The Importance of **Customer Service** in Global Mobility

aires

The services and support offered by Relocation Management Companies ("RMCs") are mostly intangible. RMCs do not manufacture a widget or have products for sale on a store shelf. Instead, support provided by an RMC is composed of customer service, technology, and partner networks.

With this being the case, how can an organization determine the quality of service provided by their RMC?

Organizations can gauge service levels by obtaining customer feedback. To do so, it is necessary to understand who is considered to be the customer. It is equally important to understand the RMC's feedback collection processes, including reporting, data integrity, and the overall quality assurance principles that drive their customer feedback processes.

| Customer Feedback

In global mobility, there are primarily two customers to collect feedback from: the relocating individual (i.e., employee, transferee, assignee) and the company for which they are relocating (i.e., mobility manager).

In this document, we will focus on customer feedback obtained from relocating individuals. Relocating individuals can provide feedback on the support they receive not only from their RMC (e.g., how well processes and policy benefits were explained, how available and knowledgeable the RMC contact was) but also from third-party service providers (e.g., the moving company, temporary accommodations, destination service provider).

Methods for Collecting Customer Feedback

Conducting a survey is the most common method to obtain customer feedback. Common types of survey questions include open-ended, closed-ended, rating and Likert scale questions, and multiple choice. Survey questionnaire data can be obtained via emails, social media/website posts, or phone calls. While each mode of contact holds different advantages, conducting surveys over the phone brings additional value for RMCs. According to the CFR (Communications for Research) and Drive Research, surveys conducted over the phone bring a personal touch, have higher response rates, allow for clarifications, and provide the opportunity for more in-depth feedback.

| Reporting and Data Integrity

It is critical for organizations that collect data to report the results honestly and transparently. Data collection by neutral parties not directly connected to the service delivery removes any bias and allows the transferee to give their opinions freely.

Response Rates

A good customer feedback sample size is critical to success. Having a variety of policy types, locations, and transferee roles provides a well-rounded representation of the relocation services. Receiving a constant stream of feedback allows for improvement and a better understanding of services; however, feedback can be difficult to obtain. According to SurveyPlanet, "A typical survey response rate goes from 5 percent to 30 percent, while a response rate of 50 percent or higher is considered excellent." With a wide range of response rate percentages, finding ways to get more feedback is a high priority for RMCs.

Satisfaction versus Excellence

Closed-ended and rating-scale questions should measure excellence, not satisfaction. Satisfied customers may still have issues or suggestions for improvement with the service they have received. Measuring on a scale of excellence provides a more critical review of the customer experience. The 5-point rating scale is the most utilized measure according to the Society for Human Resource Management because it allows for "an opportunity to better differentiate between employees by offering two superior performance levels, a satisfactory level and two less-than-satisfactory levels."

The following examples show the difference between measuring satisfaction and measuring excellence and how the highest marks provide very different service comparisons.

How satisfied were you with the service you received from the RMC?

1-Very dissatisfied	1-Unacceptable
2-Somewhat dissatisfied	2-Less than expected
3-Neutral	3-Satisfied
4-Somewhat satisfied	4-Better than expected
5-Very satisfied	5-Excellent

While both are five-point scales, they do not embrace the same sentiment. Someone who selected 5-Very satisfied from the first group would likely select 3-Satisfied or 4-Better than expected in the second question set. This demonstrates how the same process can result in different outcomes.

Net Promoter Score

A Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a metric based on a single question to determine how likely the respondent is to recommend a company to someone else. Scale ranges are often from 0 or 1 (being not likely at all) to 5, 7, or 10 (being most likely). Once collected, the scores are categorized into three groups:

Detractors – Respondents that provide the lowest level answers (e.g., 0-6 on a scale of 0-10); they are not likely to recommend your company or say good things about it.

Passives – Respondents that provide above mid-range answers (e.g., 7 & 8 on a scale of 0-10); they suggest some satisfaction but offer little loyalty.

Promoters – Respondents that provide the highest-level answers (e.g., 9 & 10 on a scale of 0-10); they are loyal and willing to share their feelings with others.

Once those categories are known, determining the NPS is simply a matter of math:

$$\frac{(\text{Promoters} - \text{Detractors})}{\text{Number of respondents}} \times 100$$

According to SurveyMonkey, an NPS is considered the gold standard for measuring customer loyalty. An NPS provides the ability to identify who is and isn't a brand advocate and what percentage of customers can become one. An NPS can also help with tracking trends.

An average NPS is +30, with other large RMCs reporting results ranging from +15 to +56.

| Quality Assurance

The work is not done once customer feedback is collected. In fact, collecting customer feedback is just the beginning of root cause analysis for an overall quality assurance program. Effective quality assurance programs use customer feedback data to drive changes that improve the customer experience. When the RMC shares data with all parties in a timely manner, the result can be prompt internal and external improvement projects that focus on processes, systems, and supply chain.

Setting expectations and following up with regular feedback reports is the key to consistent supply chain management and partnership. A smart RMC sets annual goals and communicates progress toward goals frequently with its suppliers. Partnership with supply chain members includes training, coaching, and sharing best practices from top suppliers. Setting clear expectations gives suppliers the framework for growth and to achieve quality targets. Regular business reviews with an RMC provide the opportunity to review customer feedback goals and achievements.

Incentives and Rewards

Top customer feedback data should be recognized among the RMC's office staff and throughout the supply chain to differentiate top performers. Promotions, trophies, and increased business distribution are some ways to fit customer feedback into recognition programs for staff and supply chain members.

| Why This Matters in Global Mobility

RMC business models center around customer service. A smooth relocation allows the transferee to focus on their position in the new location.

An RMC's service delivery impacts every employee experience, and the success of a relocation program can be measured in a variety of ways through customer feedback. This feedback may even drive relocation policy improvements.

Partnering with an RMC gives mobility managers supportive data and suggestions for continual improvement of their relocation programs, ensuring their relocating employees receive the best service possible.

About Aires

In operation since 1981, Aires is an industry leading, technologically advanced global mobility company. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA, Aires has offices across the U.S., as well as offices and legal entities in London, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Malaysia, and India. Aires' worldwide offices and global partner network extend to 176 countries, ensuring broad coverage for clients. Aires' comprehensive suite of internally built technology tools include MobilityXchange®, featuring application programming interfaces (APIs) for tax, immigration, HRIS, and service partner systems. It also includes MobilityX®, custom web portals for both employers and relocating employees offering accessibility to all key data to view, track, manage, and complete mobility tasks and details. Additionally, relocating employees can conveniently access MobilityX® through their mobile devices.

With four decades of industry experience, Aires sets the standard in the global mobility industry, including the highest standard for customer service.

An Industry Leader in Customer Service

Aires was founded by Jim Putt in 1981 with the purpose of providing a better relocation experience than what was available in the industry. Since then, Aires has continued to focus on the customer experience, reinvesting in its people, processes, and technology to deliver world-class service. Aires is recognized as an industry leader for collecting and sharing customer feedback, as highlighted below.

- Aires' business model is founded on independence and focuses on customer feedback. Although Aires has a global network of service providers, there are no pay-to-play contracts and no exclusivity agreements, ensuring that Aires' service partners are selected based on their performance, merit, and service delivery qualifications (in addition to competitive pricing).
- Aires customer feedback scores are based on a five-point scale of excellence, from 1 (unacceptable) to 5 (excellent) as noted in the second example on page 2. Aires' 2022 overall score was 4.44 out of 5. Aires' current Net Promoter Score is +66.
- The Aires Quality department is responsible for collecting all customer feedback. They are objectively independent from the relocation process; their sole purpose is to collect transferee thoughts and scores without bias or judgement.
- Aires' average survey response rate for 2022 was 56.71%, compared to an industry average of 15-25%. The success of the response rate is due to the variety of survey methods utilized including strategically timed phone calls, texts, and online contact points.
- The Aires Quality Management System is tested through internal and external audits. Obtaining and tracking data, customer resolutions, corrective actions, process enhancements, and continual improvement of customer service scores are all audited by independent external auditors as part of the Aires ISO 9001 Program and the FIDI FAIM Plus accreditations. Aires' customer service scores have risen by 18% since becoming ISO 9001 certified in 1994.
- Aires not only provides feedback to clients, but also provides weekly reporting to service partners for all activity in order to provide timely information to strengthen partnerships and continue to elevate the level of service by everyone involved in the relocation process.
- Aires focuses on hiring team members that possess traits of Aires DNA. Aires DNA is characterized by empathy, a sense of urgency, and a culture of "yes".
- At Aires, customer feedback scores drive action. Employees are rewarded for attaining high-level scores by becoming distinguished members of Aires' Circle of Excellence. Employees are incentivized to let their Aires DNA shine.