



The Agili-T Group Success Story: Metso Paper, Inc.

Metso Paper, Inc.: Continuously Improving Processes through Customer Feedback

The Company:

Metso Paper is the leading supplier of processes, equipment, and services to the pulp and paper industries. The company develops and delivers complete production lines, rebuilds and modernizations, as well as know-how, and expert and maintenance services to pulp, paper, board, and tissue producers worldwide. Metso Paper is dedicated to using its unique combination of process know-how, machinery, and automation to support customer success over the entire process life cycle.

Metso Paper's deliveries, amounting to roughly 1,500 paper machines and 800 pulping processes in operation today, create a firm foundation on which to build new know-how and aftermarket services. And Metso Paper is active in all main market areas with its own manufacturing, sales offices and service centers.

Metso Paper is part of Metso Corporation, the core businesses of which are Metso Paper, Metso Automation, Metso Minerals, and Metso Ventures. With net sales of 4,221 million euros and 22,000 employees, Metso Corporation is one of the biggest industrial companies in Finland, and has a major presence in North America with operation in Canada and the United States. Metso Paper, Inc. is listed in the Helsinki and New York Stock Exchanges.

The Challenge:

The North American pulp and paper industry has undergone significant change. With new plants in Asia and South America, the industry is now global, and more competitive, in nature. There is more paper on the market and margins are thinner. Few companies are building new mills. However, to remain competitive, many companies are retrofitting mills and reviewing ways to continuously improve processes and output capacity of employees and machinery. This has led to growth in technical consulting services and the aftermarket.

To satisfy and retain customers, Metso Paper chose to focus on aftermarket sales and service. To be seen by customers as a vital business partner, Metso required a better understanding of the needs of its clients.

As Metso was striving to become more intimate with customers, the company's Canadian operations—Metso Paper Canada—began to upgrade to the more client-focused ISO 9001:2000 certification. One of the requirements of ISO 9001:2000 certification is the need to sample customers on the effectiveness of service delivery. Metso Paper Canada viewed this as an opportunity to develop greater awareness of its customer expectations in order to improve customer relations.



“We wanted to implement a comprehensive but practical survey and began to look for a third party with progressive and innovative survey delivery and analysis expertise,” said Rick Leroux, General and Business Manager with Metso Paper Ltée in Montreal, Quebec.

Looking for ease of survey customization, delivery, and reply, Metso selected The Agili-T Group. The Agili-T Group’s Web-based survey tools are easily customizable and easy to respond too. Since survey replies are delivered over the Web, Agili-T can apply computer analytic tools to quickly produce results.

The Process:

Agili-T began working with Metso Paper Canada in 2004. The goal was to capture valuable and pertinent feedback from client stakeholders and then could deliver customer intelligence to senior management at Metso.

Agili-T’s consulting wing worked with Metso to determine the specific customer interaction areas the survey should cover. For instance, Metso needed to know which departments—sales, service, installation, and so on—needed to improve processes, and the type of information that would allow Metso to make positive, constructive changes. Once that was determined, Agili-T plotted a survey strategy.

Agili-T met with Metso senior management and business unit managers during a discovery phase to acquire an in-depth understanding of the organization, customer landscape, competitive environment, and the drivers of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Based on discovery information, Agili-T then proceeded to:

- Identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Develop a comprehensive survey questionnaire to serve as an operational performance assessment tool
- Determine the data collection instrument to be used
- Established an internal and external communications program to make both Metso clients and Metso managers aware of the program and the reasons for it
- Produce an analytical framework to deliver meaningful survey results to Metso based the overall paper business, board business, tissue business and fibre business

The analytical metrics would enable Metso to understand how each business unit was performing and gauge any performance gaps between corporate and mill level customers. In addition, individual “customer scorecards” were developed so Metso could understand its performance for given accounts, enabling the company to improve its Key Account Planning strategy.

The Solution:

Before designing and deploying the survey, Agili-T consulted with Metso customers (including stakeholders at the CxO, maintenance, and plant manager levels) to determine the relevancy of a survey, to inform customers of the reasons for the survey, and to ascertain how companies would like to receive the survey. Based on that, Agili-T designed an online Web-based survey and used



its Web surveying technology to capture data. However, a paper survey was also offered as an alternative.

The first survey was conducted in fall 2004, and the response rate was excellent. Agili-T obtained feedback from 90% of Metso Paper's accounts, accounting for 95% of the company's revenues. These results were highly representative of what Metso's customer base and demonstrated a willingness on the part of Metso customers to improve their relationship with the company.

Once the survey was completed, Agili-T submitted a report to Metso senior management and worked closely with Metso to develop an action plan.

Thank you letters were sent to all customers who completed the survey. The letter included an overview of the survey results and an indication of the actions that Metso planned to take based on those results.

"In many cases, we literally sat down with customers and discussed the results, then developed a customer account strategy to implement change," said Mr. Leroux.

The Results:

The survey was well received by Metso customers and has had a strong, positive impact on Metso's customer relationships, Mr. Leroux indicated.

Metso used survey results to establish a customer service benchmarked and then defined activities and areas that required improvement. "We determined Metso could increase customer support by better demonstrating the value of its offerings, continuously improving its products and staff product knowledge, and by shortening response time to quotes," said Mr. Leroux.

Metso also developed key account plans—customer/business unit action plans—based on survey results and began a yearlong implementation process.

Acting on the survey has enable Metso to improve operational effectiveness and operating processes. In addition, these improvements have helped boost revenue by 23% in the accounts surveyed as companies understood that Metso was now customizing its approach to meet their particular business needs in an increasingly competitive market.

"The implemented changes are a key component in our strategy to remain highly competitive and close to the customer as the pulp and paper industry continues to evolve into an industry requiring greater aftermarket sales and process improvement support," said Mr. Leroux.

For example, in an industry that is geographically dispersed over remote locations, process improvement consulting could be a timely and costly initiative. However, Metso is now tapping into expertise from around the world and using in Webinars and Web-based meetings to deliver valuable process improvement information in an affordable, yet interactive, environment.

Not only does this meet defined customer needs—to enhance competitiveness through knowledge transfers—but such value-added initiatives also allow Metso to differentiate itself from the competition. In an industry that has become cost-sensitive to products, this positions Metso as a company that sells lifecycle training and support in addition to technically superior products.



Implementing significant change can be a long and expensive process. Metso used its resources wisely, initially targeting key customers for service improvements. In 2005, Metso conducted a follow-up survey and found that its key customers had experienced significant service improvements. These results validated the work that Metso had done, and encouraged the company to continue its process and service improvement program across the board.

The Future

The survey process that started in Canadian was so successful that the identical program was recently implemented for Metso Paper USA as well as Metso Minerals Canada. Metso has indicated that they would like to implement this program globally.

As for Metso Canada, the company will partner with Agili-T to repeat the survey each year. However, now that Metso has established a benchmark, it will only market slices of about 25% of its client base each year and do a full benchmark survey in five years. That way, Metso will not exhaust its audience and yet the company will receive enough valuable feedback to allow Metso to continuously improve its performance.

About The Agili-T Group

Agili-T combines science and technology to create effective, actionable stakeholder feedback programs that help organizations perform better by capturing and measuring stakeholder feedback. Our software solutions and consulting services enable organizations to improve stakeholder relationships, customer and employee retention, competitiveness, business processes, operational and financial performance.

Our surveying services draw upon our extensive surveying expertise in: Customer Surveys; Employee Surveys; Partner Surveys; Patient Surveys; Member Surveys; Custom Surveys; and Healthcare Solutions.

Androfact, Agili-T's state-of-the-art surveying system for healthcare providers, is a powerful Web-based surveying application that enables healthcare providers to capture patient and employee feedback to improve the quality of services and patient experiences. Androfact streamlines the entire surveying process including questionnaire design, deployment, data collection, analysis, and management reporting.