



Voice of the client

Engaging with clients to measure program effectiveness and improve social outcomes

The community services sector is becoming increasingly outcome focused. The ability to attract funding and ensure continuation of services depends more and more on engaging effectively with clients and being able to measure the impact of programs.

Community services organisations need to have a robust process for understanding and measuring:

- their clients' needs and expectations
- how their clients perceive the services they receive
- what outcomes are being achieved in partnership with their clients
- what can be done to improve the organisation's services and achieve better outcomes

Insync partners with community services organisations to systematically, confidentially and independently gather client feedback to measure program effectiveness and ensure that the organisation's mission is being accomplished.

The imperative for hearing the voice of the client

Benefits of gathering client feedback

The community services landscape is evolving rapidly. Four main themes are becoming increasingly important:

1. Consumer Directed Care (CDC) gives clients and their carers greater say about the types of services they receive and how those services are delivered
2. Governments and donors increasingly want to see demonstrable outcomes from the funds invested
3. Quality standards and reporting requirements are becoming more onerous. Funding bodies/accreditors want to see evidence that standards are being maintained and that client needs are being met
4. Boards are looking for more reliable ways of ensuring that organisations are providing appropriate services for their clients and fulfilling the organisation's purpose

In this environment, it is vital that community services organisations provide their clients with a reliable and confidential means of giving feedback. Establishing a systematic and independent process for gathering client feedback has a number of benefits:

- Gives clients a voice on how programs could be improved to achieve better outcomes
- Demonstrates to supporters and funding bodies that programs are achieving results and making a measurable difference in the community
- Helps to maintain mandated accreditation by identifying what is working well and where improvements need to be made in support of quality programs
- Increases confidence that the organisation is delivering the required client outcomes and achieving the purpose for which it was established

Voice of the Client Framework

While Insync's Voice of the Client feedback system will always be customised for your organisation's specific requirements, we typically seek client feedback on three key dimensions:

- Experiences and perceptions – what is it like for clients to deal with your organisation?
- Outcomes and actions – how well are you meeting clients' needs?
- Strengths and weaknesses – what are you doing well and where do you need to improve?

DIMENSION	EXAMPLE SURVEY ITEMS (7 POINT LIKERT SCALE, WHERE 1=STRONGLY DISAGREE, 7=STRONGLY AGREE)
Experiences and perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• [The organisation] took time to understand my needs and goals• [The organisation] is easy to deal with• [The organisation] treats me with dignity and respect• [The organisation's] staff do what they say they will do
Outcomes and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• [The organisation] has helped me to find the best possible solution for my needs• [The organisation's] services help me to live a more fulfilling life• I would recommend [the organisation's] services to others in a similar position to me
Strengths and weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you find most helpful about [the organisation's] services?• What could [the organisation] do differently to serve you better?

Where there are residential facilities, additional questions would usually be added to understand client experiences in more detail.

DIMENSION	EXAMPLE SURVEY ITEMS (7 POINT LIKERT SCALE, WHERE 1=STRONGLY DISAGREE, 7=STRONGLY AGREE)
Experiences and perceptions (residential facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am satisfied with the meals and beverages that are provided• The facility has adequate social areas for its residents• Staff always make my visitors feel welcome• The facility is kept clean from offensive odours

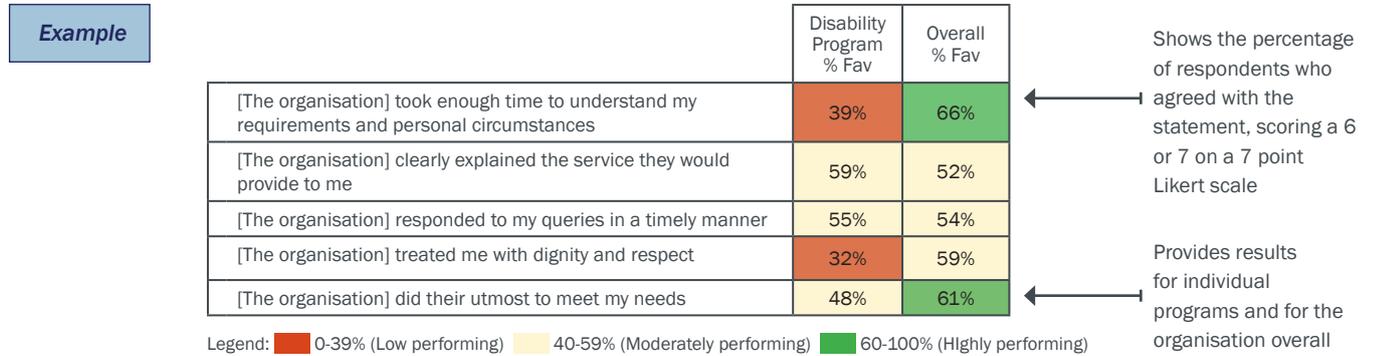
Surveys are designed to be completed within 5-10 minutes. Feedback can be obtained using a mixed method approach including via paper forms, PCs, laptops, smart phones, tablets, telephone interviews, IVR, focus groups or one-on-one interviews.

Clear and actionable reporting

Our reporting frameworks

Over the last five years Insync has made significant investments in reporting frameworks and the supporting technology to provide clear and actionable information. Results are updated on a customised “voice of the client” portal in real time, accessible via any web browser 24/7. The portal presents client feedback in numerous ways – by program, location, client type, gender or other agreed demographic.

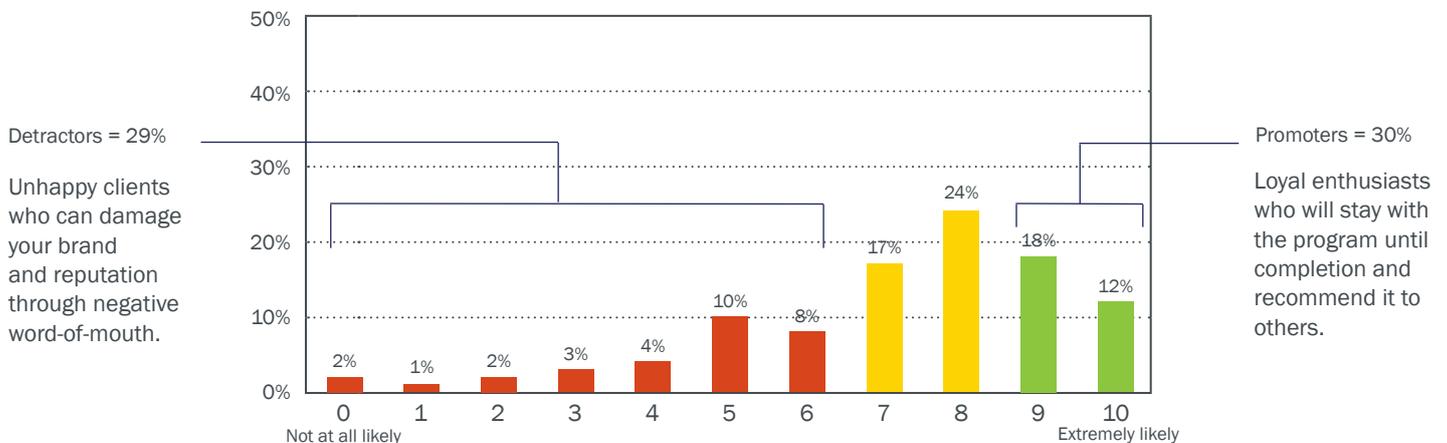
Client experiences and perceptions



Outcomes and actions

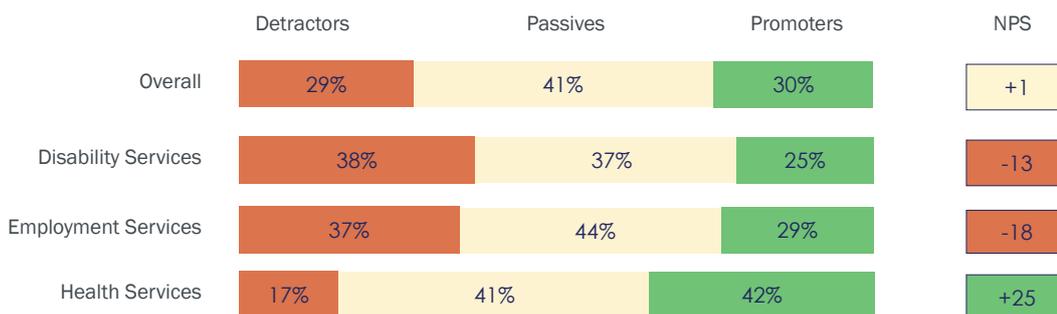
The Net Promoter¹ score measures how likely your clients are to be advocates for the services they have received from your organisation. It is a very good indicator of what clients think of your services and whether they are likely to continue using them.

Example How likely would you be to recommend [the organisation] to others in a similar position to you?



The Net Promoter Score in this example is +1, being the difference between Promoters (30%) and Detractors (29%). Results can be further analysed by program area or other relevant dimension.

Example Net Promoter Score by program area



With an NPS of -13 it is clear that Disability Services have some significant issues to address; conversely, Health Services with an NPS of +25 are meeting client needs more effectively and can expect the clients to continue using the services

¹ Net Promoter is a registered trademark of Satmetrix Systems Inc., Bain Company and Fred Reichheld.

Engaging clients to improve social outcomes

Partnering with an independent research organisation

Partnering with an independent research organisation like Insync to gather client feedback has six main advantages.

Better use of your limited resources

By letting a research specialist take care of the survey administration and data analysis you can focus on understanding the results and deciding what actions to take.

Clear and concise reporting

You will receive an executive snapshot of issues at both the overall organisational level and at the department or program level. Clear and concise reports allow you to understand your clients' experiences, supplemented by the ability to drill down quickly and easily by department, location or other required dimension.

Valid and reliable survey instrument

By using a survey instrument that measures both client experiences and client outcomes, you will get a comprehensive view of what your customers think. Reliable data will help you determine what actions would be most effective for improving client engagement.

Benchmarking

Comparisons with other community services organisations in our database will give you a better understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. We can assist you with both external and internal comparisons to show where improvements are required.

Honest feedback and confidence in results

Your clients will have confidence that their responses will be treated confidentially. Use of an independent research partner encourages full and honest feedback without the fear of consequences or embarrassment. Not only does this assist in increasing the participation rate, it also increases confidence in the reliability of the results since they were measured by an independent party.

Achieving your objectives

You can have confidence that your clients' feedback will be gathered accurately, efficiently and within the required timeframes. Managing research projects is all that we do – we manage more than 200 projects every year. We have invested heavily in our people, processes and technology to ensure that we always provide our clients with the insights they need to achieve their objectives.

About Insync

Insync has been providing research services to the community services sector for 15 years. Our mission is to help our clients improve health and social outcomes via a better understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of key stakeholders including clients, employees, suppliers, members, donors and regulators.

For more information please see our website: www.insyncsurveys.com.au/communityservices

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