

# Understanding Customer Satisfaction

## Introduction

This activity is designed to help you identify the key components of what drives customer satisfaction outcomes. Listed below are a series of statements made by consumers regarding their recent interaction with a firm. Quickly review each statement and determine how satisfied each consumer is, using this simple scale:

- very satisfied
- satisfied
- neither/indifferent
- dissatisfied
- very dissatisfied

## Customer Comments on their Satisfaction Levels

- “My friends dragged me to see that new movie. I didn’t want to go! I thought it was going to be a stupid movie, but it turned out to be not too bad.”
- “I got my old TV repaired the other day, as the picture always looked fuzzy. The firm fixed it in a few days and met their \$100 quote. Now the TV works fine.”
- “I was really excited about going to see the concert, but the seats were right up the back, and we were next to a bunch of loud and noisy people.”
- “I couldn’t believe that the hotel only charged \$100 for the night. They could easily charge a lot more for what they offer.”
- “I was so excited when I first saw vanilla flavored cola – I thought it would taste great, just like cola and ice-cream. But when I tasted it, it was so bad that I couldn’t even finish it.”
- “I hired a floor polishing machine for the weekend. When they delivered it, we found it was too big to get through the doorway. They took it away without charge, but I was disappointed as I had previously checked with them that it would fit.”
- “I had a real problem with my bank as they kept charging a wrong fee to my account. When I went to see them, they were really good about it, refunded the fee and apologized and said that it wouldn’t happen again.”
- “I went to McDonald’s the other day, and it was a real surprise. I haven’t been there in years and these days they have a good choice of food, nice coffee, and even comfortable lounge chairs to sit in.”

## Student Discussion Questions

1. How satisfied are each of the above consumers.
2. What factors seem to influence their level of customer satisfaction?
3. Given these factors, to what extent is customer satisfaction controllable by the firm?
4. Do you think that delivering satisfaction is harder for large firms, because consumers expect more from them?
5. Given your answer to Q2, how valid is the cliché of “under-promise and over-deliver”?
6. Likewise, what are the implications of a firm “over-promising” in their marketing communications?