

## RMS Case Study 136 – SATISFACTION SURVEYING

- Background:** Research & Marketing Strategies (RMS) was engaged to conduct patient satisfaction work for approximately 3,000 patients visiting a practice's facilities each month. The focus of the research was to benchmark and continually monitor patient satisfaction for the practice. The survey was designed to gather feedback on four separate subject matters including: appointments; staff; physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant; and the facilities. It also attained an overall satisfaction score for their most recent visit. From the research, the practice would be able to keep abreast of patient satisfaction, make necessary appointment and staffing improvements, and assess their current facilities on an ongoing basis.
- Methodology:** In order to create a benchmark of satisfaction for each measure, RMS started with a telephone methodology to collect a statistically significant sample of patients (365 total). The same survey script was used in monthly surveying to sample 150 patients from the list of 3,000 delivered by the client at the beginning of each month. Based on a response rate of about 30 to 40% for the mailed surveys, RMS received approximately 50 to 60 surveys back each month to analyze. The data was then compared to the benchmark measures and also month-to-month. This helped the practice keep the *pulse* of their patient base. Respondents were also given the option of completing the survey online (the web address was listed at the top of the paper survey with a unique patient ID or access code). By creating a unique patient ID embedded into the survey, RMS could analyze all patient demographics (time of last visit, date of first visit, gender, age, facility, etc.) on the back-end of reporting.
- Findings:** The following bullet points were findings from the research:
- Service factors regarding access (appointments) all saw increases of at least 4 percentage points, some increasing as much as 8 to 9 percentage points.
  - Two service factors that both saw increases of 9% were the ease of making appointments over the phone (access) and the friendliness of the people spoken to on the phone (staff).
  - The one service factor that saw a decrease in the second half of the year was the availability of educational and/or informational materials. Having the verbatim comments around dissatisfaction revealed that because patients know that the practice provides a good deal of materials, they were expecting/requesting that the information be refreshed and/or updated on a more frequent basis. For example, the practice provides various recipes for food, and patients were looking for more ideas to be provided.
- Results:** The clients used the data to share it with management, providers and staff on a regular basis. The client used the verbatim comments about dissatisfaction and any general comments the patients made as examples for areas that needed improvement. The practice also looked into gathering emails from patients during the said calendar year and used emails to keep in contact with patients and provide electronic access to the survey. With some issues around staff and appointment scheduling, the practice conducted employee satisfaction surveying to dive into these issues. They also looked at "smarter staffing" appointment scheduling capabilities to improve access and experience for patients.