



# Customer satisfaction

## Results and actions 2018

Last year we committed to a new approach to measuring customer satisfaction. This is our first annual report that aims to share the feedback received, provide transparent performance metrics and highlight the improvements implemented as a result. We believe this is unique in our industry and firmly believe that by working together with customers we can achieve our mission to be 'the best in the world at what we do'.

Thank you to those customers who completed our customer satisfaction survey, we appreciate the feedback and are committed to making continued improvements as a result.

In 2018 we scored an average satisfaction rating of 9.00 across all scored questions. This is up slightly from our 2017 score of 8.90 and in line with our target of achieving 9 or above.

We received 84 responses over the course of the year from a range of customers, responses vary by question but are consistently high across the board. We are extremely proud that there were no customers that would not be happy to refer us to a friend, colleague or industry associate. We do however recognise that we have some work to do with customers around demonstrating the added value that our services deliver.

Whilst its great that we achieved our target score of 9, the survey also highlighted some further improvements that we can make to our processes and procedures to ensure that every customer is fully satisfied on every job. We have already implemented a range of improvements as a result, detailed throughout this report, and have plans in place to make further improvements in the coming year.

As a growing business, approximately 25% year on year, it is important that we maintain our performance in relation to both quality and customer service as we continue to grow. Staff numbers have reached 143 employees (up 20% in 2018) and as such we have implemented robust recruitment, induction, training and ongoing development processes to ensure our innovative, service focused culture and quality processes are upheld by both new and existing employees.

We understand customer satisfaction is key to our growth. I personally review all survey responses received and feedback is shared with employees at all levels of the business in order to affect real change and ensure all employees take responsibility for customer satisfaction.

I look forward to continuing to receive your feedback over the course of the year, and



our teams will be in touch to facilitate this. However, you don't have to wait until we ask you to give us your thoughts, speak to your sales contact at any time or get in touch with me directly on +44(0)191 234 3000 or [michael.mitten@houghton-international.com](mailto:michael.mitten@houghton-international.com).

Kind regards,

**Michael Mitten**  
CEO

**VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE:** [www.houghton-international.com](http://www.houghton-international.com)

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# Your feedback...

## 1. Overall, how satisfied are you with Houghton International?



In general, the majority of customers are very satisfied with Houghton International overall, with 70% scoring us a 9 or 10 for this question. Whilst this is very close to our target - we would like all customers to feel completely satisfied.

One of our core values is to 'work as one team to deliver an exceptional customer experience' and staff are empowered to provide this. Results of this survey are shared with employees at all levels of the business, seeking their feedback with a view to implementing improvements as a result.

## 2. In relation to your most recent experiences, how would you rate the quality of our products/services?



The quality of our workmanship is vital to providing an effective service and we are delighted to score highly in relation to this question. Whilst we endeavour to provide an exceptional service to all customers on every job, we understand things don't always go to plan. However, when this happens, we work with customers to resolve the issue quickly and effectively which customers appreciate.

A number of quality issues were highlighted as part of the feedback process and new processes have been implemented to ensure that these issues do not reoccur. We have strengthened our documentation process and implemented a new system which prevents these issues reoccurring, including introducing a team brief following any changes made to ensure all staff are aware.

It is a key strategic priority to maintain our high quality levels as the business continues to grow.

## 3. In relation to your most recent experiences, how would you rate the delivery of our products/services?



A lot of our services are provided on an emergency or fast turnaround basis, supporting customers to reduce downtime and maximise efficiency. As such delivery is critical and we plan our workloads and resources to enable us to remain flexible and meet customer needs.

Whilst the majority of customers (73%) scored us a 9 or 10 in this area, the survey did highlight a number of improvements that can be made in relation to communication, with customers sometimes having to chase us for updates or not clear on the outcomes of work undertaken. As a result, we have created a new Electro Mechanical Services Coordinator role in order to oversee delivery and increase our reporting capability. We have also grown our customer communication teams both in relation to sales and operations this year to ensure that customers are kept up to date throughout the entire process and that someone is always available when needed.

#### 4. How well do our products/services meet your needs?



Innovation drives our business and we are always on the lookout for problems to solve - our staff excel in this area and are always up for a challenge. We are pleased to see that our product and service offering meets the needs of our customers and welcome suggestions on any new services you would like us to provide. We have invested in new vehicles this year to keep up with demand for both the number and size of collection and delivery requests and also in the latest 3D CAD design software to increase our reverse engineering and design capabilities across the business. We successfully launched our pumps division last year - keep an eye out for new services coming soon.

#### 5. In relation to your most recent experiences, how would you rate our products/services with regards value for money?



81% of customers scored us an 8 or above in relation to value for money, which shows that the majority of our customers value the service we provide both in relation to the actual cost of our service but also with regards to the additional value we offer by reducing downtime and improving the performance of their assets.

We invest in the development of our staff. Our facilities and our processes are independently audited to ensure we provide the highest quality service that will stand the test of time and we provide warranties to back this up. We regularly review our prices in terms of market competitiveness and where possible aim to work directly with the end user to offer the best value solution to their needs.

We will continue to work with customers to better communicate our pricing structure in relation to the value we provide.

#### 6. How would you rate the service provided by our sales and customer service teams?



Over half of respondents rated us a 10 in relation to our sales and customer service teams - which we were delighted to hear. Staff were praised for their friendliness and technical knowledge and customers highlighted that they can be relied on, especially in emergency situations. As our teams continue to grow, these are traits we seek in new employees and embed in our culture. We invest heavily in training and development to ensure our staff are capable and knowledgeable when answering your queries. You can expect to see some new faces in the coming year, however, be assured that they will be focused on continuing to provide an exceptional service.

We have also invested in our IT systems and equipment to ensure all employees have access to the latest technology to quickly respond to enquiries. We have invested in new servers and equipment to speed up our operations and provide a more responsive service.

## 7. Compared with your best supplier, how do you rate Houghton International?



In response to this question a number of customers indicated that we are their best supplier - which is what we strive to be. However, we still have some way to go on this front. Our mission is to be 'the best in the world at what we do' and our customers are the judge of that.

Expect to see an improvement in communication in the coming year as a result of our bolstered customer facing teams and investment in technology. We are working closely with our ERP system provider to improve the performance of our internal systems and resolve some long-standing issues that impact our ability to deliver an outstanding service. Our Finance Director is heavily involved in this process and we are already seeing results in relation to reducing duplication, planning and recording data.

Our aim is to continue to provide a consistently high quality service in to 2019 and beyond.

## 8. How easy is Houghton International to do business with?



We want customers to want to do business with us and aim to make it easy to do so. We are pleased to see that our customers agree. Of course, there are always improvements to be made in relation to processes, particularly when opening new accounts and Purchase Orders - we have reviewed our procedures in this area to streamline the process and make it easier to keep track. We have also improved our product labelling system that ensures all relevant information remains with every job, highlighting any key information such as terminal connections and datum positions of mechanical items on return to the customer. Based on customer feedback we are also reviewing our stock holding process and supplier agreements to support faster deliveries and improve quality standards. We understand we are only as good as our weakest supplier and are strengthening our procurement processes to ensure that we continue to deliver in this area.

## 9. How likely is it that you would recommend Houghton International to a friend, colleague or industry associate?



Its great to hear that our customers are very likely to refer us to a friend, colleague or industry associate. This is a great testament to the quality of the service we provide and the ultimate compliment. We know a high proportion of our new business comes from word of mouth and we appreciate any referrals you would like to make.

## What to expect going forward

Going forward you can continue to expect high levels of service and quality. This is top of everyone's agenda and all employees are challenged with personally doing what they can to improve our satisfaction score.

We are strengthening our commitment to the environment this year, aiming to reduce the negative impact our operations have on the planet. We are setting up an Environmental Matters working group with staff from across the business and welcome ideas from customers as to where we can make improvements.

We are also expanding - as well as expanding the size of our operational facilities to keep up with demand, keep an eye out for news and updates on our latest service offerings and for an invite to our company open day later in the year.

**SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER:** [www.houghton-international.com](http://www.houghton-international.com)

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