Using Customer Experience Analytics to Drive World-Class Customer Satisfaction

Mercedes-Benz Financial Services

Mercedes Benz Financial Services USA LLC (MBFS), headquartered in Farmington Hills, Mich., with Business Center Operations in Fort Worth, Texas, provides brand-specific financial services and products for Mercedes-Benz automotive dealers and their retail customers. It also provides financial support to smart USA dealers and customers. In the U.S. trucking industry, it conducts business as Daimler Truck Financial and finances Daimler Trucks North America commercial vehicles branded Freightliner, Western Star, Thomas Built Bus and Mitsubishi Fuso Truck of America, Inc.

MBFS serves as the headquarters for operations in the Americas, with approximately 1,700 employees in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil managing a portfolio of approximately $34 billion. With an over 30-year history of financial product and service excellence, MBFS provides financing for dealer inventories and over 400,000 retail customers while striving to maintain the highest levels of customer service and satisfaction.

MBFS is a company of the Daimler Financial Services Group, the captive financial services arm of Daimler AG, which is headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. Daimler Financial Services does business in 40 countries and employs more than 7,000 men and women worldwide.

MBFS plays a crucial role in shaping dealer and customer perceptions of the overall Mercedes brand. This case study provides an overview of the MBFS and CFI Group relationship and several of the program highlights to date.

Demanding Quality and Analytical Rigor in Customer Satisfaction Measurement

Prior to partnering with CFI Group, MBFS' customer feedback programs followed a marketing-based approach primarily focused on attracting customers and less focused on retention and satisfaction. Sensing a need for a more analytical approach, MBFS formed a project team to investigate alternatives. This research ultimately led them to CFI Group.

CFI Group's access to the proprietary analytical tools and methodology behind the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) was a differentiator for MBFS and gave the project team confidence that working with CFI Group would result in more meaningful insights based on sound analytics.

The MBFS program started with a "total experience" survey that looked holistically at the owner experience as well as questions designed to get the customer's feedback concerning MBFS competitors. This program quickly grew and now includes surveys at a more specific transactional level. An overview of the two types of analyses is as follows:

Total experience: This effort measures the overall customer satisfaction index (CSI) of MBFS customers by looking at the total customer experience across all touchpoints. The effort also includes competitive and cross-industry benchmarking. MBFS not only wants to score highly among competing alternatives in the luxury car financing segment, they also want to be among the best CSI performers across all industries.

Transactional: These analyses look at individual customer interactions across different functional areas, drilling down into the details that matter most in each. For example, one program monitors customer feedback and satisfaction within the MBFS Client Care Center, looking for specific insights that can drive process improvements in this critical operation.

The MBFS program complements the Mercedes-Benz 'Customer One' initiative, which is designed to put the customer first at all key touchpoints of a buyer's experience with the brand. These points range from the initial sales experience, to managing their accounts on the MBFS website, to end-of-contract handling. Data from the program provides team members with continuous feedback, helping them identify and evaluate key aspects of the customer experience in the customer's own words.

Driving Operational Insights and Changes for Impressive Gains

Overall CSI and stated loyalty metrics rose six points within a year, strongly supporting the connection between customer satisfaction and intention to remain a Mercedes-Benz vehicle owner and MBFS client. MBFS is currently on par with other captive financial services companies in the luxury segment, and very close to the top tier of all ACSI-measured organizations, across all industries. A sampling of areas the program has impacted includes:

> **First Contact Resolution (FCR) Rate** – FCR rate improved by six points in one year, exceeding by a wide margin the average FCR rate reported in CFI Group's annual Contact Center Satisfaction Index (CCSI) study results. MBFS achieved this by leveraging customer feedback, identifying specific phone support problem areas, and streamlining processes.

> **Auto Pay** – The team used transactional survey insights to better understand why customers sign up for or cancel this service, using the data to help drive website and process modifications for improvement. MBFS also discovered that customers on Auto Pay exhibited higher overall CSI scores, motivating them to take proactive steps to improve awareness of this feature and encourage its use.

> **Interactive Voice Response (IVR)** – MBFS leveraged feedback to streamline IVR menus and processes, making it easier and faster for customers to reach a live agent when needed.

> **Website** – The MBFS web team makes continuous improvements to the website functionality, incorporating good ideas coming directly from customer verbatim comments. The CFI Group software platform is especially useful in this area, as it includes text search and 'word cloud' functions that help identify trends and 'hot topic' themes within the customer's open-ended feedback.

> **'Live Chat'** – MBFS learned this mode of web-based interaction with customers is a key contributor to overall CSI for those who use it, warranting live chat usage be examined for broader adoption across MBFS support operations.

Real-Time Access to What Real Customers Are Thinking

Customer Service and Collections Group leaders at the MBFS Client Care Center are especially heavy users of the CFI Group platform tools, accessing the web portal on a daily basis to monitor dashboard summary data, key CSI drivers and useful verbatim comments. Both the Texas and Michigan teams also receive real-time email alerts based on MBFS-established criteria, allowing them to more quickly coordinate customer responses.

Finding Diamonds in the Data

Customer experience survey results can often be a bit surprising, uncovering important relationships and connections management teams wouldn't otherwise zero in on. Such was the case with the analytical work performed at MBFS. As one example, MBFS discovered that the discussion of payment options with potential customers very early in the vehicle buyer's initial financing application process was a key driver of customer satisfaction not only for that process, but for MBFS CSI scores overall. This type of finding helps MBFS uncover where to invest even further, and also where to avoid or perhaps curtail investment. Through the data collected in the program, the operational areas have additional data points to be considered when projecting the expected payoff as they prioritize changes or enhancements.

These "diamonds in the data" can be found 24/7 by MBFS staff as they use the CFI Group reporting portal. Insights are also uncovered in the quarterly executive reports (deeper dive analysis provided by CFI Group consultants), which are part of the CFI Group program.

MBFS and CFI Group: Customer Experience Teamwork That Really Works

MBFS and CFI Group continue to hone and expand their customer experience analyses and recommendations, working as a three-part team that incorporates the headquarters staff in Farmington Hills, Michigan, the Client Care Center in Fort Worth, Texas, and CFI Group's analysts and platform support personnel in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

MBFS executives attend regular project briefings and staff members receive ongoing education in the science and analytics that underpin the ACSI and CFI Group programs in general. This ongoing interaction keeps the program vibrant and ensures team members have the background and knowledge to fully participate and contribute to the program's ongoing success.

If you think your brand and customers deserve a similar world-class customer experience analytics program, simply contact CFI Group today.

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About Mercedes-Benz Financial Services (www.mbfs.com)

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For more information, go to: www.mbfs.com/corp or facebook.com/mbfsamericas.

About CFI Group (www.cfigroup.com)

CFI Group is a global leader in providing customer feedback insights through analytics. CFI Group provides a technology platform that leverages the science of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). This platform continuously measures the customer experience across multiple channels, benchmarks performance, and prioritizes improvements for maximum impact.

Founded in 1988 and headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, CFI Group serves global clients from a network of offices worldwide. Our clients span a variety of industries, including financial services, hospitality, manufacturing, telecom, retail and government. Regardless of your industry, we can put the power of our technology and the science of the ACSI methodology to work for you.

About The ACSI (www.theacsi.org)

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is the only uniform, cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction proven to predict financial results. Founded at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, the ACSI is a leading economic indicator of consumer spending in the United States.

The ACSI measures more than 230 companies and organizations across 43 industries, representing close to half of the U.S. economy. Nearly 20 years of data from the ACSI show that customer satisfaction is an indicator of financial results on both macro and microeconomic levels, including shareholder value and cash flow volatility. The U.S. Federal Government also uses the ACSI as the gold standard of satisfaction measurement for its agencies.