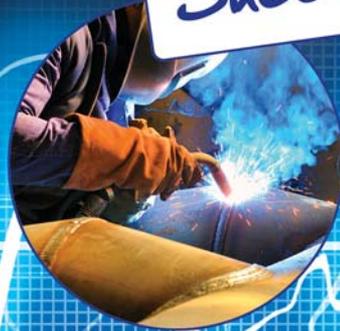




EMTA Awards Limited  
Part of the SEMTA Group

# A Customer Satisfaction

Success Story



EAL (EMTA Awards Limited) is a leading UK Awarding Organisation for vocational qualifications in the Engineering, Manufacturing and Building Services Sectors.

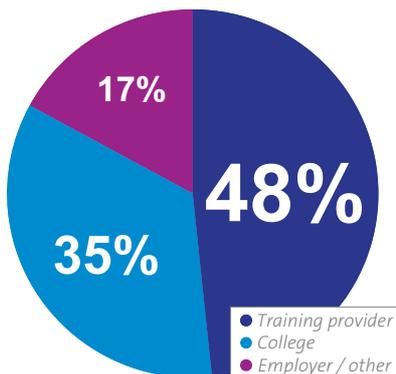
With more than 40 years experience, EAL's qualifications are recognised as representing the highest standard of practical achievement and are delivered by over 800 educational centres including colleges, training providers and major employers including BAE Systems and Toyota.

Certificating more than 100,000 learners in 2009, EAL uses its team of in house experts to develop high quality qualifications relevant to both industry and the learner. EAL is committed to customer service and ensures guidance and support is available every step of the way.

## The 2010 customer satisfaction survey

The 2010 EAL customer satisfaction survey was carried out by The Leadership Factor, who conducted interviews with over 200 EAL customers throughout April and May. The sample, a representative spread, included a wide range of the different organisations EAL has relationships with. As shown in Chart 1, these are mainly train-

Chart 1: Sample breakdown by sector

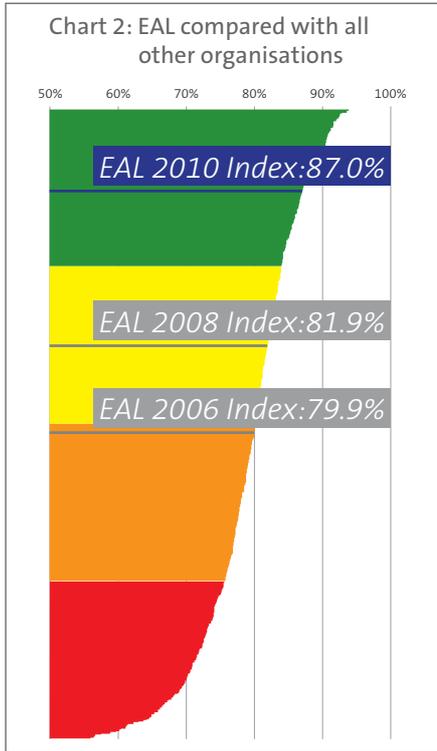


ing providers, followed by colleges and then employers. The sample was also representative according to the different types of individuals who experience EAL's service with contacts in both management and operational roles.

The Leadership Factor has conducted two previous Engineering customer satisfaction surveys for EAL in 2006 & 2008. Prior to the first survey carried out in 2006, exploratory research involving in-depth interviews was carried-out with 20 of EAL's major customers in order to design a questionnaire which focused on the most important areas to customers. This year, exploratory research was conducted again, and the measures were updated to

reflect changes in EAL's customers' priorities. Since customer satisfaction is all about 'doing best what matters most to customers' (i.e. there's little point being great at something that's not important to customers), it's essential that any overall measure of customer satisfaction is based on the customers', not the organisation's, priorities. The Satisfaction Index™ is therefore a measure of the customer experience through the customers' eyes. Since some customer priorities are more important to them than others, Satisfaction Index™ uses importance ratings to weight satisfaction ratings to produce an overall, weighted customer satisfaction index that can be reliably monitored over time.

YEAR	SATISFACTION INDEX™	STATISTICAL RELIABILITY
2010	87.0%	±1.1%
2008	81.9%	±1.3%
2006	79.9%	±1.4%



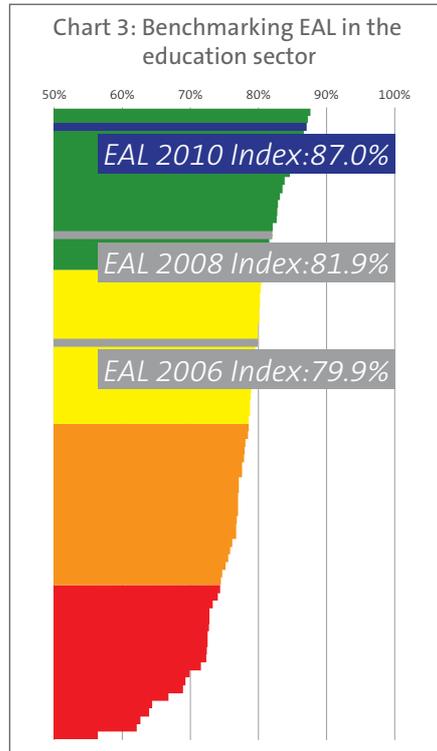
Since the 2008 survey, the Satisfaction Index has increased by 5.1%, which is a very impressive improvement, and by 7.1% since 2006.

The league table in Chart 2 shows that compared to other organisations generally, EAL is well up in the top quartile on its ability to satisfy customers and in the education sector it is now in the top 5%. In addition, EAL has a very high Net Promoter Score of 64.6%.

**Specific customer satisfaction improvements**

Not surprisingly, with such a good overall satisfaction result, EAL achieved some very high customer satisfaction scores for specific customer requirements. Most interestingly however, is how EAL managed to drive through actions that led to significant improvement in customer satisfaction in specific areas. As a result of previous customer satisfaction surveys, The Leadership Factor identified four PFIs (priorities for improvement) for EAL:

- Having clear points of contact
- Keeping customers informed
- Ease of candidate registration
- Problem solving



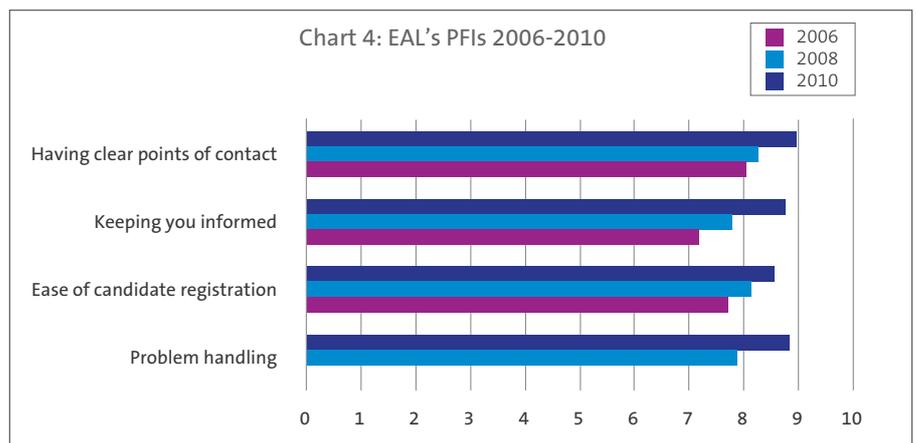
The chart clearly shows the great strides that EAL has made in focusing their attention on the four areas that would drive the biggest improvement in overall customer satisfaction. The most interesting question is how was this achieved? How did EAL manage the change necessary to transform the customer experience? Emma Bretton, EAL's Policy and Commercial Executive, looks back on the last 4 years at the story of how these four areas were improved...

"Ultimately, you can't manage what you don't measure! EAL invests heavily in ensuring our customers receive the best possible experience and by working with

the Leadership Factor to conduct our customer surveys, we know we're putting our energies into those areas that are of the highest importance to our customers. That's why we've enhanced many areas of our organisation to address our priorities for improvement – and so far, it appears to have worked!

**Improving Service and Systems**

Let's begin with our commitment to improving our service and systems, a great contributor to simplifying candidate registration and improving problem solving. In 2008, EAL made a significant investment in our online services, bringing back in house what was previously outsourced. To facilitate the transition, we made the strategic decision to appoint a team of 'freshers' – staff new to both the business and the sector, to manage the project. This resulted in an enthusiastic and driven team, each of whom added a huge amount of value. They consistently looked at ways to improve our levels of service and systems. Extremely committed to achieving our goal of bringing Online Services back in-house, they devoted a lot of time to ensuring they supported the business, as well as each other. To this day, they continue to challenge and develop the customer service processes, always with a smile on their face. Once the project was completed and online services were integrated into our in-house systems the infectious nature of the project team had certainly 'rubbed off' on other EAL staff members! They have built a great rapport with EAL's cus-





tomers and are highly commended on the service they provide.

Between 2008 and 2010 the number of outstanding queries at the end of each week had reduced by 80%, and as a result, we've quickly learnt that you can put as many measures, systems and processes in place as you like - but it's the people who really make the difference!

### Keeping Customers Informed

Since 2006, we've looked to improve our capabilities for digital communication with our customers by upgrading the website, and sourcing a good quality email marketing solution. Firstly, we upgraded our quarterly newsletter 'INTOUCH' to include topics such as 'Centre Spotlight' – a chance to take an in-depth look at how our centres are using EAL qualifications. This was followed by the launch of a monthly E Bulletin, which gives customers an early alert to new products and industry news. As tempting as it may be to put all our eggs in the digital basket, we recognised from tracking the number of customers who read our communications in this format, that there was a need to supplement our offering with both digital and print versions. To avoid over communicating with our customers, we adopted this dual approach specifically for crucial information.

The need to keep customers informed became of paramount importance as we reached the end of 2009. With the imminent launch of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), Functional Skills and Essential Skills Wales, our customers were undoubtedly worried about how these changes would affect them. By early 2010, it became clear that our customers were struggling with the demands of QCF and it was at this point we stepped-in to offer detailed information and support. We quickly introduced the 'Transition e-bulletin', issued to over 1,000 customers on a weekly basis, outlining information on funding, qualifications and general news to help ease the transition between educational frameworks.

EAL also held 17 regionally based free

events on the QCF and 6 on Functional Skills, all presented by our own External Verifiers and Product Development team. We held a further 6 that were focussed purely on our building services qualifications, helping customers to understand how the qualifications will change under the new framework. Once again we were able to rely on the enthusiasm of our own staff to reassure and inform customers, providing a valuable support network for the future. We took customers' questions from our events away with us and sought industry expertise for the answers. This information was built into a comprehensive FAQs document which was uploaded to our website and supported by our quarterly newsletters and monthly e-bulletin newsletters.

### Customer Contacts are Key

EAL is the only Awarding Organisation to employ full time External Verifiers (EVs) to support centres in delivering qualifications in line with quality standards. By having access to a dedicated External Verifier, customers have a single point of contact - someone who truly understands their situation in its entirety. The relationship customers have with their EV is much stronger than EAL originally anticipated – it truly can make or break a customer's loyalty to EAL. It's a good thing then, that we've invested time and effort into ensuring centres continue to receive dedicated support. These lines of communication remain open and uninterrupted at all times.

More recently, EAL has re-developed their quality assurance processes to lend a 'smarter touch' to regulation. These new, streamlined processes make it simpler for the customer to meet quality requirements, leaving more time free for the EV to spend with the customer, understanding and meeting their needs.

EVs were shown to be of significant importance to our customers throughout 2010's satisfaction scores so we are convinced that our commitment to maintaining a team of highly competent, full-time EVs has helped achieve the increase in this year's satisfaction scores.

EAL's journey over the last 4 years has proven that measuring customer satisfaction is integral to improving the business, but it's only the first step. It's what organisations do with the findings that will make the biggest difference. By turning insight into action, by making the changes that really matter, organisations, such as EAL can implement the steps that will really unlock the potential of your business.

Does that mean we'll be repeating our customer satisfaction survey next year? It certainly does! **S**

### Emma Bretton

*Emma Bretton has worked with EAL for over 12 months, joining their Marketing Team in 2009 and now contributing to EAL's strategic growth as Policy and Commercial Executive. Prior to her appointment with EAL, Emma braved the world of financial services as Product Development Manager in a well-known life assurance organisation. Emma's passion for customer centricity and her commitment to innovation has quickly become her brand after assisting with a raft of customer focussed improvements since joining EAL.*

[www.eal.org.uk](http://www.eal.org.uk)

### Jim Alexander

*Jim has many years of experience as both a user and provider of research. The clients for whom he manages customer and employee surveys span a wide range of activity and he is very keen to see all of them succeed by maximising the experience they deliver to staff and customers. He strongly believes that delighted staff will deliver delighted customers and that good research drives successful strategy.*

[jimalexander@leadershipfactor.com](mailto:jimalexander@leadershipfactor.com)