

**Houghton International**  
Electro mechanical innovation

# Customer satisfaction

## Customer report 2019/20

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

**Houghton International**

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**At Houghton International our mission is to be the 'the best in the world at what we do'. That is why last year we published our first ever customer satisfaction report, examining customer feedback across a range of questions and highlighting improvements we were planning on making to enhance customer experience and the services we offer.**

I'm delighted to report that in 2019/20 we have again exceeded our target satisfaction score of 9 or above, with an overall Customer Satisfaction score of 9.04 for the year. This is up from 9.00 in 2018 and 8.90 in 2017. This is a real achievement for all involved and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing an excellent service and listening to our customers.

This year we engaged with a greater number of customers on a wider range of work carried out, from ongoing contracts to one off repairs. In total, 122 surveys were carried out with customers from across the business highlighting both areas in which we excel and also things we can do better.

Customer feedback is vital in order to achieve our mission 'To be the best in the world at what we do' and I appreciate each and every customer that has taken the time to respond. Please read on to find out more about how we have used your feedback to continue to improve.

Last year our Pump Services department expanded into its own dedicated repair facility, we rewound our first generator for nuclear application and were again listed in the top 10 'Best places to work' in the North East. We also encountered some setbacks in relation to the changing nature of the market which we operate in, however we were able to adapt and continue to move the business in the right direction, building even stronger relationships with our customer base as a result.

It is thanks to your feedback, honesty and ongoing recognition of the quality of the services that we offer that we have confidence to continue to invest in the future of the business. We all are operating in uncertain times at the moment which can make planning for the future difficult, however we are committed to our core values and to working with customers to adapt to the new normal, improving performance throughout.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Mitten'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

**Michael Mitten**  
CEO

# Your feedback...

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



Up from 8.90 in 2018/19, overall the majority of customers are very satisfied with us. 78% of customers answered 9 or 10 in relation to this question. We are encouraged to see positive movement in this area, however our focus is on ensuring all customers have a positive experience with us. We have invested in larger facilities, more equipment and additional training for staff to increase our capacity to improve service delivery and lead times further.

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



Quality remains a key focus for all at Houghton International and it's good to see we have maintained a consistently high score of 9.04 in relation to this question. Moreover, where things have not gone as expected, customers praised how we responded to and rectified any issues.

Our aim is to work with our customers to solve their problems and often this means tackling complex repairs and coming up with new specifications or testing procedures. We have developed and introduced new quality processes in relation to this to capture and document the learning for future use and ensure a comprehensive approach is taken which encompasses experience from across the business. This includes the introduction of 3D scanning for improved accuracy and enhanced capabilities for reverse engineering.

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



Scores in relation to delivery decreased slightly on last year, down from 8.99 in 2018/19. Given the nature of what we do, we understand turnaround time is critical to our customers and have various service options in place to enable us to meet your needs. We aim to work with customers to understand their requirements and be open and honest in relation to meeting these. We never knowingly accept a job with a deadline we don't believe we can achieve, and customers value our integrity on this issue.

Most of the time delivery is achieved within the required timescales, often quicker. However, we understand that sometimes things do take longer than anticipated and we are working on a number of initiatives to reduce this. These include a supply chain improvement project, training to further multi skill our teams and consolidating our departments to improve efficiency and speed up response times further.

We received some great feedback regarding our drivers and, where we outsource delivery, we are actively working with our suppliers to improve communication and minimise any disruption.

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



We are pleased to see that our products and services continue to meet your needs. A number of customers commented specifically on our enhanced Pump Services offering and the benefit of using one supplier for both motor and pump requirements. We continue to invest in additional services to support your needs and have recently purchased a 3D scanner to further supplement our offering. This can be used to reverse engineer spare parts and speed up response times.

Innovation drives our business and we are in the process of introducing our services into several new sectors where the demand for life extension of key assets is increasing, such as the transport and wind power sectors.

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



Up slightly from 8.29 in 2019, customers see the value in the service we offer, not just the cost. Whilst, as we would expect, some of you told us that you would like to pay less, you also told us you "pay for what you get" and that we are "not the cheapest but by far the best".

We understand we are not the cheapest supplier on the market for every job, however we genuinely believe that we offer excellent value for money. Not just in terms of quality but also the added value we offer in relation to our experience of solving problems and improving the performance of your machines. We regularly improve efficiency and prevent in service failures; our customers trust our advice and the vast majority are happy to pay for a consistent and reliable service.

We regularly review our pricing to ensure we remain competitive and work with customers to provide the best value solution for their needs without compromising on quality.

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



We know our people and culture are a unique competitive advantage and it's great to see our customers recognise this too. Up from 9.16 in 2018, this is one of the highest scored questions in the survey, with staff being praised for their knowledge, responsiveness and for having a proactive approach. We invest heavily in our recruitment and selection process and provide all staff with the training they need to deliver an exceptional service.

We note that communication can be improved and that some customers would like to be kept up to date more with the progress of their job. Houghton Exchange, our online video update tool, has been used throughout the business for a number of years to provide progress updates and test results on a range of jobs. Whilst this tends to be used more for international customers, we intend to roll this out wider, particularly in response to the Covid-19 outbreak which may mean visits to site are difficult. We are also investing in video communication technology and your sales representative will be arranging a customer review call shortly to discuss how best to operate both in the short term and moving forward.

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

**9.00**  
/ 10

Our mission is to be 'the best in the world at what we do' and our customers are the judge of that. We scored highly in this question, up from 8.82 in 2018, with some customers telling us that not only are we their best supplier but also that they use us exclusively.

The performance improvements made to our internal ERP system over the last year, as a result of feedback received from customers in relation to paperwork, were highlighted as an improvement, alongside the quality of our reporting.

It is important to us to maintain our position as a valued supplier and we are providing additional training to staff across the business on how best to communicate with customers remotely. We have adapted our processes and working times to enable us to keep our staff and customers safe and aim to minimise any impact to customers as a result of Covid-19. We are also offering additional services such as on-site support to help customers who may be experiencing issues such as reduced capacity as a result of sickness or an increase in failures following a prolonged shut down. Let us know if we can help.

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

**9.27**  
/ 10

We are pleased to hear that customers enjoy doing business with us, with 80% scoring us a 9 or 10 in relation to this question.

We made improvements as a result of last year's feedback which haven't gone unnoticed, including simplifying our new customer onboarding process, improving our product information labels and strengthening our supply chain. Further to this we have also made some changes to our quoting process as a result of this year's feedback to improve both the timeliness and the detail included, detailing the job as needed to ensure customers have all of the information required to make informed purchase decisions.

We intend to ensure doing business with us remains easy and are committed to working flexibly with customers to navigate changes to business practices required in response to ongoing government guidance. Whilst the need to be physically distant may remain for some time, we continue to provide support to customers globally and are introducing more ways to remain connected virtually both to sales and engineering teams. Keep an eye out for new training resources coming soon.

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

**9.34**  
/ 10

Scores in this question remain consistently high, which is reflective of the overall feedback received. We know there is always room for improvement and we are grateful for customers taking time to give us feedback, both good and not so good. We endeavour to use this constructively to continue to improve as we grow into new markets and offer new services. Recommending us to others is the ultimate signal of trust - thank you, it is appreciated.

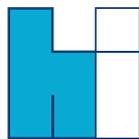


## What to expect going forward

Whilst no one quite knows exactly what to expect going forward, as we move through the pandemic and deal with the wider economic impact of Covid-19 and the practicalities of BREXIT, I can assure you Houghton International will continue to work with you to navigate the challenge whatever that looks like for your company. As an independent, service focused SME we can be flexible and adapt to change rapidly, it's what our culture is based on and the kind of skills we value in our teams.

For Houghton International, going forward we are pressing ahead with our plans to consolidate the whole business into one location, to create a world class engineering facility and customer experience. Customers will benefit from improved efficiencies and increased in house capability and we look forward to sharing the plans in due course. We have also invested in testing equipment to provide onsite HV testing, 3D scanning capabilities and improved gearbox services. Get in touch with your sales representative to find out more.

Thank you again for the feedback - every response is valued and used to learn and improve. Thank you also to our customers who continue to provide essential services to communities across the globe. Industrial and engineering companies have long since been the backbone of communities and I have every confidence that we will remain so, long into the future.



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