

Category: *Managed Care Company*

Methods: *Customer Satisfaction, Private Online Panel*

Summary

A large managed care company wanted to optimize its customer satisfaction levels among its Preferred Provider Network (PPN). Decision Analyst created, managed, and hosted an online survey panel for the managed care company. The panel allowed easy access to representatives in the PPN and provided a mechanism for feedback on a variety of planned changes and improvements in the ways that providers interact with the company.

Strategic Issues

Customer service for a managed care company is not just about the insured, but it extends into their work with other stakeholders like network providers, including physicians, ancillary providers, as well as hospitals and facilities. For one company, having a large PPN was a major selling point and led to increased sales and member satisfaction levels.

In the network, preferred providers interacted with the managed care company on multiple levels, including eligibility requirements, claims processing, care management, referrals, educational materials, etc. The company had created a preferred provider service department specifically to help facilitate these interactions. But to further assure that the preferred providers remained in the network, they wanted to improve its network provider satisfaction-measurement tools and provider satisfaction levels.

Preferred Provider Network:

Physicians, clinics, hospitals, and other healthcare service providers that agree to a pre-negotiated rate for everyone on a selected health plan.

Research Objectives

To help the company with this goal, Decision Analyst recommended developing a temporary private online panel of the preferred providers who were willing to provide feedback in online surveys and discussions.

The panel was created to: Present an infrastructure for actively soliciting feedback from a preselected group of providers.

- Augment existing qualitative and quantitative research that routinely identified and monitored key drivers of provider satisfaction with the program.
- Provide a mechanism to attain actionable, reliable, timely insights and emerging trends from providers on experience with the company.



Research Design and Methods

Members of the panel included provider representatives who directly interacted with the managed care company via the provider service department. The panel consisted of approximately 200-250 providers. On average each panel member completed one project or survey per month.

Over the course of 1½ years, Decision Analyst conducted a series of quantitative and qualitative studies. The topics of the research focused on the provider service department and how it could be improved. Once the company's high satisfaction goals were achieved and a permanent provider satisfaction tool was put into place, the panel was disbanded.

Results

Findings from this panel research drove numerous recommendations for improving the provider service department and refocusing the strategic plan for the managed care company. The panel also served as a forum for provider representatives to express their opinions around critical topics, and interaction with the panel members was used to track progress on various initiatives and to advance the company's collective understanding of factors affecting providers' overall satisfaction. Through feedback from the panel, the company was able to optimize its customer satisfaction levels among its network providers.