



Countrywide is the leading UK business in the supply of products to the rural community. The businesses include Agriculture, Energy and Retail trading throughout the UK to market town and country customers, with products available through sales specialists, a direct sales team, 47 country stores and online 24/7.



Countrywide have over 11,000 shareholders, 40,000 account holders and employs 1,000 members of staff. Despite competing in the most challenging economic conditions seen for a generation in the UK, strong performances by Countrywide has meant the business is all set for a third year of record operating profits in mid 2010.

### Countrywide

is growing and, as part of a focussed expansion, has been busy working on a CRM and Customer Segmentation programme. This will allow them to get closer to understanding and meeting the needs and aspirations of their diverse customer base.

In July 2008 the criteria for identifying seven distinct customer groups were determined. They are Professional Farmers, Smallholders/ Small Farmers, Smallholder/ Hobbyists, B2B, Horse Owners, Country House/ Villages and Market Town.

The next stage in the programme was to develop a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to benchmark Countrywide's performance in each of these segments.

The Countrywide Marketing Team started working with Chris Carver of Market Vision International to design and deliver an ongoing KPI programme using MVI's product MarketVis to measure and analyse customer satisfaction.

Key satisfaction drivers and their relevant elements were identified using MVI's databases and Countrywide's market experience. This resulted in a



core set of 30 measures to which additional segment-specific measures were added as appropriate. Questionnaires for each segment were then drawn up by MVI, comprising the MarketVis grid to collect data on customer satisfaction, importance and comparison for each KPI together with a series of overall satisfaction and loyalty questions.

The team decided upon postal questionnaires to best ensure randomness and non-bias in the segment samples of 800, which were to be mailed out monthly. Mailing started in July 2009 focusing on Professional Farmers and by November, six out of the seven segments were up and running with response rates achieving a highly acceptable segment average of 14.5%.

## Communicating the Key results...

A key consideration in undertaking such a customer insight programme is that it must be rooted in clear business objectives and inform the organisation in its thinking and decision making.

With this in mind The Countrywide Marketing Team made sure that their results would be communicated to the management team by ensuring they underpinned the theme for Countrywide's monthly Management Communication Forum in January 2010.

From the data that the programme has generated to date, Chris presented to the Marketing Communications Forum the Quadrant Chart for the business as a whole (Fig 1) and a summary of Countrywide's overall corporate Strengths and Weaknesses as measured by the customer satisfaction scores.

Members of the forum, led by Chief Executive, John Hardman, were now required to work in small break out groups tasked with discussing the findings and issues arising from the data presented, and then to feed back next steps and action plans in a plenary session.



The feedback from each group on strengths and weaknesses was most constructive and enthusiastically received. Many points were made which make good commercial sense.

## The Next Step

Many of the points have now been incorporated into an action plan for the business which is firmly based on real customer insight and has the support of the whole business team going forward.

Commenting on the results of the MarketVis Customer Satisfaction Survey, Pat Sykes, Countrywide's CRM Manager, said:

"I'm delighted with the results. The MarketVis study has helped us to listen to and more clearly understand the voice of our customers and to focus on how we can more effectively meet our customers' ever changing needs."



## And Finally...

By working with Market Vision International you can:

- Identify new sales opportunities
- Set & measure customer focussed KPIs
- Retain customers
- Measure perceived service levels
- Increase customer focus
- Benchmark performance

