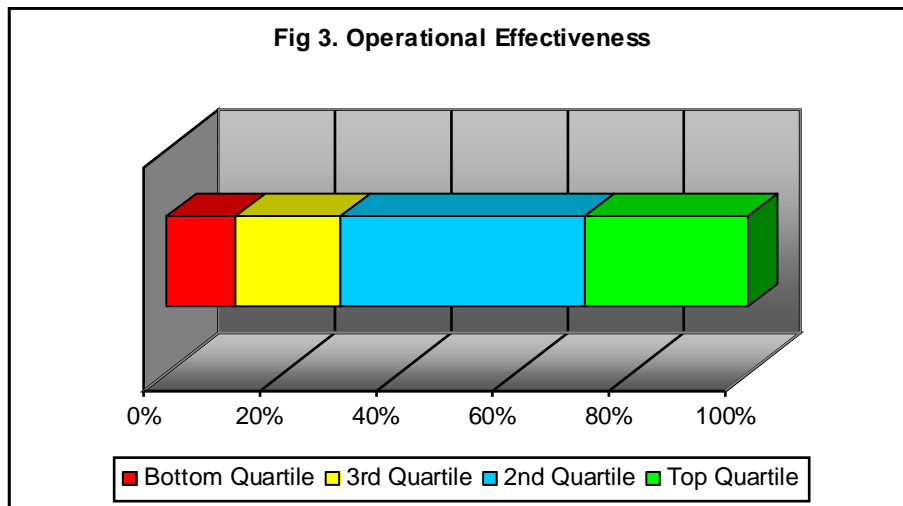
We know that high-reliability organisations take the measurement of service performance extremely seriously, as the recent increase in the number of organisations practising approaches such as Six Sigma®, paying attention to the measurement of error-free transactions or tracking the cost of non-conformance, highlights.

And, while many organisations 'impose' improvements on front line teams, the more successful organisations engage their own people in bringing about service improvements themselves. They do this by regularly setting the business context and focusing on the provision of key skills, such as problem solving and decision-making.

The rationale of Service Delivery:

- Customers want an easy life
- Complaints = improvement
- Improvement = productivity.

Figure 3 - below shows your performance for this section, relative to other members of Customer Service Network



Source: CSN Membership Assessment Database

<b>Results</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
Performance improvement is not systematic but some work is reported as "in progress"	GCU are aware of the need to improve effectiveness and are searching for relevant benchmarks. Hopefully, this assessment and other CSN members will provide a source of inspiration and help.	3rd Quartile

## Points to Note

- Successful companies recognise that undertaking research amongst customers and building a personal dialogue is not just about understanding customers but that it is the route to operational effectiveness
- In a recent Customer Service Network survey, 80% of participants viewed 'ease and efficiency of doing business' (service delivery) as important, but only 40% measure this specific statement, 30% use it at board level, 20% benchmark it and 20% link it to reward and recognition.

The three key questions in this section are:

- Are you easy to do business with?
- Do you continuously improve?
- How do you recover after mistakes?

The following network events which maybe of interest to you or one of your colleagues.

Wednesday 16 March	Internal Service Excellence - Workshop	CSN Offices Wolverhampton
Thursday 22 September	Operational Effectiveness - Network Day	South Midlands

Related documents in the members' area of the Customer Service Network website [www.customernet.com](http://www.customernet.com):

 [Benchmarking your organisation](#)

 [Outsourcing Workshop](#)

 [Merchants Global Report 2003](#)

### 4.3 People Engagement

While most organisations prize their people as their most important asset, our own research shows that organisational processes and practices are often designed to drive operational performance rather than inspire the people behind it.

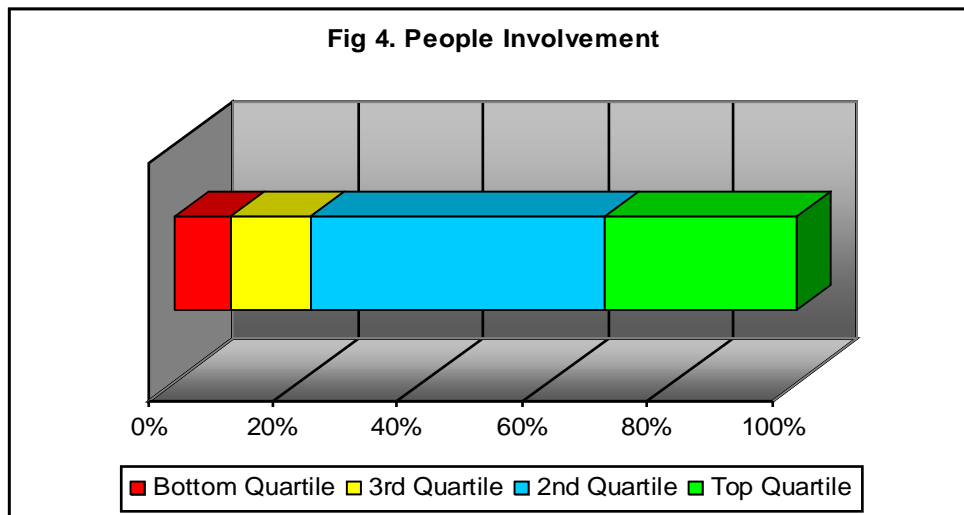
Enlightened organisations have re-designed their people policies and procedures to release these traditional constraints and free up their potential. As one Service Excellence Awards finalist once commented: 'For every pair of hands I employ, I receive a free brain!'

Successful organisations apply the same philosophy to their employees as they do to their customers. They collect feedback continuously, they provide their people with rich performance data and they provide timely, focused feedback. In addition, with the increasing adoption of the concept of 'self managed teams', organisations are beginning to design a working environment built upon trust and empowerment.

The rationale for Engaging People

- They directly influence customers
- Great service is personal
- People are your greatest asset

Figure 4 - below shows your performance for this section, relative to other members of Customer Service Network



Source: CSN Membership Assessment Database

<b>Results</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
Results of University staff perceptions survey are not known. Some multi-skill activity is planned	People satisfaction, reward and recognition programmes do not yet appear to be widely adopted.	Bottom Quartile

## Points to Note

- Recent Customer Service Network research shows a strong correlation between employees who are completely content and customers who are delighted. To generate more delighted customers, you need to generate more contented employees. GCU do not know how they perform in this area.
- Top organisations invest heavily in people because they believe people make all the difference to customer delight. Although clichéd, words like 'trust' and 'empowerment' are put into practice and become reality not just a buzzword.

The three questions in this section:

- Are people competent at what they do?
- Will they go the extra mile for the customer and the organisation?
- Are they passionate?

The following network events which maybe of interest to you or one of your colleagues.

Wednesday 6 July	Preparing for National Customer Service Week – Workshop	CSN Offices Wolverhampton
Wednesday 22 June	Engaged Employees - Network Day	East Midlands

Related documents in the members' area of the Customer Service Network website  
[www.customernet.com](http://www.customernet.com):

 [Linking Employee Satisfaction to Bottom Line Results](#)

 [People and Values](#)

 [Listening to Employees - White Paper](#)

#### 4.4 Service Excellence Culture

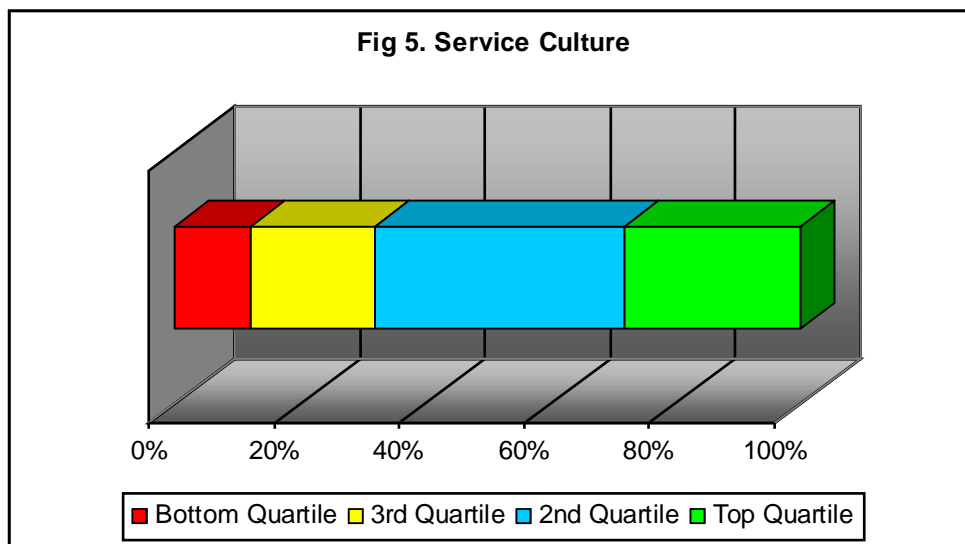
When asked to explain his organisation's phenomenal success, Terry Leahy, CEO of Tesco, always attributes this to listening to the customer. And yet, isn't that the mantra of every modern organisation? We believe that leadership and values is the key. An organisation's values are not simply posters on a wall, but the philosophy upon which all of the organisational processes have been designed. They are not there to be referred to only at the annual management conference, but are referred to each time an important decision has to be made, whether in the board room or at the cash till.

Leadership is all about setting and communicating direction, motivating and inspiring. Successful organisations design day-to-day management activities to support this. Managers are recognised and rewarded for consistently driving performance through these important interventions and succession plans focus on those individuals who live your organisation's values and practise true leadership.

The rationale for having a Service Culture:

- Leaders are shadows of their organisations
- Values and performance are linked

Figure 5 - below shows your performance for this section, relative to other members of Customer Service Network



Source: CSN Membership Assessment Database

<b>Results</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
The University values are not part of the culture. If fully understood by all, there is strong evidence to suggest that these will provide a framework for future business success.	There is little evidence of activity in this area. Actions and values are often seen as contradictory. The amount of management contact with customers needs to be reviewed.	Bottom Quartile

## Point to Note

- Giving people at the 'coal face' power to address customer issues, through organisational values leads to the delivery of quality service that will differential GCU from other Universities and Colleges.
- Listening to people closest to the customer will ensure management doesn't get out of touch in developing strategy formulations.

The three key questions for the section are:

- Are values lived?
- Do leaders act with integrity?
- What's the values/rules balance?

The following network events which maybe of interest to you or one of your colleagues.

Wednesday 23 February	Business Case for Service Excellence - Network Day	Aston Villa Football Club
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Related documents in the members' area of the Customer Service Network website  
[www.customernet.com](http://www.customernet.com):

 [Developing a service excellence strategy](#)

 [Service Leadership](#)

 [Tomorrow's Company](#)

## 4.5. Organisational Change

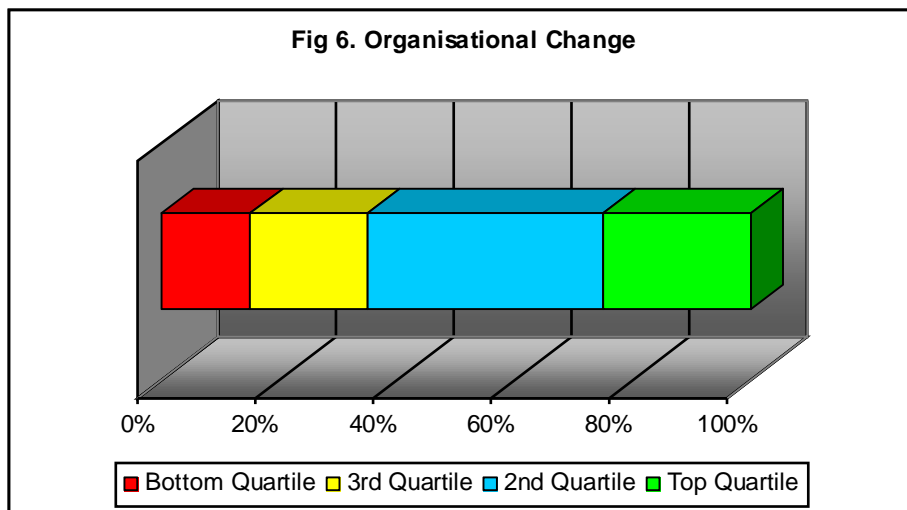
Our experience of best practice is that change is only effective where the following elements are aligned:

1. Strong organisational **values**, supported by complementary organisational design (i.e. not just declarations on posters, but processes that reflect and support a deep belief in these values)
2. Clear, understandable **context**, provided by regular, two-way discussions between managers at all levels and their teams, so that the local, regional and national business context is known, understood and impacts on decision-making at every level. Where the context forms a priority for communication, local teams are more likely to adopt problem solving techniques effectively and use them to overcome service and business issues
3. **Skills** and behaviours, which have become embedded through regular practice, observation, coaching, reward and recognition

The rationale for Organisational Change:

- Customers' needs change
- New ideas, new opportunities, new ways.

Figure 6 - below shows your performance for this section, relative to other members of Customer Service Network



Source: CSN Membership Assessment Database

<b>Results</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
Change is viewed with concern at GCU. Middle management are seen as obstacles to new ideas and change	No formal processes appear to exist but suggestions are received. Workshops in support of major change should continue.	3rd Quartile

## Points to Note

- Flexibility and agility within a company is essential for survival and long term growth. There is a high correlation between people feeling 'eager and able to change' and responding as 'completely contented' for employee satisfaction. People need to feel there is a purpose to be served by changing and if they are on side/committed it is so much easier to change.

The three questions in this section are:

- What's happening in the market place and the environment in which you operate?
- Do you share information across the organisation?
- Do you support change?

The following network events which maybe of interest to you or one of your colleagues.

December 2005	Launch of the 2006 Unisys Service Excellence Awards	To be Confirmed
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Related documents in the members' area of the Customer Service Network website [www.customernet.com](http://www.customernet.com):

 ["e"-business expectations](#)

 [Organisational Agility](#)

 [FutureofService](#)

## 5. Recommended Reading

- Armistead C.G. and Clark G., "Service Quality and Service Recovery: The Role of Capacity Management", in Armistead C.G., (ed), *The Future of Services Management*, Kogan Page, London, 1994
- Barlow J., and Møller C., *A Complaint is a Gift*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 1996
- Berry L.L. and Parasuraman A., *Marketing Services: Competing Through Quality*, Free Press, New York, 1991
- Clark G., and Johnston R., *Managing Service Operations*, Prentice Hall, 2000
- Georgiades N., and Macdonell R., *Leadership for Competitive Advantage*, Wiley, 1998
- Handy C., *Gods of Management*, Arrow Books, London, 1995 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition first published by Random Century in 1991)
- Heskett J.L., Sasser W.E. and Hart C.W.L., *Service Breakthroughs: changing the rules of the game*, Free Press, New York, 1990
- Heskett J.L., Sasser W.E., and Schlesinger L.A., *The Service Profit Chain*, Free Press, New York, 1997
- Jackson D., *Dynamic Organisations: the challenge of change*, Macmillan Business 1997
- Johnson G., and Scholes K., *Exploring Corporate Strategy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Prentice Hall, London, 1993
- Jones T.O., and Sasser W.E., "Why Satisfied Customers Defect", *Harvard Business Review*, November-December, 1995, pp 88-99
- Kakabadse A., and Kakabadse N., *Essence of Leadership*, International Thomson, London, 1999
- Matteson M.T., and Ivancevich J.M., *Managing Job Stress and Health*, Free Press, New York, 1982
- MORI, *Complaints Handling*, Citizen's Charter Unit, London, February – March, 1997,
- Schein, E.H., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1985
- Schneider B. and Bowen D.E., *Winning the Service Game*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Mass., 1995
- Slack N., Chambers S., Harland C., Harrison A. and Johnston R., *Operations Management*, 2nd edition, Pitman, London, 1998
- Voss C., Blackmon K., Chase R., Rose B., Roth A., *Achieving world-class service*, Severn Trent plc, 1997
- Voss C.A. and Johnston R., *Service in Britain: A Study of Service Management and Performance in UK Organisations*, Severn Trent plc, Birmingham, 1995
- Zemke R., and Schaaf R., *The Service Edge: 101 Companies that Profit from Customer Care*, Plume Books, 1990

## 6. Useful Websites

- ❖ Call Centre Association  
[www.cca.org.uk](http://www.cca.org.uk)
- ❖ Call Centre Focus  
[www.callcentre.co.uk](http://www.callcentre.co.uk)
- ❖ Call Centre Management Association (CCMA)  
[www.ccma.org.uk](http://www.ccma.org.uk)
- ❖ Contact Center World  
[www.csm-europe.com](http://www.csm-europe.com)
- ❖ Customer Service Network  
[www.customernet.com](http://www.customernet.com)
- ❖ Clicktools  
[www.clicktools.com](http://www.clicktools.com)
- ❖ Customer Service News  
[www.wilson-publications.com](http://www.wilson-publications.com)
- ❖ DTI for Consumers  
[ww.dti.gov.uk/for\\_consumers.html](http://ww.dti.gov.uk/for_consumers.html)
- ❖ eCustomerServiceWorld.com  
[www.ecsw.com](http://www.ecsw.com)
- ❖ European Centre for Customer Strategies  
[www.efqm.org](http://www.efqm.org)
- ❖ How to complain.com  
[www.howtocomplain.com](http://www.howtocomplain.com)
- ❖ Institute of Customer Service  
[www.instituteofcustomerservice.com](http://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com)
- ❖ National Customer Service Week  
[www.nationalcustomerserviceweek.com](http://www.nationalcustomerserviceweek.com)
- ❖ The Consumer Gateway  
[www.consumer.gov.uk](http://www.consumer.gov.uk)
- ❖ Service Excellence Awards  
[www.serviceexcellenceawards.com](http://www.serviceexcellenceawards.com)

## 7. Additional Support from Customer Service Network

In addition to your membership benefits, we also offer specialist support in the following areas:

- Service excellence audits and assessments
- Bespoke strategy development advice
- Strategy Club
- Service Leadership Diploma programme
- E-learning BTEC in Customer Service
- Research membership
- Customer service training
- Profit from complaints programme
- Benchmarking programmes
- Customer and people perception surveys and online dashboard
- Customer focus groups
- Mystery caller / shopper activities
- MSC in Customer Management

If you require specific help in getting started, or help with a particular aspect of customer service, we can help. Our highly skilled team have in-depth experience of working in a diverse range of industries, at all levels of business.

For more information about any of the above member services please contact [csn@customernet.com](mailto:csn@customernet.com) or call 01902 311641

**To ensure you keep the momentum going, we will repeat this assessment free of charge when you renew your membership of Customer Service Network next year.**

**Thank you for completing your self-assessment.**