

## Measuring Customer Satisfaction – Over Time and in Global Benchmarks

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**Abstract:** In a new research approach, the German National Library of Science and Technology, TIB, together with the market research organisation TNS Infratest, measured customer satisfaction in one figure as well as in terms of service quality offered. Even if offers of libraries are quickly changing, the dedicated TNS methodology applied allows comparisons over time and enables scientific as well as public libraries to measure, monitor and manage service quality from year to year. The unique tools used allow international cross-comparisons among libraries and allow us to judge the TIB results compared to other leading scientific libraries.

**Keywords:** customer satisfaction, market research, global benchmarks, balanced scorecard

### 1. Introduction: The German National Library of Science & Technology

The TIB, as the German National Library of Science and Technology, plays an important role in Germany's research infrastructure. Within its fields of engineering, architecture, chemistry, computer science, mathematics and physics, the TIB is worldwide the largest specialised library. It has been an important provider of literature and information for over five decades at an internationally competitive level. The TIB was founded in 1959 and employs around 212 people. The library is based on unique collections of essential and highly specific technological and scientific specialist literature across all media. Furthermore, the library conducts numerous research and development projects on digital libraries.

The TIB is an institute of the Leibniz Association which is one of the four large science organisations in Germany (apart from Fraunhofer, Max Planck Society

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and Helmholtz Association). Every seven years, all the members are evaluated by an independent, external panel of experts who examine strategies, services and management methods. Both the results of the experts and the Leibniz Association Senate's statement are used at the German Joint Science Conference for the assessment of further funding requirements. The worst case scenario can lead to the closure of institutions and facilities. Annually, around 24 million euros are invested into the TIB by the federal and state governments.

## **2. Motivation and Aims**

In order to continuously adapt the TIB's strategy to the wishes of its clients, it is key to gain a precise understanding of the current users as well as of their expectations and their behaviour in the future. Key questions to be answered were:

- How satisfied are the users with the products and services of the TIB?
- What are the expectations and requirements of the users – also in the future?
- Which different user groups exist – and should they be addressed differently?
- Which products or services are among the most important?
- What are the current strengths and weaknesses?
- Are there products or services which can be skipped?
- Which measures should be taken in order to improve customer satisfaction and retention?
- Which measures will have most impact on the users' retention?

The overall aims of the study were to answer the following questions:

### **Current Users**

- Who are the current users of the TIB?
- How intensively the current products and services of the TIB are used?

### **Customer satisfaction and service quality**

- How satisfied are the users overall and with each of the products and services offered by the TIB?
- Where should the quality be improved and why?
- What measures should be taken in order to improve user satisfaction and retention?

## **3. The Survey**

In 2011, the TIB commissioned the market research institute, TNS Infratest Business Intelligence, to carry out a customer online survey which took place between November and December 2011. A total of 483 TIB customers (random sample) completed the online questionnaire which consisted of 19 questions. The questions referred to the customer typology, the usage of products and services as well as to learn about customer satisfaction and service quality. An

overall return rate of around 26% could be reached. The average interview duration was 8 minutes, the evaluation, of course, anonymous.

#### **4. Results Part 1: Customer Typology**

We want to briefly discuss the customer typology here in order to be able to categorise the TIB.

The 483 customers who took part in the survey are a representative cross-section of all customers. 46% of them work in the private sector. Nearly a quarter of these (21%) are employed in the machine building industry. The other customers come from the chemical/pharmaceutical industry (19%), electrical engineering (9%) and from the energy or environmental industry.

20% of all customers are attached to (non-)academic research and teaching, 18% to academic research and teaching and 14% to other state institutions, such as libraries or administrations.

On average, 74% of customers have been using the TIB for four years and longer, 55% already for seven years and longer. TIB customers are primarily long-term users.

How intensively the services are used? 71% of the respondents used the TIB during the last two months, 29% used the TIB within the last week in 2011. 51% of these users were public institutions.

94% of the TIB customers are using the document delivery service. 54% profit from researching “GetInfo”, the TIB portal for Science and Technology. One third (31%) of the respondents used the information from the TIB’s website. It is to stress that personal consulting is relevant to 17% of all respondents.

#### **5. Results Part 2: Customer Satisfaction**

To ensure a reliable customer-focused strategic orientation in the medium and long-term, libraries must have a sound understanding of their customers and users. Key questions include:

- How satisfied are the users of a library overall?
- How satisfied are they compared to users of other comparable libraries?
- How can demand among regular long-term customers be increased?
- Which segments of the customer base should be targeted on a priority basis in order to achieve the greatest possible growth?
- How the service does provided by the library rate as regards the quality of each of its individual products?
- Which services warrant investment for the future?
- In contrast, which services should be dropped in the future?
- How does the quality of products and services compare to those provided by other libraries?

- What measures should be taken as a matter of priority in order to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty?
- How can customer satisfaction help to increase the number of recommendations and thus to attract new customers?

These numerous questions can only be answered by an “Integrated **M**asuring, **M**anaging and **M**onitoring” of the customer relationship are needed. These three analytical steps each beginning with the letter “M” are brought together in TNS so-called “TRI\*M” method:

- Measurement:** The current level of customer retention is measured.
- Management:** The option of prioritising opportunities and measures helps to improve the quality of the individual products and services. This leads to an increase in customer loyalty.
- Monitoring:** Regular monitoring, e.g. every two years, checks the efficiency of the measures taken.

TNS has already carried out over 20,000 so-called TRI\*M studies for more than 1,900 clients worldwide. This means that TNS has wide-ranging benchmarking capabilities. As a result, the results of all the studies we have carried out for information service providers and libraries can be compared with each other.

In order to establish long-term, profitable customer relationships, an organization such as the TIB must not only satisfy its customers but also ensure lasting, genuine customer loyalty. If we measure **customer satisfaction** we measure the current status of the customer relationship – but we disregard future opportunities, e.g. the digitization of products & services, for growth. In view of this fact, it is at least equally important to measure **customer loyalty** in the **other** dimension too. Customer loyalty analyses the future of the customer relationships. Only satisfied customers are loyal customers. In addition, we have to take care of customers’ retention. The retention mirrors the emotional relationships between customers and the organization and is the sum of all experiences made with the organization.

TRI\*M studies can measure not only the satisfaction of customers with all products and services offered, but can measure the overall customer satisfaction in one figure.

### **5.1 Collecting information on library customers' satisfaction – as compared to other libraries – nationally or globally**

So-called TRI\*M studies can measure not only the satisfaction of customers with all products and services offered, but can measure the overall customer satisfaction in one figure. This is an important advantage – compared to all self-made surveys – as the customers satisfaction index, the TRI\*M index, allows international or regional benchmarks, also over years. The TRI\*M index is

based on four pillars allowing to measure the real complexity of the customer relationship.

Assessing the overall services provided by a library has to cover all rational and emotional aspects of a customer relationship. After all, a customer relationship is too complex to be measured in a single dimension only. Thus, each TRI\*M survey is based on the following four questions which are put to customers, as standard, at the beginning of each questionnaire. They cover the following dimensions:

**5.1.1 Overall rating:**

This question measures customers' perception and reflects their satisfaction with a library's products/services on a rational level (*rational loyalty*).

*"In general, how would you rate the overall performance of the library?"*

**5.1.2 Recommendation:**

This question shows whether customers are so satisfied that they would recommend the library (*emotional loyalty*).

*"Based on your experiences, would you recommend the services of the library to friends or colleagues?"*

**5.1.3 Intention to make further purchases/further use:**

This question reflects the *intentional* dimension and serves as an indicator of customers' willingness to make further purchases and further use of the library.

*"Based on your experiences, how likely are you to reuse the services of the library in the future again?"* ("Intentional dimension")

**5.1.4 Competitive advantage:**

This question serves as an indicator as to what (if any) barriers hinder customers from switching to rival libraries (*"objective hindrance"*).

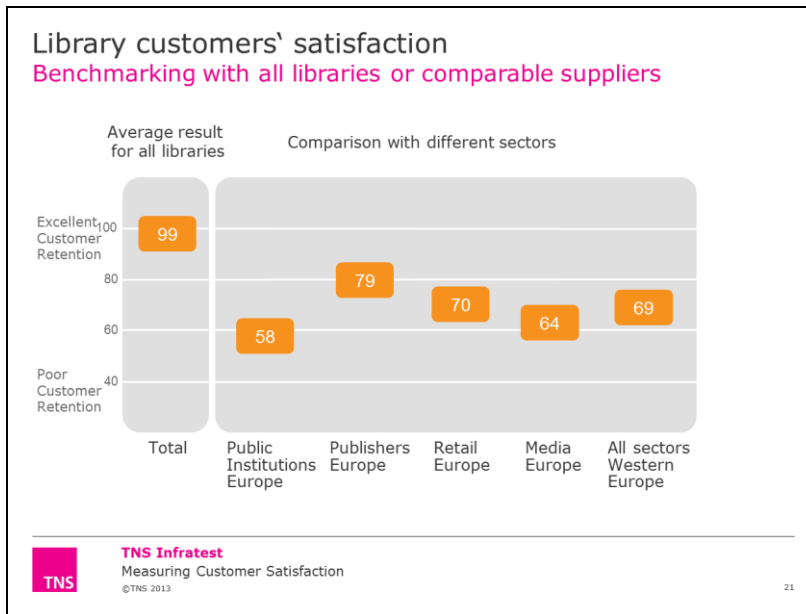
*"Based on what you know about comparable institutions, how would you rate your advantage in using the services of the library rather than the services of the other institutions?"*

The results of these four questions are aggregated to give a key figure, the so-called TRI\*M index. It allows an assessment of the library's overall services based on customers' responses – in direct comparison to those provided by others. The TRI\*M index can also be compared during repeat surveys over a number of years. It reflects any progress or deterioration in the development of the customer relationship.

The TRI\*M index uses a scale from 0 to 100 points. Given the nature of index calculation, index values below "0" or even above "100" points are theoretically possible in exceptional cases. However, the TRI\*M indices range between 10 and 100 points in 98 per cent of the studies carried out by TNS.

In the studies we have carried out for specialist scientific libraries to date, the average TRI\*M index for the customers surveyed is 99 points. This constitutes a "sensationally good" result and means that the customer relationship is very

good. In the main, libraries have highly satisfied and extremely loyal customers. Every library taking part in a TRI\*M study is given its own specific index value and can therefore rate itself and make meaningful comparisons.



**Figure 1: Benchmarking customer satisfaction of specialist libraries with other sectors or comparable suppliers**

A comparison with studies carried out by TNS in other sectors shows that the libraries can rightly be proud of this result. Based on all TRI\*M studies that TNS has carried out for public institutions in Europe, the average TRI\*M index value is 58. This means that the result for libraries is significantly better.

They clearly outstrip the European automotive industry's average index value of 79 points. The libraries' lead over other sectors too is impressive. For example, the index values for European retail companies (70), the European media sector (64) or all Western European sectors taken together (69) are on average much worse.

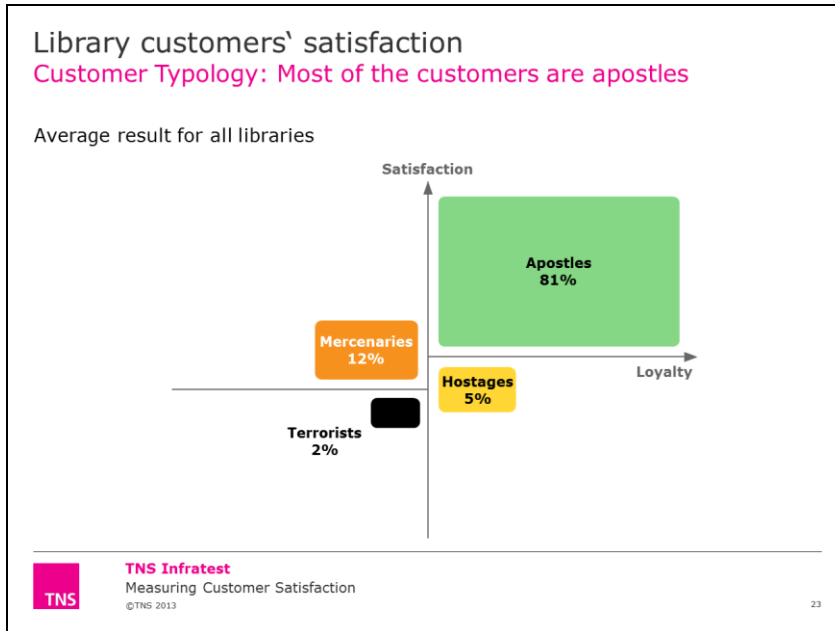
The TRI\*M index for the TIB reached 97 points. This means that the TIB reaches a very high customer satisfaction. Looking at the TRI\*M index split by different customer groups, we recognize that customers from the non-academic research and teaching reach 100 points, which is a value superior to the average index value reached within all studies TNS conducted among libraries. The TIB can be proud of this result. The satisfaction among private industry clients reaches 94 points, a very good result.

With TRI\*M from TNS, all scientific (or public) libraries have access to a tool which allows customer relationship measurements and benchmarks which can be compared on a global basis over many years. Multi-client studies are also possible. These are particularly cost-effective as they allow a number of libraries to be surveyed at the same time using a standardized questionnaire.

## **5.2 Customer typology – as compared to rival libraries – nationally or globally**

In many cases, a library's customer file consists of a collection of e-mail addresses. Frequently, only very basic attempts to gather more precise details of the customer group have been made. Apart from addresses and contact details, there is generally little information which would allow strategic customer management. In contrast, a customer base can be meaningfully scrutinised on the basis of a survey. TNS TRI\*M allows a distinction between the following four customer types:

- **Apostles:**  
Apostles guarantee the long-term success of a library and thus represent one of the most important customer groups to take care of. Apostles actively spread positive mouth to mouth propaganda. They also exhibit high repeat purchase rates and offer excellent potential for cross-selling/up-selling. They are highly satisfied and are very loyal to their library.
- **Terrorists:**  
Terrorists are dissatisfied, disloyal customers. They actively spread negative mouth to mouth propaganda. They are extremely dissatisfied and show little loyalty.
- **Mercenaries:**  
Mercenaries are on the lookout for better services and frequently defect if they find them. Mercenary relationships are often not particularly profitable. Mercenaries are only moderately satisfied and not particularly loyal.
- **Hostages:**  
Hostages do not actually wish to remain with the library as a customer but are usually reliant on it for presentations and technologies or as a result of other (possibly emotional) barriers. Nevertheless, these relationships may still be profitable for the library. The customers are not particularly satisfied but they are loyal.



**Figure 2: Typology of library clients**

Customers should not be classified as “apostles” or “mercenaries” from the outset. Instead, it is the sum of positive or negative customer experiences which leads to one of these relationships. Depending on possible new experiences, customers may also switch from one relationship type to another with varying degrees of dynamism.

- Our studies for libraries reveal that, at 81%, the proportion of apostles is very high. Given the very high average TRI\*M Index, however, this was to be expected. These library users show a high level of overall satisfaction and considerable loyalty. This is also valid for the TIB. 80% of the TIB customers are apostles.
- On average, around 12% of the library users in all surveys are mercenaries, i.e. they are very satisfied with their particular library but are not loyal when it comes to using it in the future. This is also valid for 11% of the TIB users. They may be price-sensitive customers, customers who rarely need the library’s services or customers who will not require the library’s services at all in the future.
- With an average figure of 2%, the proportion of terrorists compared to the apostles is extremely small for all libraries surveyed. 3% of all TIB users are “terrorists”. These people are dissatisfied with the services provided by the library.
- Finally, the hostages too should be mentioned. These are customers who show a low level of satisfaction but profess to a high level of loyalty. On average, they make up 5% of customers in all surveys of libraries or



information service providers. 6% of all TIB customers belong to that group.

When looking at the customer typology of the TIB by user group we can state the following:

- Apostles (84%) and hostages (9%) are the most widespread among customers belonging to non-academic research & teaching
- Most terrorists (6%) can be found among the public institutions
- With 14% mercenaries the private industry is leading.

Overall, it is clear that the vast majority of customers is not only very satisfied and loyal but also has an extremely positive attitude towards the TIB. The customer base is stable and exhibits hardly any tendencies towards defection. The proportion of the “dangerous” customer groups (mercenaries and terrorists) is minimal and does not pose any threat. The vast majority of customers is happy to use the TIB again and again, is receptive towards new services and is glad to recommend the library to other people.

When carrying out our studies, we have typologies customers according to specialist areas too. This enabled us to come up with very specific marketing measures aimed at the individual groups, e.g. users connected with mathematics, mechanical engineering or architecture.

### **5.3 Assessing the services provided by libraries**

Collecting information regarding people’s satisfaction with the single products and services provided by a library plays a key role in any customer survey. The special TRI\*M method asks customers not only about their satisfaction with the individual services but also about their importance. After all, if the products that were classed as important by customers are rated poorly, this means that customer satisfaction is low and that action must therefore be taken immediately.

At the start of each TRI\*M study, the products and services (so-called “items”) to be analysed are defined with the help of the library during a workshop. These are the items that those surveyed must then rate in terms of importance and service provision.

On the basis of the studies we have previously carried out for libraries, these items normally refer to four groups: media offer (e.g. range of printed or electronic journals offered, etc.), research facilities (e.g. quick, user-friendly, relevant, etc.), document delivery (e.g. cost-benefit relationships, quality of copies, etc.) and customer service (e.g. competency, friendliness, reaction timeliness, etc.).

Each service or item is identified with a letter and a number combination. The letters relate to the item group, e.g. all items grouped under “A: Media on offer”, “B: Research Facilities”, “C: Document Delivery” or “D: Customer Service”.

<p><b>A Media on offer</b> A01 Complete range of printed journals A02 Complete range of electronic journals</p> <p><b>B Research Facilities</b> B01 Facility to research across all specialist databases using one search query B02 Relevance of the list of hits</p> <p><b>C Document Delivery</b> C01 Direct downloads possibility of full-texts after retrieval C02 Quality of copies or PDF downloads</p> <p><b>D Customer Service</b> D01 Competent specialist advice D02 Rapid response to queries</p>
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**Figure 3: Selected products and services offered by a library**

During the survey, customers are asked to rate the **importance of each item** on a five-point scale, e.g. “How important do you consider the facility to carry out research across all specialist databases using one search query”? As far as the assessment scale is concerned, the possible answers are “extremely important, very important, important, less important, not important at all”.

Those surveyed are also asked to rate the **quality and performance of each individual item** in their eyes. Here too, the assessment is given on a five-point scale (“excellent, very good, good, adequate, and poor”).

The results of the survey are summarised in a portfolio view, the so-called TRI\*M Grid. Through the positioning of the items, TNS clearly shows how products and services influence customer loyalty. The TRI\*M Grid provides information as to the current strengths and weaknesses of a library’s service portfolio, while explaining in a transparent manner the way in which individual service and quality elements influence customer loyalty.

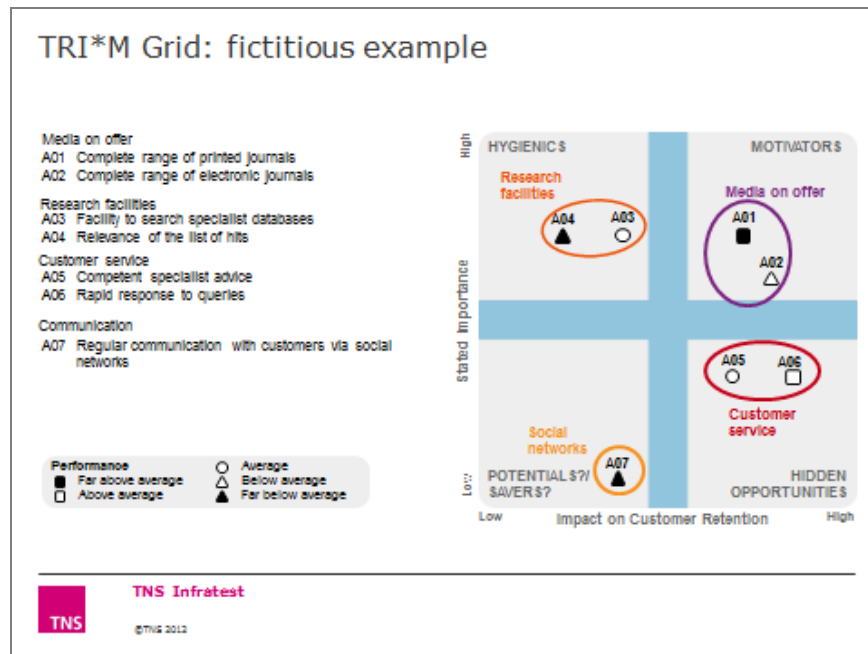


Figure 4: Example of a TRI\*M Grid with fictitious results

#### How should the Grid be read?

##### Reading example 1:

The **stated importance** of the items is placed on the y-axis as the mean value of the five-point scale. Low mean values lie in the bottom part of the grid and high mean values in the top part of the grid, i.e. above the light blue middle line of the cross. In our sample case, this means that the traditional “Complete range of printed journals” (A01) still appears to be more important to those surveyed than the “Complete range of electronic journals” (A02). However, both items have a huge influence on both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In contrast, “Competent specialist advice” (A05) is less important to customers, although it certainly should not be neglected. “Library communication via social networks” still seems to be completely unimportant. This is typical for a service which is currently used by only a few customers and is only just starting to become more established.

##### Reading example 2:

The **performance or assessment of the quality of products or services** is indicated in the grid by five different symbols:

- Far above average – black square
- Above average – white square
- Average – circle

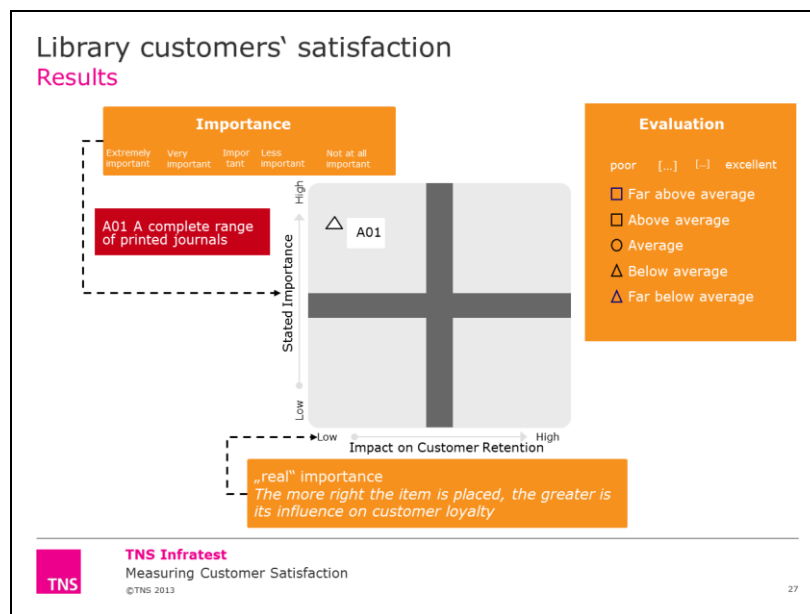
- Below average – white triangle
- Far below average – black triangle

For the libraries we have studied to date, this means that “Regular communication via social networks” (A07) is currently rated “far below average” by customers. However, it does not seem to be particularly important at the moment which means there is no need for immediate action. However, the development of the item should still be monitored closely. After all, people's estimation of its importance may very well change as the use of social media for library matters continues to grow.

The “Relevance of the list of hits” (A04) following a search of the libraries’ online catalogues is rated “below average”. In contrast, the “Complete range of printed journals” (A01) is rated “well above average”, while the “Complete range of electronic journals” (A02) is rated “below average”.

*Reading example 3:*

**The impact on customer retention** is shown on the x-axis. By knowing what items are important to customers and influence their overall rating and in turn their loyalty, the various performance attributes can be optimised to ensure they meet customers’ requirements completely. The attributes are positioned in four quadrants.



**Figure 5: How to interpret the TRI\*M Gird**

- **Motivators:** The items placed in this quadrant are considered important and have a demonstrably great influence on the intensity of the customer relationship. They are drivers of loyalty.  
The library stock is positioned here. Purposefully and quickly improving the stock as well as the accessibility of the electronic media on offer is therefore a priority for the future as this promises to increase customer loyalty and satisfaction. This provides empirical proof that the current strategic focus of many libraries is indeed correct. However, care and consistent quality are still called for when it comes to maintaining the traditional printed stock.
- **Hidden opportunities:** Although those surveyed considered the items placed in this quadrant less important, in reality they have a considerable influence on the intensity of the customer relationship and its future further development.  
For libraries, this applies in particular to customer service. Specialist advice is rated average, while rapid response to queries is rated above average. The products and services in this area represent the main opportunities for libraries to stand out from their competitors within the market.
- **Hygienics:** From the customers' point of view, the search functions for online catalogues on offer are a standard feature nowadays. Although they are considered very important, they are of little importance to the intensity of the customer relationship. However, this does not mean that libraries can neglect their provision of services – they must at least maintain the current level.  
Given the fact that satisfaction with the relevance of the list of hits was well below average, there is room for improvement and action must certainly be taken.
- **Potentials (savers):** The items placed in this quadrant have lower priority as they are less central. At the moment, this still applies to the use of social networks and applies to all libraries surveyed by TNS.  
Although libraries should remain committed to the use of social networks, expanding the range of facilities on offer in this area should not be pursued on a priority basis.

By knowing what items are important to customers and influence their overall rating and in turn their loyalty, the various performance attributes can be optimised to ensure they meet customers' requirements completely.

#### 5.4 Assessing the Products and Services Offered by TIB

Let's have a closer look how the TIB users rated the different customer services of the TIB. "Friendliness of the staff" (D01), "Competence of the staff" (D02), "Availability by phone during opening hours" (D03) and "Professional complaint management" (D05) reach best and highest customer satisfaction, symbolized in the TRI\*M Grid by black squares. This means that the TIB staff is extremely customer-oriented. All symbols are placed in the "Motivators"

quadrant meaning that these items have a high influence on the clients' retention. The overall future aim of the TIB libraries' strategy is to maintain this best service quality rating for all items also in the future "Quick response to email enquiries" (D04), marked as a white square, reaches a performance rated by TIB customers as "above average". This is quite a good result. The TIB will strive to further improve this performance (black square) – as timeliness in answering queries has a huge impact on customer retention.

All other items are rated "average", shown by circles used in the TRI\*M grid. These circles refer to different communication activities such as "Offering of trainings or customer tutorials" (D06), "Regular information about products and services via a newsletter" (D07) and "Regular information about products and services on the website" (D08). The "newsletter" (D07) is placed in the "Hidden Opportunities" quadrant. The newsletter seems to be less important to the TIB clients than other communication activities. However, it shows a high influence on customer retention. As a result, the TIB decided to improve this marketing tool by inserting and regularly up-dating it with relevant client-oriented content. The newsletter will then reach out to more clients and will help the TIB to improve in customer retention.

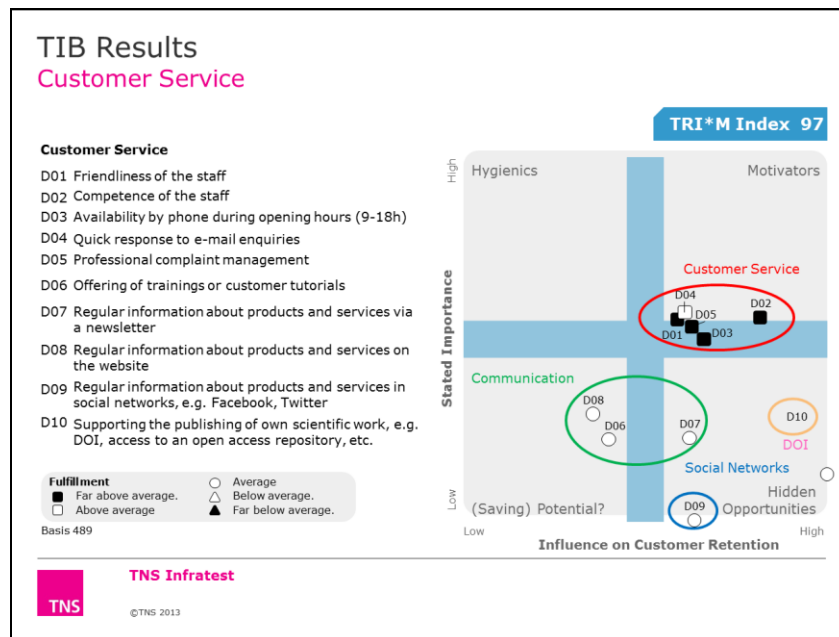


Figure 6 How satisfied TIB customers are

"Customer trainings" (D06) and "website" (D08) are less important in view of the TIB customers showing a low influence on customer retention. Nevertheless, having news on the library's website is an important

communication channel which should not be neglected. From our experiences and other surveys we know that heavy users do not scan websites for news but go directly to the products and services requested, e.g. such as the TIB portal GetInfo. It is thus of utmost important that portals are user-friendly and self-explaining. In addition, the TIB offers trainings, e.g. webinars and online trainings for GetInfo. This is customer-oriented and highly flexible. But onsite seminars for GetInfo were cancelled.

“Regular information about products and services in social networks” (D09) seems to be completely unimportant to users. However, this item is placed in the “Hidden Opportunities” quadrant meaning that this kind of information has a considerable influence on the intensity of the customer relationship and its future development. This communication potential is underestimated because it predominantly addresses the younger customer group only. However, users of social networks will steadily grow – among current as well as potential users of the TIB. During the last two years, the TIB has caught up with social network activities (for example with a blog) so that we expect to reach a better positioning in the TRI\*M grid portfolio when repeating the survey in due time. Customer orientation always includes potential clients, too.

Last but not least, “Supporting the publishing of own scientific work, e.g. DOI, access to an open access repository, etc.” (D10) is placed in the “Hidden Opportunities” quadrant. This positioning means that an extremely high influence on customer retention is given. Permanent and integrative access to research data is playing an increasingly important role in information provision. The TIB recognised already early in 2005 how important the publication of research data for sciences is. The TIB was globally the first registration agency offering this important service to their users. As the DOI service is an area of future strategic importance for the TIB, the results showed us that more effective communication is needed. It is necessary to clearly explain the particular benefits and competitive advantages users can expect from this important TIB service. The TIB will take different measures to improving in that respect.

In addition, we highly recommend to add open questions to give the customer the possibility to comment on strengths and weaknesses, wishes or future products and services to be offered.

### **5.5 Analysis of Particular Strengths and Weaknesses**

The results of the different TRI\*M Grids for each of the groups A: “Media on offer”, B: “Research Facilities”, “C: Document Delivery” or “D: Customer Service” can be summarized into a strengths and weaknesses analysis. It is one of the major advantages of TNS TRI\*M studies that competitive advantages and disadvantages which have a direct real impact on customer satisfaction and retention can be recognized. This is a major difference to all “home-made” surveys.

Let's have a look at the particular strengths of the TIB:

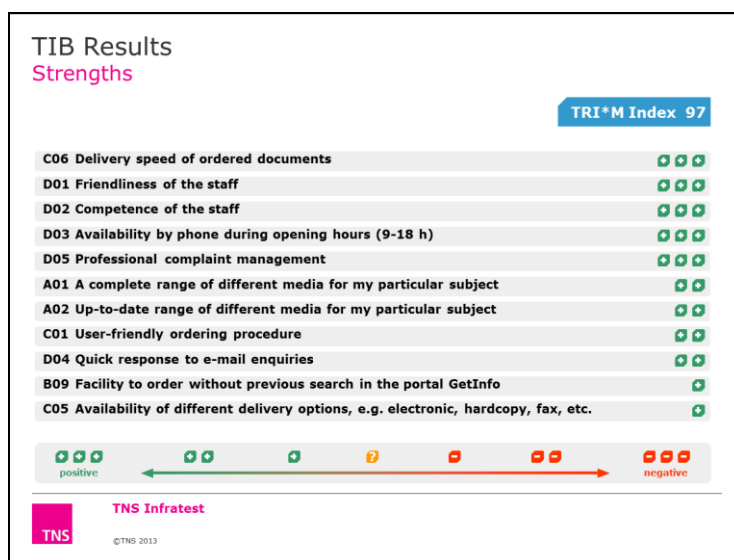


Figure 7: TIB: Key Strengths in view of its customers

Most of the **particular strengths** (+++) of the TIB refer to its customer service, particularly to all those services generated by the TIB employees. These services are most valued by the customers. Particularly the friendliness and the precise, competent consultancy skills of TIB employees as well as their professionalism dealing with complaints are highly appreciated. As all these factors had been placed as “motivators” in the TRI\*M grid, they have notably a high influence on customer retention. Furthermore, the TIB service is quick: documents are delivered as fast as possible – a fact which influences customer behavior and retention strongly. It is recognized as a key strength.

**What does this result mean to TIB?** It is important to maintain the service quality at this best level - also over the coming years. Any deterioration will have a direct effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Significant strengths (++) can be attributed to the media offer. In the eyes of the customers the media offer is complete and up-to-date. The influence of the media offer on the customer retention is high. The media offer is of course “in the heart” of each library.

**What does this result mean to TIB?** It is the overall aim to maintain, if not to improve service quality to the highest level (+++) during the next 24 months.

Significant strengths (++) are also attributed to the user-friendliness of the document delivery process as well as to the reaction time to e-mail requests from customers. One of the key elements of a good customer service is obviously the speed in reacting to the needs of the users.



**What does this result mean to TIB?** It is key to maintain this high service quality level also in the future. This may have direct impact on further education & training, and building further professional experience. The TIB employees must be able to address various technical areas (e.g. engineering, mathematics, chemistry, etc.).

Further strengths (+) can be noted for the possibility to order documents without search. Furthermore, customers value and stress how important it is for them to have different delivery options at their fingertips (e.g. print, e-mail, fax, etc.).

**What does this result mean to TIB?** It is important to support user-friendliness as well as different delivery options which can be chosen by the customers according to their individual needs and expectations.

Let’s have a look at the particular areas in which the TIB must react because this will lead to improved customer retention and satisfaction.

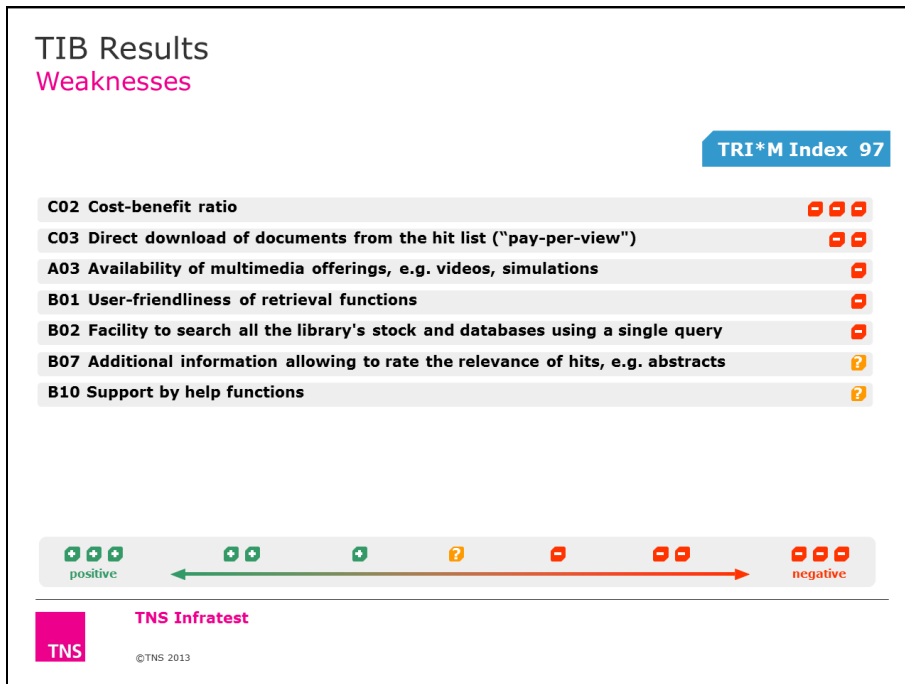


Figure 8: TIB: Key Weaknesses in view of its customers

The key weakness (---) of the TIB is – according to the customers – the cost-benefit-relationship. From the open ended questions we know that price sensitive issues refer to the document delivery service.

**What does this result mean to TIB?** The TIB should improve its communication measures stating that services and products which have to be charged offer good value for money. The communication should clearly state

why services are liable to pay costs. By striving for understanding within its customers, retention is likely to improve.

Most of the other areas in which the TIB should improve in the future refer to the retrieval functionalities of “GetInfo”, the TIB-portal for Science and Technology which provides access to more than 160 million data sets from specialized databases, publishers and library catalogues. Direct access to electronic documents and multimedia objects is available – but the current scope of offerings is rated by the customers as a weakness (-).

**What does this result mean to TIB?** In view of the increase in multimedia objects, it is important to improve access to objects such as audiovisual media, 3D-objects or research data and also to enable new forms of use for existing collections. This is why the library establishes a Competence Centre for Non-Textual Materials to achieve fundamental improvements to conditions pertaining to the access and use on non-textual material – and enlarge their multimedia content. In addition the TIB is developing a web-based platform for audiovisual media.

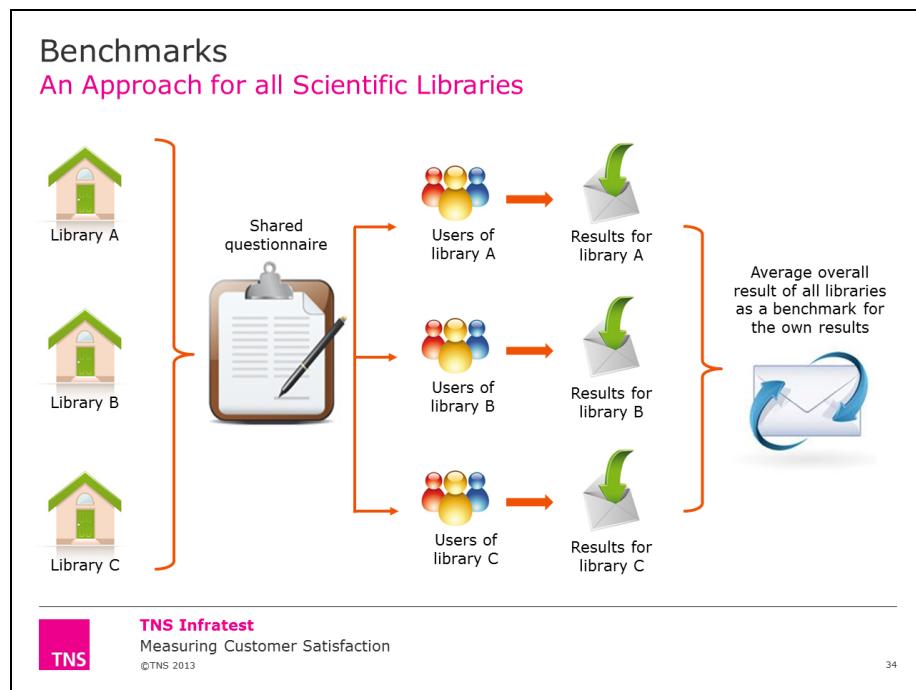
Improving retrieval functionalities is another technical issue. The degree of “user-friendliness” of the TIB website and of what is to be understood by that can be best assessed by usability studies. The TIB had just employed an expert for this field.

## **6 Results Part 3: Outlook: A Multi-client approach**

Besides a customized study approach, TNS offers interested libraries the option of a syndicated customer satisfaction study.

Such a syndicated or multi-client study is carried out simultaneously for all participating establishments. Surveys take place online using a standardized questionnaire (the questionnaire is the same for all establishments taking part, only the name of the establishment is changed for the survey). This ensures that only the customers of a particular establishment receive the questionnaire for that establishment.

This type of study is ideal if you would like to know how satisfied your customers are and what they will expect and demand of your products and services in the future. It allows direct comparisons between all libraries taking part – even on a national or international level and on product and services level, as far as the same offerings are concerned. Of course, it depends on the level of privacy agreed upfront to which degree sensitive information is shared among all participants.



**Fig 9: Multi-client approach**

One particular advantage is the fact that a syndicated study is much cheaper than an individual survey. All participating establishments receive their own individual results as well as average overall figures allowing a direct comparison between all establishments taking part. This allows you to classify and interpret your own performance.

## 7 Summary: Key Benefits

Using TNS TRI\*M as tool to measure customer satisfaction offers various advantages:

- TNS TRI\*M measures the degree of overall customer satisfaction in **one overall index figure**. This is easy to understand and to integrate into balanced scorecards. The index value is comparable – not only in between all libraries worldwide but also over the time, from year to year, even if all libraries may have completely different product & service offerings which may change. TNS TRI\*M has also access to a global benchmark database. All study results can be compared to other institutions and aggregate data and results, e.g. compared to other libraries, can be generated.
- TNS TRI\*M takes care of the whole range of **complexity of customer relationships**. It measures the rational and emotional loyalty as well as customer satisfaction. This helps libraries to better understand user perceptions.

Respondents have to judge the overall importance (five-point scale) of services and products as well as their performance (five-point scale). The more important a service or product is, the more important is to have a very strong performance. Showing the results in the TRI\*M Grid TNS provides information as to the current strengths and weaknesses of a library's service portfolio, explaining in a transparent manner the way in which individual service and quality elements influence customer loyalty. The unique selling proposition of TNS TRI\*M is that it reveals the **real drivers** of customer satisfaction. It shows **where to further invest and allocate resources in pointing to the services or products which have a direct positive impact on your customer retention.**

- TNS TRI\*M delivers a **detailed customer typology** which allows you to follow up with appropriate marketing or PR actions. You can improve your user database with compelling information on all your target groups. All results, TRI\*M index as well as service & product portfolios in the form of TRI\*M grids can be also obtained for each customer group separately.
- TNS TRI\*M is not limited to the number of products or services. TNS TRI\*M offers a much broader and **higher flexibility**. By using the so-called TRIM method, it is possible to obtain a differentiated picture of the services and products offered and the customers' evaluation thereof and to have comparability of the overall satisfaction over time with all libraries worldwide.
- TNS TRI\*M is particularly straight-forward. A library's top management can easily recognize all drivers which have a huge influence on customer retention. Thanks to these results libraries can concentrate **joint measures and actions** on the right products & services. TRI\*M also gives empirical evidence when it comes to completely skip or stop services or products. TNS TRI\*M also runs workshops to help you to define and prioritise measures which aim to strengthen your customer relationships.

In summary, this leads to the following key benefits:

1. You gain an understanding of how satisfied and loyal your customers are. You get a precise understanding of what are the real drivers to improve customer satisfaction and retention.
2. You gain a detailed knowledge about the structure of your customers.
3. You identify your strengths and weaknesses in the eyes of the customer – at the level of each single product or service.
4. You identify key areas where there is high need for action as regards customer management.
5. You invest only in the products and services which promise you improved customer satisfaction and retention. By that, all your actions are straightforward. You get guidance in allocating your resources to the right time at the right place.
6. You can compare your performance with similar libraries – even over a number of years.

From a strategic point of view, the customer satisfaction index, customer typology as well as product and service assessments deliver significant key indicators which can be a trump card in prioritizing investments. They document the continuous efforts to achieve a high level of customer retention. After all:

**Too often we measure everything and understand nothing.**

**The three most important things you need to measure in a business are customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and cash flow!”**

Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric

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