

Benchmarking the quality of your IT Services:

Customer Quality of Experience (CQoE) Service

- What do customers think of the service you provide?
- Would this be useful information to know?
- What if you could show the connection between your Service Improvement Programme and improvements to IT Service Quality?

The Challenge

The Customer Quality of Experience approach to benchmarking the current quality of IT services is a simple yet very powerful concept. Many IT organisations have a challenge in demonstrating that they are adding value to the business in any measureable way.

Initiatives to improve the quality of IT services are all too often initiated without a business sponsor, due to a fear of creating unrealistic expectations and further diminishing the reputation of the IT organisation. These initiatives often fail, because they are not aligned to agreed business outcomes and have no business sponsor.

Fundamentally, no investment to improve the capabilities of IT should be made unless there is a clear way of identifying and prioritising which specific improvement activities will make a visible difference from the customers' perspective.

This can be achieved by conducting Customer Quality of Experience (CQoE) surveys.

A traditional approach to improve customer satisfaction and lift the capability of IT would be to set (ITIL® or P3M3®) process maturity targets and work towards achieving those. Unfortunately, there is no reliable way of setting such targets and the danger is therefore setting them too low (service levels and service quality suffer) or too high (more money is spent than is needed, resulting in over-servicing).

ProActive's Customer Quality of Experience service enables customers to overcome this challenge. The service uses a survey method called SERVQUAL, which essentially measures the gaps in the way IT services are delivered. Gap 5 is seen as the key measure, as it measures the gap between the customer's perception and what is expected of the service. More detail on SERVQUAL can be found overleaf.

How we can help

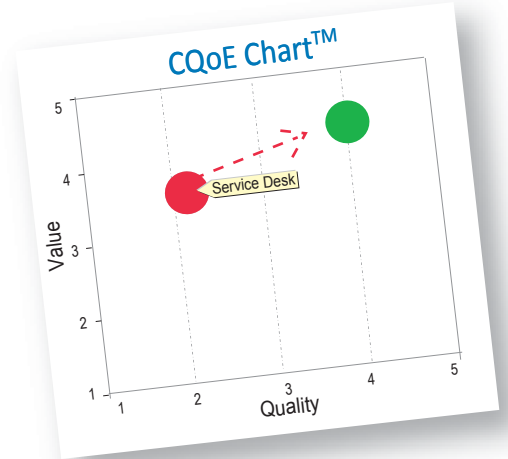
ProActive's CQoE service is a very cost-effective way of collecting the CQoE data and formulating a plan of action. The information included in the report provides an excellent insight into the business perception. The report includes:

- Measurement of performance as viewed by the customer
- The combination of Quality and Value to assist with setting Service Improvement priorities
- The identification of the Quality (RATER) dimensions outside the Zone of Tolerance
- Take into account Importance weighting of RATER dimensions
- Cross references the Quality Perception and Importance to ensure that the survey data is consistent
- Sets Service Improvement targets
- A key tool for driving the Service Improvement process
- Strategic data for planning
- Identification of services whose quality is too high

How Does the Service Work?

The service comprises five steps:-

1. Determine what will be measured, typically one or more high value IT services that are known to be underperforming;
2. Establish the survey and customer communication, using a software as a service;
3. Distribute the survey;
4. Analyse the results and produce a report; and
5. Workshop the report and agree actions



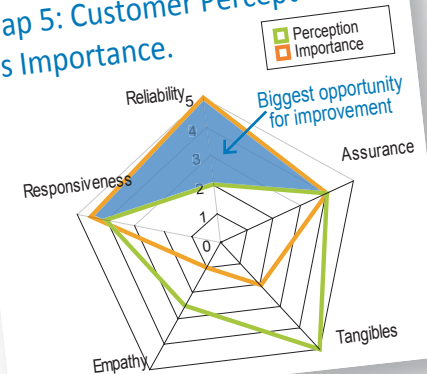
Value vs Quality

This graph shows how customers define the value of the surveyed IT service. The example above is for a Service Desk but could be for any customer facing IT service. The objective is to move the service to the correct quadrant.

Using CQoE to drive your capability improvements means that they will be:

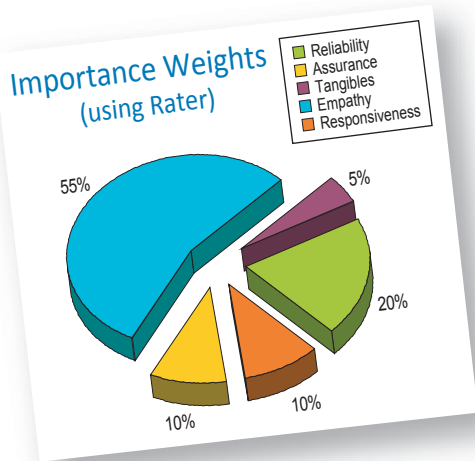
- business aligned;
- cost effective, as they are not building capability that is either too high and costing money, or too low and affecting productivity;
- progress can be measured quickly and easily, as the CQoE survey is faster and generally cheaper than process maturity assessments. Process maturity assessments have a disadvantage in that they cannot measure service quality directly;
- ideally suited to incremental service improvement;
- support engagement with key stakeholders and customers in IT about the intent and business benefit of IT improvement initiatives.

Gap 5: Customer Perception vs Importance



Gap 5: Customer Perception vs Importance

This graph shows the gap between perception and importance of each of the RATER dimensions for a service. In this case, there is a big gap between perception and importance of Reliability, and as such offers the biggest opportunity for improvement.



Importance Weights

This graph shows what the customers see as important to them in the way that the Service works.

This is expressed as percentage weighting across the five RATER dimensions. In this case, Empathy is seen as the most important dimension.

SERVQUAL and RATER explained

SERVQUAL was developed over 20 years ago and is still accepted as a good way of benchmarking the delivery of "services", although some modifications have been made to apply it to "IT Services". SERVQUAL now effectively benchmarks IT Services in the context of three levels:

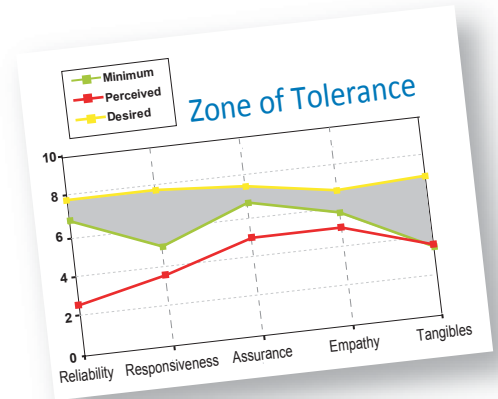
- The **desired** level of service - the ideal level of performance the respondent desires, and what the customer considers to be the best available anywhere from any provider.
- The **minimum** level of service - the minimum level of performance the respondent considers adequate. Below this level, the customer would not be able to complete their assigned job.
- The **perceived** level - indicates how the respondent considers the current level of service provided.

The gaps are measured using 5 dimensions, usually referred to by the acronym of RATER - as shown in the table at left.

The RATER Model is a simple and useful model for qualitatively exploring and assessing customers' service experiences and has been used widely by service delivery organisations. It is an efficient model in helping an organisation shape up their efforts in bridging the gap between perceived and expected service.

SERVQUAL helps you determine:

- the value of a service versus its quality
- the relative importance of each of the RATER dimensions
- the perceived levels of service broken down by the RATER dimensions graphed against the "Desired" and "Minimum" dimension targets. This is known as the Zone of Tolerance - see below.

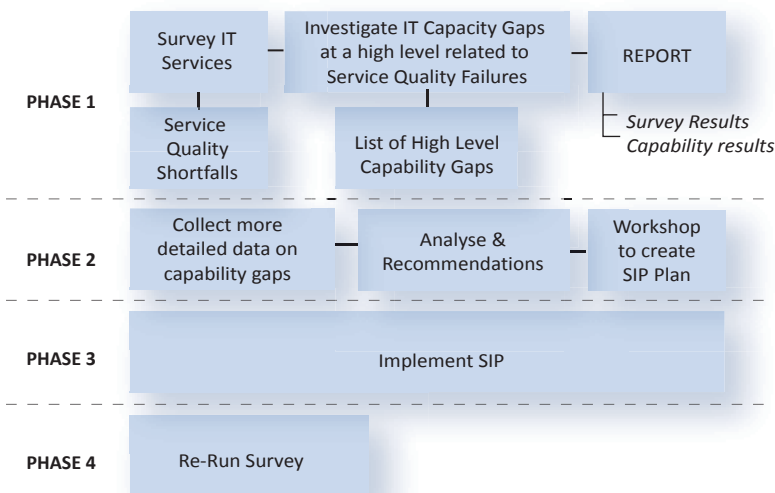


Zone of Tolerance

This shows the actual scores for each dimension and whether the Service is meeting the customers' minimum service levels (under servicing) or exceeding their desired levels. (over servicing). The intent is to ensure that the perceived level of service is within the Zone of Tolerance.

SERVQUAL (RATER)	
Reliability	The ability to perform the promised functionality dependably and accurately.
Assurance	The knowledge and courtesy the IT Service Provider expresses during interactions with users, and the ability of the provider to inspire trust and confidence.
Tangibles	The capability of the IT services, e.g. functionality or appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.
Empathy	The giving of caring, personalised attention to users.
Responsiveness	The willingness to help users and provide prompt service and support.

CQoE Approach to Service Improvement



What's Next?

ProActive's CQoE approach to Service Improvement is outlined at left.

Typically a Service Improvement Programme (SIP) would be initiated to address service quality shortfalls or the benchmarking data would be used as a baseline to measure the improvement of customer satisfaction from an existing SIP.

The data is a key input into the IT-Service Value Management™ methodology that is used by ProActive to help customers prioritise SIPs and conduct Service Portfolio Management.

Once a SIP plan has been defined, the role of repeat surveys is to determine whether the expected improvements are being realised and to make any required adjustments to the SIP.

Want more information?



Contact ProActive to request the [CQoE Service Description](#), which outlines the service in more detail, and further explain each of the Phases of the CQoE Approach (as per the diagram at left).