

ACU TOP OF THE CLASS WITH CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

Last week Australian Catholic University was awarded the top ranking institution for Customer Service excellence at the Association of Tertiary Education Manager's (ATEM) conference. The award was the result of a survey conducted for the conference by Melbourne based benchmarking firm Customer Service Benchmarking Australia (CSBA).

Customer service was assessed at 16 of the 44 attending Tertiary Institutions by 'mystery shopping' their contact centres. Over 400 surveys were conducted and run through CSBA's Customer Service Model providing insights on the universities' relative strengths and weaknesses.

CSBA's delivery of the survey results to delegates at the Student Service Centres Conference generated an in depth discussion on customer service.

"Universities competing for enrolments is a hot topic", said Paul van Veenendaal, Managing Director of CSBA. "Competition in the Tertiary Sector is high and loyalty is low, so they are seeking to improve their customer service to give themselves a competitive advantage."

CSBA has demonstrated to its clients that survey data can be used to improve market competitiveness and increase ROI from effectively resolved calls.

An issue raised by CSBA at the conference was that Tertiary Institutions must be aware that customers contact their organisations through different channels (telephone, email, front counter). So even if customers get quality service on the telephone, all other customer service 'touch points' must be as consistent. If a call is answered in 20 seconds, the customer thinks 'Wow - that person was great!' This experience needs to be the same whether contact is via email, a face-to-face encounter, or through any other touch point. Inconsistent service leads customers to question the quality of the organisation.

Next year CSBA plan to build on the survey by including all 103 Australian tertiary institutions, giving a comprehensive overview of the sector, a who's who of outstanding performers!