



CUSTOMER
RESEARCH
INTERNATIONAL

Hardware & Home Improvement

Integrated Feedback Program



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If you only knew...

Yeah, they carry picture hooks and things like that, but I'm not going to wait in line forever to save a few pennies.

The filters weren't where they should be and there was no one to ask so I just walked out.

I wouldn't go in there for PVC because I wouldn't know if they even had it and if they did, they probably wouldn't have enough selection or enough in stock.

—Focus Group Verbatims

The Hardware and Home Improvement Landscape

In a business that is now dominated by big box home improvement chains and several mid-sized regional chains, thousands of independent hardware, nursery, and lumber outlets continue to thrive. Understanding that most customers often shop *all* of these store platforms is the key to success. If there were not a *complementary* role to be played among these entities, only the big would survive.

Many refer to this category as Do It Yourself (DIY). We feel this limits the scope to large *projects* such as remodeling, major repair, and even new construction. We prefer Hardware and Home Improvement (H/HI) because it encompasses the full range of “making a home” behaviors—from hanging a picture to fixing a toilet to painting a room and more.

This also allows us to view customers as dynamic segments, defined not only by demographic and lifestyle variables but by task and product-specific variables—“Situational Segments”. For example, the “High DIY Propensity Guy” who was in your store last week could easily take on an entirely different persona when shopping with his spouse for a decorative lighting fixture. Your store may have been a primary choice for one of his personas but not for the other *or* a primary choice for one category but complementary for another.

CRI's Hardware & Home Improvement Integrated Feedback Program is designed to identify your store's position in the minds of your customers across various product categories, varying tasks, in the context of Time & Trouble[®] variables such as Location, Service, Accessibility, and Price/Value.

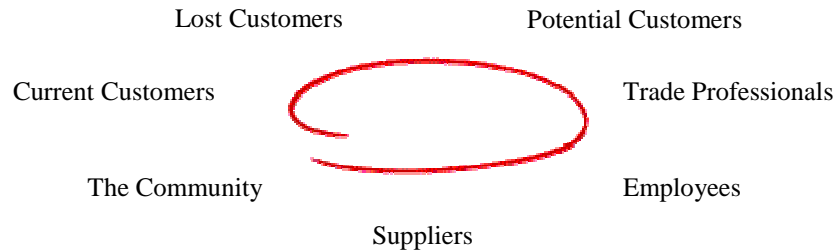
Dave Roberts, PhD

Dave Roberts takes the lead on this CRI program with over 20 years experience consulting hardware/home improvement retail, home services, and related products. Clients include Orchard Supply Hardware, The Sears Hardware Stores, McCoy's Building Supplies, Apex Garden Hose, Fox Service Company (Plumbing, Electrical, & HVAC), Pillar To Post Home Inspections, and CertaPro Painters. Dave and CRI have conducted hundreds of focus groups, telephone studies, intercepts, and more. To learn more about the principals of Customer Research International, please visit www.CRI-Research.com.

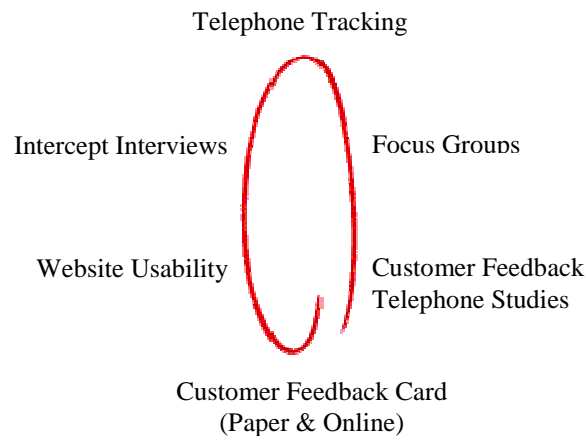
CRI Manages Your Metrics—360°

Over time, a hardware/home improvement enterprise—small or large—may find it has several customer feedback mechanisms operating across various functional areas with no standardization of measurement and no way to access the data in an integrated fashion. Various methods that *should* be complementary are instead fragmented bits of information that are seldom actionable. Integrated Feedback Management assures that the whole is *truly* larger than the simple sum of its parts. This research program is designed to provide a 360° customer feedback platform operating on two dimensions—Customers/Stakeholders and Data Collection Methods.

Customers/Stakeholders



Data Collection Methods



Analytical Approaches

We have been studying the Hardware and Home improvement environment for over 20 years and have an understanding of the complex relationships among variables such as DIY Propensity, Primary Task, Project Complexity, and more. Your customer is likely a customer of at least one of your competitors and their membership in customer segments varies with these situational variables. We have an arsenal of proprietary analytical approaches to help you understand and serve these various personas, including—

- Driveway Decision/Time & Trouble Analysis®
- Qualitative Conjoint for Product Categories®
- Customer Value Segmentation®
- Copy & Creative Testing
- Department-Specific Brand Choice
- House Brand Positioning
- Customer Conversion Studies
- Print As Traffic Driver Studies

Integrated Research Methods

The CRI integrated program might incorporate any or all of these methods across any or all of its stakeholders.

Customer Feedback Report Card This basic method of customer communication is important to have in place to assure that customers *know* there is a feedback channel open to them. Offering an online version also gives customers a sense that *you care* and makes responding more convenient and less threatening. This is especially important for identifying disgruntled customers—negative feedback is forwarded to you immediately for remedial action.



Web Usability Study

Q1. On average, how many days per week do you typically visit the CRI Web Site?

<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 5
<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 6
<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 7
<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> Can't Say

Q2. How many times per day do you typically visit the CRI Web Site?

<input type="radio"/> Once A Day
<input type="radio"/> 2-3 Times Per Day
<input type="radio"/> 4 or More Times Per Day
<input type="radio"/> Can't Say

Q3. Do you have CRI "bookmarked" in your browser?

<input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No
<input type="radio"/> Can't Say

Online Studies The internet provides us with a valuable new tool with which to create a dialogue with customers—internal and external. In addition to an online version of the Feedback Report Card, more detailed online questionnaires can be deployed on your website. An Online Usability Questionnaire is an integral part of our Hybrid Web Usability Testing methodology.

Telephone-Based, Random-Sample Studies This is the most reliable way of assuring that you are measuring *all* of your customers, including your potential and lost customers, in a statistically-representative way. These studies take on various forms— Awareness, Trial, Usage, & Attitude Studies (ATUA), Perceptual Studies, Follow-Up Feedback (Report Card) Studies, Tracking Studies, Pre-/Post-Tests of Advertising Effectiveness, and more. For years, CRI has been conducting yearly Tracking Studies for several Hardware/Home Improvement companies, tracking product penetration, service & selection evaluation, advertising awareness, and more.



Focus Groups This qualitative method offers the ability to *experience your consumer* first hand. What do they want from you? Expect from you? Get from you? Are they satisfied? A skilled moderator is able to uncover these perceptions and drill down to the *whys*. In addition to open-ended perceptions, Focus Groups can be used for advertising and promotional concept testing and evaluation of specific products and services. The more intimate One-On-One interviewing method is particularly useful for copy testing and our Hybrid Usability Lab for web sites.



Intercept Interviews This is a valuable tool for capturing the essence of the shopping experience while it is still fresh in the mind of the consumer. It is especially critical for Hardware/Home Improvement Retail in determining *why* customers leave empty handed or with less than they had intended to purchase, homing in on those critical *customer conversion* dimensions such as in-stock position, selection, store condition, available assistance, pricing, and the like. These may take the form of exit interviews or in-store intercepts and may be augmented by online questionnaires.



CRI will work with you to assemble an affordable, custom program of integrated customer feedback to fit your needs and budget.

Contact Dave Roberts, PhD

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