

Media Release

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**Less than 10% of the call centre representatives were able to answer inquiries during initial contact**

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) conducted a “Call Centre Customer Satisfaction survey” in collaboration with students from the Diploma in Business Studies of Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s School of Business & Accountancy in December 2011. A total of 1403 responses were collected from 1004 respondents who gone through a face-to-face interview. Only 8.4% of the respondents on average agreed that call centre representatives were able to answer their inquiry during initial contact. This sparks an area of concern as this seems to imply that call centre representatives may not be equipped with the relevant skills or knowledge to provide adequate support or assistance for consumers.

Through conducting the survey, CASE’s aim was to find out the satisfaction level of customers towards banks and telecommunications providers. In addition, CASE also hopes that banks and telecommunications providers can make use of the survey findings to improve their call centre services.

To participate in the survey, respondents must have made calls to call centres of banks, telecommunications providers or both in the six months before the survey. (See Table A below on the number of respondents by distribution). Their responses were recorded in an interview whereby they had to answer an extensive list of questions on the services provided by the call centre representatives.

**Table A. Number of respondents by distribution**

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Called only telco	305	30.38%
Called only bank	300	29.88%
Called both telco and bank	399	39.74%
<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>	<b>1004</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table A above shows the total number of respondents who responded based on their experience with the bank, telecommunications provider or both.

The findings of the survey also further revealed that on average, more than 70% of the respondents agreed that the call centres representatives did not have the knowledge to answer, or provide accurate or relevant information. The breakdown is as below:

- 1) 1047 or 74.6% of the respondents felt that the call centre representative did not had the knowledge to answer their inquiries
- 2) 1020 or 72.7% of the respondents felt that the call centre representative did not provide accurate information
- 3) 1025 or 73.1% of the respondents felt that the call centre representative did not provide relevant information

Note: Please refer to Annex A for reference.

A majority of the respondents also did not think that the representatives were courteous, friendly, professional, enthusiastic, patient, responsive or attentive to their requirements. A majority of the respondents also disagreed that the representatives were fluent and clear in their speech. 46% of respondents had to call twice or more times to reach a call centre representative. (Please refer to Annex B for reference).

CASE also found out that about 78.6% of the respondents wanted call centres to operate at least 13 hours daily. A check with seven companies revealed that six of them are already operating at least 14 hours daily. Therefore, it may imply that the publicity on the operating hours of the call centres may not be widespread. As such, CASE recommends that the banks and telecommunications providers step up their publicity on the operating hours of their call centres.

However, despite the above findings on operating hours, respondents were generally more concerned with the waiting time of the call, the product knowledge of the representative and his/her efficiency and effectiveness in solving their problems.

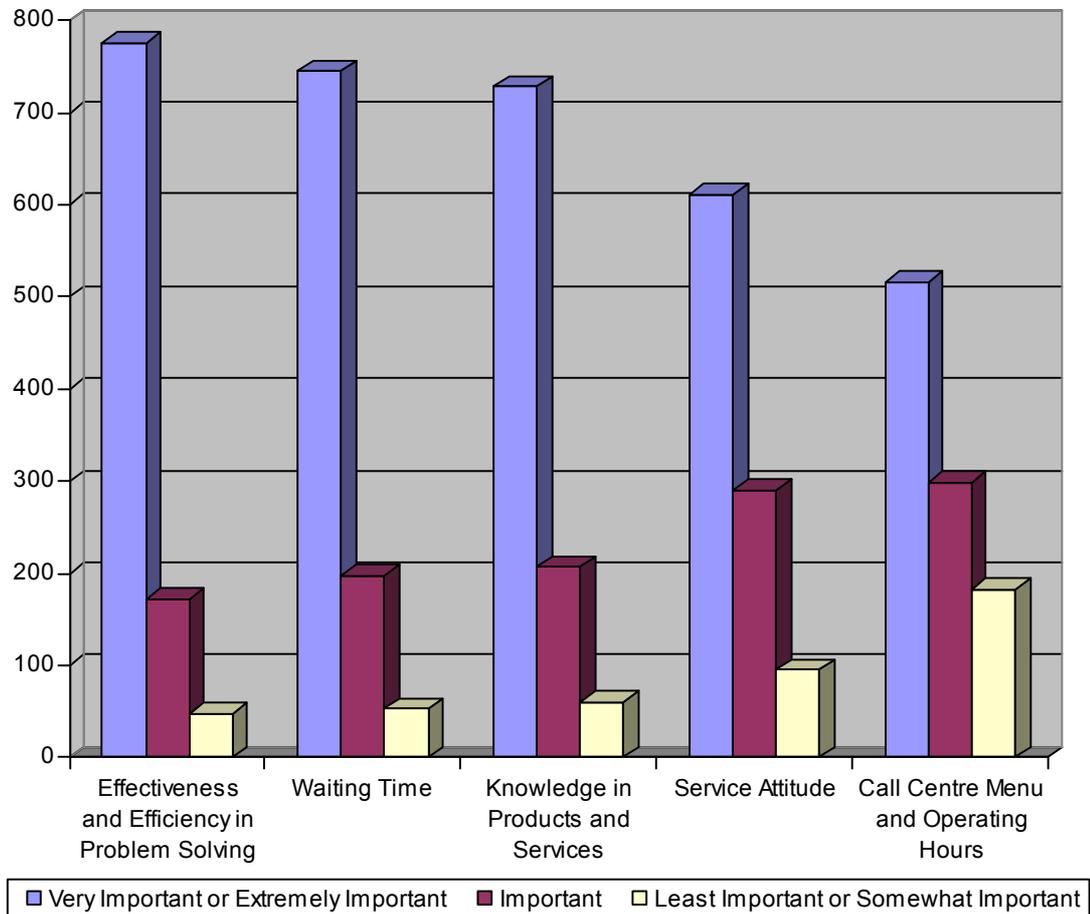
The following Table B and Figure 1 show the areas for improvement that consumers would like to see.

**Table B: Areas for improvement that respondents would like to see**

	<b>Waiting Time</b>	<b>Call Centre Menu and Operating Hours</b>	<b>Service Attitude</b>	<b>Knowledge in Products and Services</b>	<b>Effectiveness and Efficiency in Problem Solving</b>
<b>Very Important or Extremely Important</b>	745	516	611	728	776
<b>Important</b>	198	298	290	207	172
<b>Least Important or Somewhat Important</b>	53	182	95	61	48
<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>996</b>

\*Note: The number of respondents for this set of questions is 996 instead of 1004, as several respondents did not answer this set of questions.

**Figure 1: Areas for improvement that respondents would like to see**



From the survey findings, CASE feels that the standards of call centres can be improved. In particular, CASE would like to suggest that call centres introduce a call-back feature for dropped calls. Moving forward, we urge the call centres to work on the lapses in their service and thus, enhance the consumer service experience with the service providers.

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