



Social Returns on Complaints Handling for Public Organisations

Your Checklist for Best Practice

The Return on Investment of Effective Complaints Management: Public Sector Organisations research report, conducted for the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals (SOCAP) by the University of Newcastle, has demonstrated that a public organisation can reap up to \$5 Return on Investment (ROI) for every dollar spent on effective complaint handling.

WHY SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT IS IMPORTANT FOR GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

The research highlights the importance of public organisations quantifying the Social Return on Investment (SROI) which considers the social benefits of effective complaint handling, including increased customer trust and enhanced perceptions of fairness and equity.

IDENTIFYING COMPLAINTS IS KEY

The research findings show there are differing definitions of what constitutes a complaint across public sector organisations creating staff uncertainty about the 'tipping point' that an enquiry becomes a complaint, which can lead to an under-reporting of complaints, subsequent under-resourcing, missed opportunities in identifying complaint trends and systemic service failures.



"Sometimes our staff aren't sure of the difference between a complaint and business as usual."

"I think complaints can be a terrific way of looking at insights into our business practices – so actually investigating ourselves through complaints."

"There are massive returns on investment both for staff and customers to actually demonstrate what the dollar value is and the time value to some of the changes that we make."

– Complaints Staff

Your Checklist to Best Practice Complaint Handling

Social equity, respect and perceived fairness influence post complaint satisfaction and employee pride in effective service delivery.



CULTURAL CHANGES: Establishing a corporate culture, which values complaints as a tool to build trust with clients.



IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY: Ensuring the stages and access points of complaints processes are easily understood and the route to escalating complaints is clear.



CONCLUDE AND COMMUNICATE: Ensure that the complaints process is concluded for each complainant, and there is clear communication on how to proceed elsewhere if required (e.g. Ombudsman).



INCREASE CLIENT SATISFACTION MEASUREMENT: Measure post-complaint satisfaction, which can be used in a SROI calculation and to provide guidance about refining complaint management practices.



IMPROVE CLIENT COMMUNICATION: Communicate with complainant how an issue was resolved as well as any corrective action.



IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF: Inform staff how complaints are used in continuous process of organisational review and improvement.



IMPROVE MEASUREMENT: Record more specific information relating to time and resources used in the complaint process.



BETTER USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: Integrate social media complaints channels with existing formal complaint channels and ensure that all are managed via a single customer management system. This will achieve economic efficiencies and also client satisfaction outcomes. Provides an opportunity to increase service recovery, transparency, build client trust and stem negative word-of-mouth.



 **socap**
the network for consumer professionals | australia

For more information on the ROI of Complaints Management and to download the Full or Summary Report for Private and Public Sector Organisations visit:

www.socap.org.au

P: 02 9167 8119

E: socap@socap.org.au