

21 January 2013

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### **HKACE survey:**

#### **“Customer Services Through New Age Channels – A Customer Perspective”**

##### **Convenience & Quick Response are Key to Success in New Age Customer Services**

A recent survey commissioned by the Hong Kong Association for Customer Service Excellence (HKACE) found that a large proportion of those questioned (71%) had received customer services online, reflecting customers' habit of going online for communication with organisations. Over half of those surveyed (55%) claimed they would consider using social media channels for customer services in the future.

The survey of more than 500 Hong Kong customers aged between 15 and 59 was conducted between November 19 and December 7, 2012 by research company Ipsos. Through this research, HKACE aims to provide members with market overview and industry insights to facilitate their strategic evaluation and resources planning on future development of the new age servicing channels.

##### **Well established online services gained popularity amongst customers**

Online customer services has become well established in Hong Kong and many companies are now deploying online platforms to deliver customer services. A large proportion of customers interviewed (71%) had received customer services online, mainly for product / service enquires and making appointment / reservation. The highest-ranked industries for obtaining customer services online were Banking, Electronic products and Food & Beverage.

##### **High awareness & penetration of social media**

High awareness level (90%) and usage (81%) of social media were observed in the survey, indicating the popularity of this new channel from customers' perspective. A notable proportion of customers (26%) had obtained customer services through social media. Facebook is the key platform among those users (73%).

The majority of the customers who had obtained customer services through online channels and social media (86%) used these channels for product or service enquires. The highest-ranked industries for obtaining customer services via social media were Electronic products and Food & Beverage.

## **Reasons for obtaining customer services via Social Media**

The key reasons for using social media for customer services were convenience (71%), quick response (34%) and more sources of information (28%).

Despite the benefits offered by social media, customers' expectations on customer services via social media are similar to traditional customer services. The responsiveness, service manner and product knowledge of staff were key concerns, implying that the service quality of staff is the critical success factor for the new age customer servicing channels.

## **Moving to new age channels for customer services**

Online servicing is well developed in Hong Kong, many organisations are considering the use of social media for delivering customer services. Over half of all customers surveyed (55%) claimed they would consider using social media for customer services in the future.

HKACE Chairman Buston Chu said, "A notable percentage of customers have already experienced customer services via online and social media channels, driven by its convenience and shorter processing time. These key benefits should be emphasized in future customer service programmes offered by Hong Kong companies."

"Customer services via social media can be strengthened in areas such as staff responsiveness, service manner and product knowledge. Customers expect the same high standards for customer services through new age channels as they do for traditional forms of customer services," he said.

## **Methodology**

The research follows a quantitative data collection method in the form of intercept interviews with random sampling. The fieldwork was carried out in different districts selected in Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories with a total of over 500 interviews conducted. All respondents have obtained customer services through different channels in Hong Kong.

## **About HKACE**

HKACE, a non-profit organisation, was established in February 2000. The Association drew up the first-ever Hong Kong Customer Service Charter and initiated a multitude of industry awards over the years, including the "Customer Service Excellence Awards", the "Young Service Stars Programme" and the "Quality Customer Service Programme". The Association aims to facilitate the sharing of managerial experiences among member organisations, to encourage innovation, and to elevate the competitiveness of Hong Kong's service sector by rewarding high levels of customer service.

For more information, please visit [www.hkace.org](http://www.hkace.org).

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