

## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MCSO FINDINGS

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Hundreds of convenience stores have conducted MyCStoresOnline (MCSO) Customer Satisfaction studies in the past 3 years. MCSO is a one-of-a-kind store level, customer satisfaction tool powered by Clickin Research, Inc. in partnership with the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS).<sup>ii</sup> “Satisfied customers visit more frequently and spend more. MCSO was built to arm convenience stores with the information they need to improve customer satisfaction and their bottom lines,” states Teri Richman, Sr. VP of research and public affairs at NACS.

While MCSO provides the feedback that can help cstores improve customer satisfaction and, in turn, their bottom lines, many times cstore executives are in need of suggestions and recommendations based on best practices. This article is dedicated to helping cstore executives maximize on their MCSO findings, once they have taken the critical step of conducting research at their cstores, by pinpointing data that should be carefully reviewed, the order in which to review the data, and how to use MCSO data in conjunction with other research methods.

### Where to Begin: Select Data View

Each set of MCSO findings can be viewed at the store level or the company level. Viewing findings at the company level is recommended when developing strategic directions for a number of stores or entire company. This process is most effective when all stores have a similar offer or a similar customer base. Company level findings are also useful in identifying effectiveness of promotional programs or changes in branding implemented in multiple stores. Here are some suggestions when viewing MCSO data at the company level.

### Company View:

Identify Best Practices  
Identify high performing and low performing stores

When longitudinal data are available, can identify improvements due to changes in operations, branding, or promotions.

### Store View:

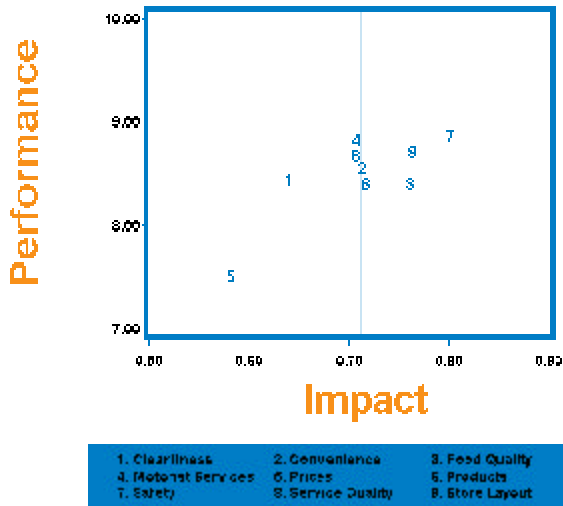
In order to execute specific tactics to improve customer satisfaction, it is recommended data be viewed at the store level. This approach keeps you from overlooking any findings that may be obscured by viewing data in an aggregated form, plus it allows you to address the needs of customers where they shop – at an individual store.

### How to Review Your Findings: Four Types of Findings

Once you have determined which data view will best answer your research questions, you can begin viewing actual findings. The MCSO research tool provides you with four sets of findings: 1) individual store performance on specific attributes and drivers of customer satisfaction, 2) opportunity matrix depicting impact on customer satisfaction by driver performance and areas in most need of improvement, 3) verbatim comments provided by survey respondents, and 4) demographic profiles of your stores’ respondents.

Each set of data described above provides a unique view into the minds of your customers and the state of your stores. Viewed together, they provide a 360-degree perspective. By reviewing your data in the following simple steps, you will gain the full benefits of this holistic view of your store and your customers.

**Step 1. Identify what matters most to your customers.** MCSO provides you with a chart called an Opportunity Matrix, pictured below.



Graph created on February 19, 2003

This matrix identifies opportunities for increased customer satisfaction by plotting the relationship between overall customer satisfaction with your store and the performance of each driver of customer satisfaction. This relationship translates into the impact on customer satisfaction that each driver can have. The right half of the matrix includes those drivers that have a greater impact on overall customer satisfaction. The left side to the matrix includes the drivers with lower impact on satisfaction. When the matrix is viewed horizontally, the top half depicts drivers that are high performing, and the lower half represents driver that are lower in performance. Hence, the most critical areas to which to pay attention are the ones with the greatest impact on satisfaction – top right and bottom right quadrants. For instance, in the matrix above you can see that “Safety” and “Store Layout” are high performing drivers and have a great impact on customer satisfaction, i.e., customers care about the safety and layout of this store. You can also see that “Products” and “Food Quality” also have a great impact on customer satisfaction, but this store is under-performing in these drivers, i.e., food and products are important to this store’s customers but the store is not fully meeting the customers’ needs.

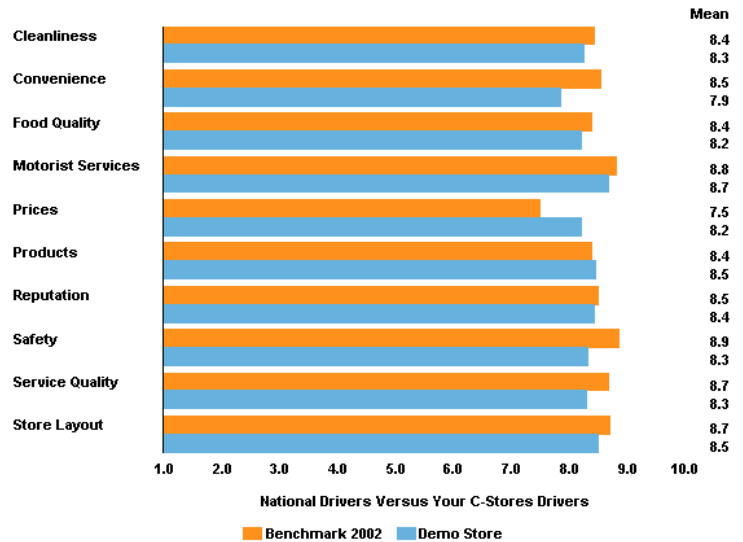
By continuing to perform well in the areas of “Safety” and “Store Layout” and making improvements in the areas of “Food Quality” and

“Products,” this store could benefit with increased customer satisfaction.

Now that areas most impacting customer satisfaction have been identified, we can take a look at their performance ratings compared to other drivers.

**Step 2. Review Driver Performance.** MCSO provides you with an Overall Satisfaction Performance chart that depicts the mean rating per driver of satisfaction compared to the mean performance of cstores nationwide. By noting the high scoring areas and the low scoring areas, you will get an idea of what your customers deem to be your best and worst store features. See sample chart below.

### Satisfaction Driver Overall Results



Graph created on August 27, 2004

For example, in the chart above, “Safety” is the highest rated driver, and “Prices” is rated as the lowest driver. We know from reviewing the Opportunity matrix that “Safety” is a high impact driver, however, “Prices” is not. Therefore, we can conclude that while customers are dissatisfied with the prices of some of the items in the store, performance in this area is not significantly affecting their overall satisfaction with the store experience.

Two lower performing drivers that have high impact on customer satisfaction are “Food Quality” and “Products”. In order to get a clearer idea of what specific aspects of products and food quality customers are not completely satisfied with, we must take an even more detailed look.

**Step 3. Review Attribute Performance.**

Each MCSO driver is comprised of 2 to 4 attributes that make up different aspects of that driver. MCSO provides individual charts that depict performance on each attribute of that driver. For instance, the “Food Quality” driver consists of four attributes – 1) freshness of coffee, 2) food safety and sanitation, 3) food quality of food prepared in the store, and 4) quality of take-out food. The chart for this driver shows a distinct rating for each of these attributes, as seen below.



Graph created on August 27, 2004

By looking at the performance of the components of the “Food Quality” driver, we are able to determine that the areas needing the most improvement are quality of food prepared in the store, quality of take-out food, and sanitation and safety measures taken when preparing food.

Once the lower performing attributes of a high-impact driver like “Food Quality” are identified, it is helpful to see what comments customers made regarding this driver.

**Step 4. Read Respondent Comments.**

MCSO includes an open-ended question that asks respondents “What areas of store operations would you like to see improved?” Respondents’ verbatim comments are delivered as part of MCSO findings.

These verbatim comments provide you with an invaluable insight and awareness of the concerns of your customers. Because these comments are not edited, you also get the full richness and complexity of your customers needs. Below are some sample quotes from a demonstration study that provide additional insight on the lower performance of the “Food Quality” driver.

- “Take Out Food.”*
- “Old stock on shelves.”*
- “Prepared food – hotdogs are nasty.”*
- “More microwave food.”*
- “Coffee area needs to be bigger.”*
- “More variety in grocery.”*
- “Food products that are offered.”*
- “Coffee machine.”*

Mentions of take out food quality and freshness of store food on the shelves corroborate the lower score associated with the “Food Quality” driver.

**Step 5. Putting It All Together.**

In reviewing all the different types of findings MCSO provides, we were able to identify which areas had the greatest impact on overall customer satisfaction, how these specific areas were performing, specific attributes of these high-impact drivers that were most problematic, and detailed customer comments that filled in any ambiguity about the performance of the high impact drivers.

**Customer View:**

**How to Combine MCSO Findings with Other Research**

Mystery Shopping

Suggestion Box

POS/Scan Data



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