

## Case in Point:

*Customer survey results are used for real-time global account management, thanks to web and database technology developed by Walker Information.*

### On the Fly and Around the Clock

As account data changes, NCR account managers access the system – available around the clock and from any web browser – and make the necessary revisions.

The conversion to one Internet program from what was almost 60 separate electronic spreadsheets (one per country) has resulted in a 50% reduction in sample management man-hours.

### NCR: Beyond Hardware to Customer Solutions

NCR Corporation develops and maintains systems that support store automation and merchandising, banking ATMs and customer/channel data processing, and network systems and data warehousing for national accounts. Founded in 1884, the company's product technology has continuously changed – evolving from mechanical business machines to electronic. Since the 1950s, NCR has invested in computer technology to support its product lines.

By concentrating on the software and services components of its business, NCR has successfully transformed from being a hardware-only company to a \$6.5 billion global business solutions provider.

NCR is committed to stakeholder measurement and uses the results of survey-based customer relationship measures to help guide its corporate strategies and management processes. NCR sets goals based on customer feedback as one means of measuring performance, and conducts frequent employee and customer surveys to inspire operational and service improvement.

### The Customer Measurement Program

With services provided by Walker Information, NCR obtains survey feedback from its major customer segments in 57 countries two times each year. These surveys have become a critical part of NCR's scorecard of business metrics, with each major business unit setting goals for performance and improvement.

Data collection methodology varies by country and local business culture, and includes telephone interviewing, self-administered mail, and personal interviewing. Based on its global experience, Walker selects the most appropriate approach for each country and administers the survey in the native language.

### Centralizing Customer Information Management

Walker Information developed an Internet-based customer information management system for NCR to help account managers maintain and update account-specific information.

This electronic warehouse, residing in Walker's Oracle database, contains information for the accounts representing the top 80% of revenue for the firm, from across its product and solution portfolios. The information includes NCR account team members, current customer decision-makers, customer telephone numbers and addresses, type of product or solution, and other customer-specific data.

This same Oracle database frames the universe of potential survey respondents, and there is an attempt each year to obtain customer feedback from all accounts in the geographic market areas within each of the major NCR business units. Beyond the efficient survey sampling, moving to a centralized database let Walker offer another critical feature – linking survey results with the account information. This made performance assessments by NCR's customers just as accessible as static information about the account. Walker further increased the value of the NCR data management system by making the survey data available much faster.

### Faster Feedback

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NCR Account Directors evaluate the ratings and comments of their accounts within a week or so of the customer's participation in the survey, even after it has traveled around the globe and been translated back to English from the native language!

Users realize that their results are not complete until the end of data collection, but can see their scores developing as these initial reports are updated with new data each week. This is accomplished by synchronizing the efforts of the **Walker Information Global Network partners** responsible for customer interviewing across the 57 countries served by NCR.

### Rapid Response

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Senior account management at NCR can check individual accounts for the status of follow-up activities. NCR policy requires corrective action plans for 100% of the accounts proven to be vulnerable based on the survey analysis. The system makes it easy to enforce and comply with this policy.

## Zero Cycle Time Processing and Real-Time Reporting

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Despite the size and global scope of the measurement program, Walker produces timely information for the NCR sales/account organization and other users. Data collection periods are at least 6 weeks, for greatest participation and to minimize the impact of singular events in major markets. A standard core of questions is used in the surveys, although each major business unit can add appropriate questions as needed.

Where most research programs wait to process findings until after all data has been collected and checked, Walker Information makes findings available on line, even as interviews are being completed. Initial deliverables include:

- tabulated results by business unit, location, and other customer segments
- customer verbatim comment reports
- individual response detail reports
- grouped response detail reports

In business-to-business relationship markets such as NCR's, customer satisfaction happens one account at a time. So it's not surprising that in addition to aggregated customer feedback scores, NCR places emphasis on survey results from individual customers and accounts. Today, account-level customer feedback is shared with Account Directors within ten days of the interview, a significant improvement over the previous process, which took as long as ten weeks.

## Promoting Effective Follow-up to Customer Issues

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Weekly posting of completed surveys allows NCR representatives to begin addressing any account issues immediately, and speeds up their reaction to emerging issues or problems revealed by the study. Follow-up meetings and improvement activities are tracked on the same system, which prompts the account managers to enter specifics about account follow-up plans, dates for planned activities, or additional learning regarding issues from the survey. Accounts considered "vulnerable" because their survey scores drop below a certain level are highlighted in the interface, and can be identified and tracked separately from non-vulnerable accounts.

## New Expectations Bring New Features

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Realities in the NCR culture now include remarkable cycle time – in posting survey results, in making the survey feedback accessible to account management, and by providing on-line tools for account planning. Such features have injected a new urgency into account relationship management, and a new vigor to NCR's ability to meet their customer's needs. NCR has also proven that follow-up activities driven by these customer surveys improve customer loyalty and sales.

Additionally, this approach to account management has raised the bar on the ultimate purpose and design of customer relationship survey programs. Such programs were once mainly strategic: to measure relative customer satisfaction and make improvements to become more customer-focused across functions and processes. Today, NCR account managers' access to performance data at an account level provides a tactical agility that sets NCR apart from its competitors.

## Raise Your Expectations

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Shouldn't you expect your business-to-business survey program to deliver real-time evidence of account needs and issues? NCR and Walker Information have fulfilled that expectation in this program. And the greatest beneficiaries are their customers.

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