

## Tips for Improving Response Rates on Satisfaction Surveys

Important: Strive for a minimum of 60% return rate for each survey type to provide you with valid results. A 60% return rate is a good representation of what your respondents think.

Here are some suggestions on how to increase your survey responses:

- “Get the word out” - communicate several weeks ahead of time with information about the goals of the surveys. Get your staff and residents involved so that they promote some internal excitement. Post flyers, notices in newsletters, and place placards on dining tables. Use multiple methods of written and oral forms of communication to cover all bases.
- Consider the timing of the survey administration. Avoid busy times of the year such as holidays or vacations. Allow respondents enough time to complete and return the surveys.
- Schedule a reminder for completion of surveys. The survey due date should be clearly indicated when handing out the surveys. Make sure to remind surveys takers mid-way through the time frame.
- Schedule a “family night” - administer the surveys in a group setting. Offer refreshments such as ice cream or dessert or another form of incentive for completion of the survey.
- Offer a special meal for residents if a target return rate is achieved. Ideas might include a special dinner with selections such as filet mignon, orange roughy or special desserts to those groups who have the most completed surveys.

## Confidence Satisfaction Survey Program Continues to Expand

### Confidence Facts and Figures

- Nearly 80% of the 249 organizations across 27 states using Confidence Surveys are continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs).
- The Confidence Satisfaction Survey department has processed over 50,000 surveys from participating organizations nationwide during the most recent year.
- The Confidence Program has been in existence for more than 15 years and currently offers 11 different types of surveys across the entire continuum of senior living, including employee and staff, long-term care, and home and community based services.
- Confidence Satisfaction Surveys can be customized to your unique needs. Call and ask for rates.
- Confidence Survey respondents increased from 9,000 in 2008 to 20,000 in 2009.
- Thanks to your participation, this program continues to grow. We look forward to working with you in 2010!
- For additional information about the Confidence Satisfaction Survey Program visit [www.confidence-surveys.com](http://www.confidence-surveys.com).

To find out more about the Confidence Satisfaction Surveys, contact the Confidence Satisfaction Survey Team at 630.325.6170 - e-mail: [surveys@lsni.org](mailto:surveys@lsni.org) or visit [www.confidence-surveys.com](http://www.confidence-surveys.com)!

### Confidence Satisfaction Surveys

#### A Life Services Network Program

1001 Warrenville Road • Suite 150  
Lisle, IL 60532

630.325.6170  
[surveys@lsni.org](mailto:surveys@lsni.org)

[www.confidence-surveys.com](http://www.confidence-surveys.com)

# THE PILLAR

A CONFIDENCE SATISFACTION SURVEY PUBLICATION • Spring 2010

## Confidence Satisfaction Surveys Get Makeover

The Confidence Satisfaction Surveys were developed in the mid-1990's, for providers, by providers. Now, fifteen years later, the survey forms are getting a much-needed makeover. The primary goal in the development of the new form design was to demonstrate that we are doing our part at being fiscally and environmentally responsible stewards. By making a conscious effort to conserve paper and other valuable resources, we hope to become your partner in the 'going green' initiatives around the country. We are very excited to introduce our new survey design to you and we welcome your feedback. See below for a sample of the new design.

4 3 2 4



### 2010 INDEPENDENT LIVING RESIDENT SURVEY

Thinking about your overall experience here, how would you rate the following characteristics of this community?

	VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR
1. The grounds and common areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The living environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The service provided to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The quality of my life here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The staff of the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Safety and Security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Dining experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Amenities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thinking about your overall experience with community programs, rate each of the items listed below. If you have not used or had any experience with one of the items listed, mark “Does Not Apply” as your response to that item.

	DOES NOT APPLY	VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR
10. Educational programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Volunteer opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Variety of activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Frequency of activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Intergenerational programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### OVERALL SATISFACTION

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
15. In general, how satisfied are you with this community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## McKnight's Article Highlights How CMS Five Star Quality Rate System Would Benefit from Resident Satisfaction Data

McKnight's Long-Term Care News Julie Williamson recently asked for input from several senior living industry survey experts. The specific area of interest was to capture their thoughts regarding the current structure of the 5-Star Quality Rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and how that relates to resident satisfaction survey data.

The current components of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Five Star Quality Rating System include health survey results, staffing levels and quality measures. The CMS Five Star Rating is used to help consumers compare nursing homes and identify the strengths and weaknesses of that specific nursing home. The task of selecting a reputable, safe, caring nursing home for your loved one is not an easy one.

A common argument in this debate is whether the CMS rating could possibly benefit from including a resident satisfaction survey component. Why not include the resident's point of view? Using a number of measures to evaluate a nursing home can only help consumers in the decision making process.

Some of the questions that Julie asked included:

“Do you believe resident satisfaction surveys are a good, reliable source for measuring quality in the seniors housing environment? Why or why not?”

“What do you believe are the most critical elements of a successful resident satisfaction survey?”

“In your opinion, where do you believe some satisfaction surveys fall short?”

LSN's Confidence Satisfaction Survey Program Director, Susan Pearson, responded to the questions in this way:

“Allowing the results from resident satisfaction surveys to be factored into the mix could possibly improve the measurement system and make it stronger. This is because actual stakeholder feedback on services, quality of care, safety, and security are considered more reliable data.”

“Secondly, some surveys fall short in terms of “whose eyes” are they measuring satisfaction - that of the organization or the resident/family member? In terms of the organization, what is important to them are operations, services, and staff performance. From the eyes of the resident/family, what is important may be safety, promptness in services, and convenience. Surveys that fail to address “what's important” to the resident/family miss the mark.”

“Finally, some surveys fail to link results back to quality improvement programs. This usually takes more analyses than merely tabulating percentages of satisfied customers. The Confidence Survey Program provides useful interpretations of results such as the Confidence Priority Action Strategy (PAS), which examines the “drivers” that most influence customers' feelings and responses about services and programs.”

Others believe that resident satisfaction survey data is subjective in nature. If that were so than try telling that to the 85 year-old resident living in your senior living community who is requested to complete a satisfaction survey annually. If you ask the resident, they typically have a lot to say. And who best to provide that first hand information than a resident. Resident's opinions should not only be collected, but considered as valuable measures of your community's processes and services.

For more information on this issue you can visit [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov) or <http://www.mcknights.com>

If you would like to weigh in on how you value resident satisfaction, please contact us at 630-325-6170.

## Written Comments May Make the Difference!

Written customer comments are important to customer satisfaction surveys. Also termed 'open-ended questions', providing residents and employees opportunities to express their concerns - as well as to convey positive experience - about your communities and organization can be valuable in a satisfaction survey.

The Confidence Satisfaction Surveys include open-ended questions such as: “Tell us what we do best here” and “What do you think could be done to improve the quality of the community?” Included in the cost of purchasing the Confidence Satisfaction Surveys is the transcription of all written comments. Evaluating individual comments is helpful to understand the needs and preferences of individual customers.

How to look for patterns in your written comments. A relatively simple method is to read through your comments a few times to identify some 'categories' into which most of the comments would fall. Some of these categories may include: staff performance, management performance, promptness of services, dining, courtesy, or staff-resident interactions. Develop two columns under each category - one for positive comments and one for negative ones.

Begin recording comments for each category. Duplicate comments may be recorded as a “check” next to each comment. Some comments may relate to more than one category, so be sure to tally each segment of the comment in the proper category. After this process of “coding” findings, look for patterns and compare results with the quantitative segments of the survey. In many cases, comments can provide valuable insights into how to address issues or “low scores” found in quantitative reports. Here's an example tally sheet on Staff Performance:

Positive Comments	Tally	Negative Comments	Tally
CNA's are always very helpful.	√√√√√√√√	Treat your staff better so they stay.	√√√√
My caregiver is very courteous and gentile.	√√√√√√√√	Dining service staff needs to dress professionally	√√√√√√√√
Maintenance always responds promptly to calls.	√√√	The activity manager needs to be more aware of what older people like to do.	√√√√

Begin recording comments for each category. Duplicate comments may be recorded as a “check” next to each comment. Some comments may relate to more than one category, so be sure to tally each segment of the comment in the proper category. After this process of “coding” findings, look for patterns and compare results with the quantitative segments of the survey. In many cases, comments can provide valuable insights into how to address issues or “low scores” found in the quantitative report.

What about the single written comment? A comment does not need to be repeated by a number of residents or employees in order to be significant. Many others may share the same viewpoint. It is often a judgment call as to whether or not an individual comment warrants actions.

Here are some final considerations:

- Comments should be taken seriously (may be an early warning or a useful suggestion)
- A comment does not need to be repeated by a large proportion of respondents to make it important.
- It takes some judgment to determine whether or not to take action on a comment.