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**An Investigation Into Implementing a Net Promoter Scoring Survey To Increase
Reviews, Referrals and Revenues for UK Managed Service Providers.**

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February 2022

Critics are your best allies: they help to identify legitimate shortcomings that you can fix.

(Fred Reicheld, Creator of the Net Promoter System).

0.2 - Abstract

The Net Promoter System has been widely and rapidly adopted by businesses around the world as an effective way to predict companies' growth and as a useful management index, despite significant controversy from academics. Meanwhile the managed IT services industry has also rapidly grown in recent years, with much disruption.

Due to a lack of empirical evidence proving the merit of NPS in this sector, this investigation sought to discover whether the Net Promoter System was a valid predictor of company growth via a small-scale empirical study.

A literature review into NPS, along with the value of online reviews and the Theory of Planned Behaviour provided the backdrop for the study.

The results of the study were reviewed both quantitatively and qualitatively and discussed and conclusions and recommendations drawn about the validity of undertaking an NPS process as part of a wider client feedback process within the managed services industry and an alternative metric, Net Satisfaction Score (NSS), was introduced and contrasted.

0.3 - Disclaimer

Whilst every effort has been made to confirm the veracity of the details within this study, no liability will be accepted for any consequential loss arising from any errors or omissions within this report.

Michael Knight 01.02.22

0.4 - Acknowledgements

My heartfelt thanks goes to everyone that helped me to conduct this research - it was not without challenge and some degree of disruption, made further difficult during these turbulent times.

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1.0 - Introduction : Background

The Managed Service Provider (MSP) industry has evolved from “IT Support” and is still evolving while growing rapidly.

II (abridged – see appendix ‘O’)

Against the backdrop of this industry’s frenetic growth comes the Net Promoter System (originally a spin-off of Sametrix’s research programme as championed by its originator, Fred Reicheld, an erstwhile acclaimed academic & professional in the domain of client-loyalty) which, since just 2003, has already been adopted by two-thirds of the Fortune 500 companies (Koladycz et al, 2018).

Most MSPs grow primarily by word of mouth, yet relatively few have any process of organised referral system in place, leaving them completely to chance and the same can be said for their online reviews, despite significant literature outlining the impact reviews have on sales. This means much business-development is left unrealised. Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has also undergone huge advances in a few short years as the burgeoning growth of review sites testifies. With the opportunities they bring (along with Social Media), they also bring challenges because *“In the past, the accepted maxim was that every unhappy customer told ten friends. Now an unhappy customer can tell ten thousand “friends” through the Internet”*, (Reicheld & Markey, 2011).

1.1 Research Aim and Objective

The research objective aims to ascertain how effective the Net Promoter Score (**NPS**) is in predicting company growth for Managed Service Providers (by reviewing revenue, gross and net profits), as part of a **Net Promoter Survey** (conducted via interviews), and how this compares against another (proposed) metric, namely the Net Satisfaction Score (**NSS**). (As an aside, costs of implementation vs secondary benefits, namely *additional* referrals, online reviews will be noted)

1.2 Reasons For This Study

1.2.1 - Firstly, the Net Promoter Score alone yields no feedback or insights about the client's reasons for their score (Fisher, N. I., & Kordupleski, 2019), while Reicheld himself suggested asking multiple questions provides more practical, usable insights which is why he changed the name from Net Promoter Score to Net Promoter System, although (confusingly) the anacronym still applies to both. This study seeks to ascertain the value of multiple questions, crucially for a service industry, such as MSPs.

1.2.2 - Secondly, different studies (Keiningham et al, 2007; Maklan & Klaus, 2011; Mbama, 2018) suggested multidimensional feedbacks provide not only more insightful feedback but also more accurate indications of future financial performance (de Haan et al, 2015).

1.2.3 Thirdly, the NPS score may simply indicate the respondent thinks the functional-utility they receive may be appropriate for someone they know, yet they may nevertheless be ambivalent/unhappy with the company providing it. Therefore, including a question specifically about the interviewees' *satisfaction-of-service* (i.e. NSS) seeks to address this issue, providing better insights.

1.2.4 - Fourthly, the NPS represents an index of someone's outwardly-expressed **attitude** about their willingness to promote, it does not actually measure their actual word-of-mouth

behaviour (East, Hammond, and Lomax 2008), hence this study includes a measurement of this, peripherally, via measuring online reviews generated.

1.2.5 - Lastly, although there are a few other, well-known industry metrics within the broader scope of client experience (often abbreviated as 'CX'), such as CSAT (Client Satisfaction Score), CEQ (Client Experience Quality) and CLY (Client Loyalty) to suggest a few, none of which are calculated in the same way as NPS, therefore there is currently no like-for-like metric, which (esp. in the service industry) suggests a potential metric is worth exploring.

This study aims to ascertain the difference between the two metrics (as well as to observe the effectiveness of *extending* the NPS with supporting questions, including the NSS metric)

1.3 - Managerial Utility

By including a Net *Satisfaction* Score (NSS - i.e. satisfaction of service received) calculated in the same way as NPS, within a suite of survey questions, more insights can be revealed into interviewees' responses, hopefully with better accuracy towards financial predictions around the company, while retaining simplicity (as simple as NPS).

1.3.1 - Acquiring a metric around 'satisfaction' (rather than conation to refer) may require an interviewee to better reflect upon their service more deeply, rather than indicating an arbitrary measurement which is potentially more subject to normative compliance ('wishing to please' to interviewer).

1.3.2 - Asking for a client-review as part of the suite of questions may yield a better indication of interviewees' actual feelings (i.e. declaration of intention plus action/behaviour rather than declaration of intent alone).

1.3.3 - CSAT hasn't been defined in the same way as NPS - not comparing 'like for like', i.e. there are various ways to establish client satisfaction (CEQ, NPS, CLY, CSAT etc) so 'NSS'

(qv) is proposed as a way to homogenise its measurement in-line with that of NPS, to see whether Reicheld's rationale for NPS applies to a service-level question.

2.0 - Literature Review

2.01 - Purpose and Layout

The purpose of this literature review is to examine academic papers, books, dissertations, conference proceedings, and other materials pertinent to the subject under study and offers context for this dissertation by identifying previous research and outlining where it can add value to the overall information.

This paper critically analyses the literature pertaining to Net Promoter Score and how this can potentially help the owner/manager of a managed service provider understand their clients better, thus optimising their service and performance.

2.02 - Outline of the Topic

The topic under investigation is that of a 'Net Promoter System' and, more specifically, how it applies in the context of examining a small number of managed service providers (MSPs, sometimes known as "IT Support" Companies), where the literature review will establish the appropriate theoretical frameworks to draw upon to ascertain a correlation between their revenue, growth and their Net Promoter Score, alongside other client survey questions including willingness to provide an online review (i.e. a positive testimonial via Google Reviews) and other supporting qualitative feedback.

2.03 - Nomenclature

The term Net Promoter Score (NPS) is relatively new and only appeared in common usage since the seminal work was introduced in an article published in the Harvard Business Review, "*The One Number You Need To Grow*" (Reicheld, 2003). Merriam-Webster defines

'Nomological' as "the branch of science concerned with the formulation of laws explaining natural phenomena" while another definition often cited is "relating to or denoting principles that resemble laws, especially those laws of nature which are neither logically necessary nor theoretically explicable, but just are so". To this end, this study partly seeks to establish causality between NPS and conation to recommend an MSP to other business colleagues and provide a positive review. Does one cause the other, the other way around, or are they both co-dependent? 'MSPs' are traditionally known as IT Support businesses while "interviews" (qv) relate, in this study, to semi-structured telephone interviews. "WoM refers to Word of Mouth". **(RLR)** means 'Refer Literature Review'.

Note, Within 'Findings' : Images : **NSS** was alternatively annotated as '**S-Sat**' yet it denotes the same figure.

2.04 - The Scope of the Literature Review

The scope of the literature review (concerning evaluations of NPS), covers from 2003 to contemporary accounts, with 2003 being significant because that is when Fred Reicheld's article first appeared in the Harvard Business Review, with the eponymous scoring system being outlined. Other literature, covering issues as the importance of reviews and frameworks not directly concerning NPS (e.g. the Theory of Planned Behaviour) will necessarily reference earlier literature.

2.05 - What Will be Covered

The literature review includes contemporary and contrasting ideas and concepts concerning the net promoter score (and system), business-to-business reviews, Word of Mouth (WoM) and Electronic word of Mouth (eWoM) marketing, Google Reviews and such literature pertinent to motivational theories and frameworks around agreeing to leave a review and

actually following through with the behaviour itself, including the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

2.06 - Outline of How The Research Connects with Existing Knowledge

The literature review will cover such content as appropriate to ascertain the prevailing thinking around NPS and from this, an emergence of the salient facts and theories enables direction to the method used to determine the efficacy of its usage for managed service providers (MSPs).

It is also important to note that the lead author of this paper, Fred Reicheld, currently works for one of these corporations so there is likely an interest on their behalf to reveal what they believe will be valuable information for readers.

Literature around any proposed correlation between a Net Promoter Score and company growth is followed by reviewing consumer behaviour in terms of decision-making process and the role of testimonials in such frameworks as the elaboration-likelihood model, given that consumers rely on the advice and information provided by eWOM to make informed purchasing decisions (Al-khinji et al, 2021), before investigating the link between intent (to leave a review) and ensuing behaviour.

2.07 - Overview of The Net Promoter Score

The 'Net Promoter Score' made quite an impact on both the business and academic worlds when it was introduced back in 2003, largely because it was/is provocatively espoused, by Reicheld, as being the "*only number you need to know*". Reicheld claims NPS fits with a modern "revolution" involving burgeoning reviewing, blogging and so forth, in line with the "connected-customer" as suggested by (Kirby & Marsden, 2006).

There has been a lot of debate about NPS, so it is helpful to firstly explore where and how it came into being. While the originator, Fred Reicheld, has had his work on NPS criticised by the academic community (shown further in this text), there is nevertheless a general consensus of respect for the person (Reicheld) himself up to that point, stemming from his observations within the field of customer-loyalty, whilst working for Bain & Co.

His book, 'The Ultimate Question 2.0' (Reicheld, 2011) provides a useful starting point from which to outline his main points, which are listed below and addressed in turn. However, before that, a quick revision of how and NPS number is arrived will be instructive, as this relates to the literature-review.

At the most basic level (ignoring any supplementary questions for now), an interviewee (for consistency, an interview is being exemplified here rather than a survey) is asked *"How likely are you to recommend us to a friend or colleague on a scale of 0 to 10?"*. This interviewee is then graded as either a 'promoter' (those who scored 9 or 10), a 'passive' (those who scored a 7 or 8) or a 'detractor' (those who scored 0 to 6).

While questions have been raised about the 11-point Likert scale (0 being included rather than starting from 1), Reicheld suggests some interviewees inevitably interpret the scale 'upside down' (assuming 1 is the highest), yet suggests no such ambiguity ever exists with a zero - hence its inclusion.

Once multiple clients have been interviewed, the overall NPS is yielded by subtracting the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors. Counter-intuitively, the passives are ignored in the calculation (prompting concern from critics). The resulting number is the Net Promoter Score. Interestingly, Reicheld felt the need to change the term

to Net Promoter **System**, possibly because a number on its own lacks substance while a 'system' may be better marketed, if one were cynical.

Reicheld explains that promoters are those people (companies) who's "*lives have been enriched by the company*" and claims 80% to 90% of referrals come from this category. Passives are much less enfranchised and apparently exhibit "*markedly different set of attitudes and behaviours*". He further suggests any referrals volunteered from these people are likely to be significantly less enthusiastic.

In contrast, Reicheld outlines his definition of detractors, suggesting their experience (with the company) has left them worse off and as a result, "*80% to 90% of negative WoM comes from this section*". (As an aside, Pareto's principle seems to conveniently apply to Reicheld's numbers).

As well as negative WoM, other considerations of detractors are that of high service costs, staff demoralisation and potential litigation. "*Traditional satisfaction surveys just aren't up to this job. They ask too many questions and inspire analysis instead of action. Financial reports aren't up to it, either.*", he suggests. This is the reasoning behind looking at simplifying the whole process of identifying client sentiment and, according to his research, the best indicator of company growth was the NPS.

Whilst Reicheld's text pre-emptively warns the reader that his method will attract 'net pro-moaners', suggesting '*survey companies have a vested interest in making things harder than they need to be*', the business world has accepted his claims with less caution than might be expected, perhaps due to its seductive simplicity and lesser costs to implement. An impressive list of adopters can be viewed at

<https://www.netpromotersystem.com/about/companies-that-use-net-promoter/>

Reicheld goes on to say that financial measurements alone cannot identify 'good profits' and 'bad profits' and lists various short-term practices which may increase shareholder value (i.e. cash from 'bad profits') on the balance sheet, at the expense of longer-term goodwill. It is hard to argue with that logic, irrespective of how the goodwill is ultimately measured.

Interestingly, some proponents of his system suggest including non-interviewees as a detractor, with their rationale being that non-responders that can't be bothered (or don't wish) to complete a survey betrays a strained relationship. Reicheld gave anecdotal context about Progressive Insurance which measured policy retention for non-respondees and noticed they were significantly lower than for those who responded, suggesting a strong correlation.

Reicheld's research indicated that over a 10 year period, of the 9% of companies (in their study) the NPS figure was 2.3 times higher than their less successful peers. Compelling reading, although whether it is cause or effect remains unclear, yet his book is unapologetic about significant investment required to convert detractors (or passives) into promoters.

Perhaps surprisingly, Reicheld freely admits that NPS is prone to bias and goes so far as to name four different kinds, namely "*fear of retribution, bribery (or mutual 'back-scratching'), sample bias, and grade inflation*".

Once the foundation for the NPS was set down and the reasons and benefits outlined and reiterated, the remainder of the text mostly looked at ways for companies to embrace it company-wide, and implement it, along with a closed-loop feedback mechanism. Other forms of NPS (such as eNPS for employees) were also put forward. These other issues are considered outside the scope of this investigation, save for two incidental issues :

The first being that due to the attractiveness of bias and manipulation, external-agencies are recommended to either conduct or audit the NPS figures (KPMG were cited as auditing the NPS figures for Phillips Electronics) and secondly, the speed of resolution (of any client

concerns or complaints) being a key ingredient to successful management of the closed-loop process, with ensuing positive changes reflected in client sentiment being measured as a result.

2.08 - Cross Examination of NPS

Further to outlining the views and aspirations of the pioneer of the NPS, Fred Reicheld, arguments both for and against his work will now be reviewed. Reicheld's work was challenged empirically by Keiningham et al (2007), citing their own research conducted from 21 firms and 15,500-plus interviews and suggest their research fails to replicate his assertions and emphatically suggests "*Net Promoter in no way would be categorized as the "single most reliable indicator of a company's ability to grow".*

Keiningham dismisses Reicheld's assertion about his data being from 4,000 companies where he [Reicheld] had asserted that it was "100% accurate" (refer <https://hbr.org/2003/12/the-one-number-you-need-to-grow>), and suggested that, up until that point "*no longitudinal, peer-reviewed, cross-industry examinations have been conducted on this specific Net Promoter metric*" although, despite their own findings, Keiningham goes on to say, confusingly, "*Nevertheless, we would expect that a serious, longer-term, longitudinal study would show that changes in satisfaction/loyalty metrics are important predictors of relative changes in revenue within firms.*"

Furthermore, Keiningham points to Reicheld's own admission (in his original 2003 post) that his NPS system was not suited to all industries, especially monopolies (or near-monopolies), reminding the reader that Reicheld had, at that point, only conducted the information for 12 categories of industry.

After initially paying homage to Reicheld's earlier work, Griselle (2005) joins Keiningham in criticising Reicheld's work on a number of points (logically rather than empirically), starting by questioning the conceptual legitimacy of the premise, suggesting that one question alone

is simply insufficient to understand cause and effect, by using the analogy that using a single measurement (temperature) must surely give an incomplete understanding of why a '*child might be sick*'.

Griselle goes further by pointing out Reicheld's change in direction/focus (i.e. shifting from concentrating on the benefits of **loyalty** to those of **referrals**) and even within Reicheld's (more familiar) grounding within loyalty, he questions whether the Net Promoter Score is actually a cause or effect of loyalty. To this point, whilst Griselle agrees with Reicheld in suggesting that repeat purchases don't constitute loyalty (they can be simply be inertia), he makes the point that Reicheld's earlier writings talk at length about loyalty and repeat purchases (rather than recommendations).

Griselle was not alone in his doubt that the eleven-point Likert scale (i.e. 0 to 10) being compressed into three arbitrary categories lacked rigour and pointed out that a score of 6 is positive (i.e. more than halfway along the 11 point scale) and yet is still treated as a detractor (i.e. a negative).

Finally, Griselle criticises the link between temporal causality from survey questions in 1991 and applying them to growth rates in previous years. As an aside, this very issue is highlighted in 'limitations' within this paper, as the study has to necessarily relate to historic growth rates yet *future* growth rates (from a long-term longitudinal study) could arguably provide a better basis for causality. This view was shared by Shaw (2008) who suggests the NPS is a lagging indicator on the balanced scorecard (popularised a decade earlier), which "*signal to all organisational participants what they should be doing today to create value in the future*".

As an aside, Kaplan and Norton (2005), who proposed the 'balanced scorecard', suggest lead indicators of nonfinancial assets (e.g. goodwill), should be employed to herald changes in financial indicators, such as revenue or profit. However, Shaw (2008) suggests it's a lag indicator unlikely to have managerial value except for high involvement situations. Arguably,

B2B purchasing of IT equipment/services is unlikely to be considered low involvement, thereby negating Shaw's suggestion.

Nonetheless, Griselle concedes the NPS could be given the status of a 'dashboard light' insofar as it's an interesting KPI and potentially useful if used in conjunction with other measures on the dashboard but certainly not 'all-knowing'.

More recently, Pollack (2013) conducted empirical research (via self-administered questionnaires) with which to establish the "*nomological validity of this measure [NPS] in the service industry*" and while his findings lend (partial) validity to the NPS process, he suggested more traditional voice of customer (VOC) were equally good or superior. Like Shaw, Pollack recommends NPS as part of a suite of KPIs and not to be singularly relied upon nor does he recommend using NPS as a predictor of financial performance.

Pollack cites conflicting research concerning the number of supplemental questions that should be included, with Baumgartner and Homburg (1996) suggesting capturing more information (via more questions) necessarily increases reliability, as contrasted with Drolet and Morrison (2001) who suggest adding more questions does not add additional information, suggesting "*the incremental information from each additional item is extremely small*" and that asking more questions risks aggravating the respondent's behaviour. He further cites (Pingitore et al., 2007) logically arguing that surveys with fewer numbers of questions require larger samples to maintain confidence in the results.

Whilst Pollack's empirical research gave mixed findings, another (larger) empirical study into NPS by Kristensen (2014) from over 2,000 (Danish) insurance clients surveyed resulted in a more definitive view, suggesting NPS is a very poor predictor of both client loyalty and (surprisingly) client satisfaction. Kristensen goes further by criticising the lack of a "don't know" option in an NPS survey (highlighting it's standard in most questionnaires) and expresses concerns about demographic and cultural issues "contaminating" the value of the

“One Measure” within a rating system, pointing to research by both (Eskildsen et al., 2010) and Keiningham et al. (2007).

An even larger (empirical) study was undertaken by Keiningham (from 15,500 interviews) which, like Kristensen, decided conclusively that they could not replicate Reicheld’s conclusions and flags the large-scale likelihood of “potential misallocation of resources” as a result. He also cites a much older study suggesting, in terms of (psychometric) testing, more questions in the ratings scales (rather than fewer) increase the reliability of the results (Guildford, 1954) which, along with earlier citations just mentioned, underpins the reason more questions were developed within this study – refer the methodology section in this paper). Keiningham’s view on cultural ‘contamination’ is at odds with Kristensen’s, in that cultural dimensions do not affect WoM likelihood.

All the empirical methods above mentioned a research-gap of large-scale empirical studies (outside of Reicheld’s own circle of influence) and, given their own studies could not repeat Reicheld’s assertions that his NPS prediction was “100% accurate” from his own study of 4,000 businesses, seriously undermines the credibility of the original research.

So far, the literature has been around the Net Promoter Score, in and of itself, although the very process of implementing a feedback process for a business has other consequences; part of this investigation seeks to ascertain collateral value such as generation of testimonials and the value of those testimonials in the context of a buyer’s journey.

2.09 - Testimonials and Reviews

In Business-to-Business (B2B) environments involving lengthy sales cycles within a highly considered purchase (i.e. when selecting a new MSP), it is suggested that the process of garnering testimonials (as part of conducting a wider Net Promoter Score process) has significant commercial merit. Whilst it has been demonstrated that for high involvement (and high cognition) purchases, testimonials are positively effective, noting that auditory

messages have more persuasiveness than written testimonials (Braverman, 2008), although whilst other modalities may have more impact, this review limits itself to online text reviews, specifically, via Google.

Putting aside those sales generated by referrals, the issue of how testimonials (and other consumer-generated reviews and collateral) impact sales is, at least in part, addressed by theories surrounding Central Route Processing and the degree of cognitive activity involved in making a purchase.

As far as online reviews are concerned (momentarily ignoring concerns surrounding authenticity), the phenomenon of reactance emerges, in that early (online) reviews seem to affect the opinion of later reviews. Shaw (2008) suggests one interpretation of why reviews tend to generate further similar reviews is a '*sheeplike following of apparent popularity*' and suggests people recommend those things which appear to be 'coming to the fore'. However, this phenomenon is unlikely to affect those people being solicited for their feedback via a person-to-person survey/interview, where people are less likely to be affected by other people's reviews (or aware of them).

It then becomes pertinent how much a testimonial is valued in a B2B purchase consideration before regarding the degree that testimonials are actually given in comparison to *declared intent* to provide them.

2.10 - Reviews : Background to Their Importance

The growth of review sites (such as Google Reviews, Yelp, TripAdvisor, 'RatedPeople' and others) have gained huge popularity in recent years, likely because they help both the reviewed company as well as the consumer (Lee et al, 2015), with Sperber (2014) going further by stating review websites are part of the new '*review economy*', while both of them

argue strongly that companies should invest due resources to gain as many positive reviews as possible. This appears sound advice because firms that control their online narratives where possible may help mitigate the control which has been passed to consumers who can now “*access and spread information about a product and a firm without the consent of the firm*” (King et al, 2014).

Returning momentarily to any correlation between NPS and turnover, there’s a parallel in that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) can be an indicator in itself of company performance, Prantl and Mičík (2019), and as identified by Babic Rosario et al (2016) where they confirmed a favourable link between a company’s sales and positive eWOM. This promises a likelihood of merit, for an MSP, in reviewing their clients’ conation to provide a high NPS with that of providing an online review. With little dispute around the effect reviews (as part of eWOM) have on purchase intent, as You et al (2015) demonstrated, reviews have a direct impact on consumers (who had gained more knowledge from the various evaluations), while the information received from reviews (by consumers) impacts purchase choice, according to Park and Kim (2008). Conversely, companies also need to be mindful of negative Wom and eWoM because, despite the potential benefits, social media communication can prove a danger to businesses (Al-khinji et al, 2021).

Whilst B2B purchase consideration is harder to measure than online retail, there is little doubt that companies that display reviews directly and positively impacts their clients’ purchase intent, with the growth of review sites testimony to the social proof they provide.

Severi and Link (2014) assert that (measures of) brand quality and eWOM are (directly) causally linked while according to (Malthouse et al, 2017), the likelihood of purchasing became 270 percent higher after five reviews in comparison to that where no feedback was received. They further demonstrated for high-price (or high consideration) items, conversion jumped (from an already impressive 190% increase for displaying reviews compared to

none) for a low ticket item to 380% for a high ticket item.

Askalidis et al (2016) suggest the source of the online reviews inclines their credibility and impacts purchase intent as well, while Lacey and Morgan, (2008) provided evidence showing that clients who have a higher degree of commitment are more likely to volunteer as client advocates.

2.11 - Reviews - Commitment to Give

So far, the intent to provide referrals has been the subject of focus (via NPS) yet, as described, the importance of online reviews is such that identifying ways to maximise the generation of these assets for a company should not be overlooked.

As a parallel to NPS being a predictor of company growth, (Clemons et al., 2006) evidenced a direct correlation which maps the turnover of a business and positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWom).

Khan (2018) points to a commercial study by Shopify which suggested that of those businesses that listened to feedback and adjusted their policies and practices accordingly, 93% saw increased reviews on third-party review sites and 54% saw increased profits.

It is therefore suggested this study would benefit from monitoring the amount of Google reviews generated.

2.12 - Reviews – Consistency in Saying & Doing

Whether a subject will agree to comply with a request for a testimonial/review in the first place is only part of the picture because whereas agreeing to provide a review is one hurdle,

actually having the review posted onto Google is another, which brings the discussion under another focus, namely consistency between clients' *declaration* and actual *behaviour*.

In determining clients' motivation to provide testimonials/reviews and referrals, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) has been adopted as a framework to draw upon. This theory, **TPB**, suggests one of the main determinants of a client's behaviour (i.e. to leave a review) is their *intention* and therefore it becomes important to understand intention and therefore help modify behaviour. However, there is little research in general concerning the predictors of writing online reviews (via Google or otherwise). Furthermore, surprisingly few (experimental) tests have been conducted concerning TPB and of those that were, the assumptions were not validated (Sniehotta, Presseau & Araújo-Soares, 2014).

Gross and Niman (1975) investigate the inconsistencies between attitude and behaviour, suggesting repeated failures to demonstrate consistency still haven't impacted widespread belief of most researchers about their assumptions, while the '**problem of planned abstainers**', was coined by Orbell & Sheeran (1998) and again highlighted by Sniehotta et al, (2014), where people simply don't perform an action, despite forming an intent.

In 'The Hidden Persuaders' (Packard, 1957), a brewery survey revealed that people said they drank lite beer v regular by a ratio of 3 to 1, yet they actually drank regular beer to lite beer by a ratio of 9 to 1. Clearly, other forces are at work and so in an example more pertinent to intent to leave reviews, Texas Tech University conducted a study which showed that 83% of consumers were willing to leave a positive review yet only 29% of them actually did (Decker, 2017).

Baumeister et al (1995) suggest that "*Feeling guilty is associated with... recognizing how a relationship partner's standards and expectations differ from one's own*", which suggests **guilt** (or other) may be another factor in changing behaviour that's relevant to reporting. Guilt

is further suggested by Charness & Dufwenberg (2006), who provide epistemological suggestions that the degree of guilt experienced (by party A) is due to their beliefs about perceptions of the injured party (Party B), effectively meaning their behaviour (i.e. Party A) is motivated by their beliefs of *other people's beliefs*.

This “ABC problem” as it has been coined (i.e. Attitude and Behaviour Consistency) has appeared numerous times where various academics have expressed concern about widespread over-reliance on questionnaires and surveys where assumptions about attitude and subsequent behaviour are made for example in their 2014 article “Talk is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy” Jerolmack and Khan (originators the phrase attitudinal fallacy) outlined a number of criticisms of over-reliance on self-reporting behaviour. It’s likely, in most cases, people aren’t consciously aware they’re (effectively) lying as the theory of fundamental attribution error (Ross and Nisbett, 1991) suggests people externalise their own disparities.

A decline in empirical research suggests this area is ripe for further study, with Baumeister et al (2007) noting the sharp decline in empirical studies into actual behaviour (rather than self-reported behaviour) and identified a decrease in ‘real’ experiments from 80% in 1976 to the time of their writing at just 20%.

2.13 - Motivational Theory for Testimonials, Reviews & Referrals

As mentioned, the underlying premise is that the best predictor of behaviour is intention and that *attitude* underpins intent (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This assumption of consistency in the relationship between attitude and behaviour is central to TPB. However, assuming a direct relation between attitude and behaviour is met with criticism from a number of sources, with the ‘attitudinal fallacy’ (Jerolmack and Khan, 2014) likely being the most prevalent. The fallacy is perpetuated when people do not act in accordance with their (surveyed) sentiment

and it's suggested this is because this sentiment may not only be an inaccurate reflection of their true feelings but also that people cannot know their underlying feelings or how they will behave in a real-life scenarios, as Nisbett and Wilson (1977) showed that the forces that drive behaviour are frequently unseen/unconscious by those who carry it out.

2.14 - Valency of Feelings

Whether a subject's attitude has a positive or negative valency towards the subject matter (i.e. providing a positive review) may be clouded by other effects outside the direct scope of planned behaviour, although it's worth mentioning compliance could be affected (positively) by affirmation bias and other normative social influences. Conversely, compliance may be affected negatively by issues such as reactance or simple disobedience stemming from other antecedal issues.

Jerolmack and Khan's suggestion that ethnography is a better method for ascertaining behaviour because it is evidenced on ex-post data, rather than ex-ante recordings of sentiment via surveys about hypothetical situations. Clearly however, ethnographic studies of either (business) referrals or even composing online reviews is likely unfeasible and impractical for a methodology for a number of reasons, including the very act of observation would change the nature of the outcome.

Similarly, the act of receiving a request for a referral (or an online review) creates a different mental-state than simply *thinking* about acquiescing to comply. Ross and Nisbett (1991), suggest that attitudes vary with situations and consequently become unreliable predictors of behaviour. Furthermore, the situations themselves become part of a one-time backdrop which is, by definition, unique. This uniqueness of situation is framed by changing moods and variable interplay between the person coding results of an interview and the interviewees, which, it is suggested, creates poor forecasts of actual events.

Indeed, there is no shortage of historical examples from which to draw which point to the unreliability of attitudinal surveys and subsequent behavioural outcomes. Election polls (argued to be a highly consistent gauge at 85% overall accuracy) are prime examples, whilst much earlier research concerning racial sentiments have become classic study, such as the account of the Chinese couple's travels related by LaPiere (1934) that showed overwhelming anti-Chinese sentiment via a survey (with almost nobody agreeing to accommodate a Chinese couple in either hotels or restaurants) yet who displayed almost zero such (overt) sentiment in-person or face-to-face. Hoffling et al (1966) found 21 out of 22 nurses would have given a patient an overdose of medicine when asked by a 'doctor' over the phone (in breach of protocols) yet declared they wouldn't ever do this when surveyed afterwards.

2.15 - CSAT vs NPS

Given the controversy surrounding NPS, there would be merit in testing an alternative metric to see if it is able to better predict financial performance and/or offer better insights.

Client Satisfaction, known among various definitions and nomenclature within the client-survey industry as 'CSAT', assumes various approaches. Recent research undertaken by Bennett and Mosilani (2020) from studying 1605 US companies suggests Client Experience Quality (CEQ) provides a better indicator (of financial performance) than NPS.

Andersen et al (2004) not only make the point that customer satisfaction is good at predicting shareholder value with compelling figures demonstrating a 1% increase in customer satisfaction equates to 1.016% increase in shareholder value, they go further to suggest that this varies significantly across industries and that it's weaker for service industries and where there is high competition (as is the case with MSPs).

It is generally understood that measures of CSAT usually relate to individual ‘transactional’ (micro) feedback (e.g. involving ‘instant’ feedback-surveys about a recent IT support ‘ticket’) and that NPS is more often concerned with longer-term company-wide (macro) sentiment. Nevertheless, there is currently no simple (overall) metric to determine long-term sentiment towards service satisfaction that is calculated in the same way as NPS, yet the sentiment it would measure could potentially yield a useful (possibly even more accurate) alternative predictive measure of financial (or other) performance, thus developing it within the methodology, thereby enabling the aforementioned test. Reicheld’s assertion that “*NPS is the only number you need to know*” is entirely arbitrary and customer satisfaction, whilst superficially appearing similar, is an entirely different measure.

Age vs consistency research suggests that as people become older, consistency is valued more (Brown et al, 2005) which could prove an influential factor in those that (publicly) commit to leave a Google review and those who actually proceed and leave it.

2.16 - Literature Review : Conclusion

Reicheld asserts that client-loyalty and predisposition to positively recommend a company can be neatly wrapped in a figure (NPS), which he suggests provides a predictive metric of future financial performance, as described. Other academics and studies have contested this view, also as described.

(Azjen's) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) suggests that intent is strongly correlated to behaviour, as outlined. There is a lack of literature concatenating TPB with commitment to give (online) reviews and receiving online reviews, together with any correlation of financial performance.

Implementing a study to determine clients' NPS, their 'Net Service Satisfaction' (NSS) metrics plus conation to provide a testimonial, as a measure of intent of future behaviour (i.e. providing an online review and/or a referral) with a contrast against financial performances will provide insightful feedback.

3.0 - Methodology : Introduction

This section maps out the steps for the methodological approach for evaluating efficacy of NPS against that of a study including NSS for determining the growth prospects of Managed Service Providers in terms of quantitative analysis, together with determining the appropriate arrangements of measurement and correlation. This study is then supported by determining the appropriate methods for qualitative analysis.

3.01 - Research Overview : Purpose, Objective & Contribution

The purpose of the study is to better understand how NPS vs NSS can be used in assessing the performance of Managed Service Providers where the objective is to maximise shareholder value by increasing client loyalty, maximising sales via referrals and improving operational efficiencies by reviewing client feedback.

This study's contribution is the evaluation of the merits of using an NPS-centered survey (contrasting NPS vs NSS,) as part of a client feedback process, together with ancillary benefits (such as Google reviews, upsell opportunities and service-improvement ideas) of the process, noting associated costs of implementation, where these costs are defined in terms of time (given no capital outlay is required).

3.02 - Using The Research Onion As A Methodological Overview

Using the eponymous 'research onion' (Saunders et al, 2019) approach as a framework enables collection of the right information via relevant questions, appropriate design study design and critical analysis of the results. The general preparation stage of the 'onion' provides a succinct overview of these tasks, justifying its adoption.

3.03 - Layer 1 : Philosophy

A philosophical outlook consists of a particular view about the nature of reality and how it is to be understood. At the most basic, philosophical outlooks are characterized by certain perspectives on matters such as ethics, ontology, epistemology and metaphysics.

The matter of ethics is sometimes considered the most important factor for a philosophical outlook, with a view on ethics generally being determined by wider viewpoints on life and living in general; how it is to be utilised, protected, respected or even destroyed. Ethical outlooks are therefore rooted in ontology.

The three most often-cited research philosophies that work on diverse ontological and epistemological assumptions are Positivism, Interpretivism and Pragmatism. Looking at these briefly in turn, Positivism is defined as the general view that all human beings desire progress and growth, and are active in striving to achieve something better. It is the idea that we are constantly evaluating our personal achievements and those of others for improvements and, collectively, are continuously creating a more positive world. It is a philosophy with optimism as its central tenet.

A positivist researcher is guided by Karl Poppers' empirical theory of knowledge. Positivists are interested in explaining things that they can test, understand, and duplicate through experiment or study. Positivism is not limited to the natural sciences; they believe in the advancement of understanding human society and social life through the use of objective methods. They also are committed to employing a quantitative approach that yields data for analysis.

Interpretivism suggests researchers must not only stay true to the facts from the original study, but also to their own interpretation of it, i.e. it may have no value as an isolated finding: how and where it fits into a broader scheme of understanding must also be considered. Interpretivism is defined as the process and practice of taking the perspective of an individual in the audience rather than that of the researcher. Interpretivists use a primary research philosophy to provide data about how audience members are feeling about their own lives, what they want, and so on.

Pragmatism states that the meaning of a research result should always be assessed in context. That is, it may have no value as an isolated finding; how and where it fits into a broader scheme of understanding must also be considered. Pragmatism supports an interpretivist approach to research in which the meaning of the research findings is constructed by researchers rather than derived from the methods or statistics used. Pragmatism is a philosophical tradition that includes any ideas that tend to be more practical than one/both of these two traditions. Pragmatic thinking often embodies action-orientation and experimentation, and rejects important aspects of other theories, such as prediction and certainty.

Consequently, the outer layer of this 'onion' will commence with that of the pragmatist.

3.04 - Layer 2 : Deduction or Induction

A layer 'deeper' into the onion determines whether the study should be inductive or deductive in nature. Inductive reasoning is the predominant form of scientific thinking and studies. In contrast, deductive reasoning is based on building logical arguments through prior knowledge and examples in order to justify the truth or falsity of a particular statement. The distinction between these two forms of reasoning is important because they are adapted to varying degrees by various disciplines of study, so it can be difficult to decide which form should replace each other.

To address this, the question must be asked "Is a net promoter score investigation deductive or inductive?"

Research undertaken in the field of marketing is often a process that starts with an idea and inductively gathers evidence to support or deny it. In contrast, the deductive process would be when all the available research is reviewed and then a conclusion drawn from the existing

data. Deductive reasoning starts with a statement or premises and then proceeds by logic to infer conclusions. Inductive reasoning, on the other hand, begins with particular observations made in one specific instance, which are generalised as universal truths when this can not be confirmed by further observation. Given the purpose of this research is to determine a link between an MSP's Net Promoter Score (of which there are sufficient theories and arguments) and growth rates, the methodology will therefore be directed as deductive in nature.

3.05 - Layer 3 : Qualitative or Quantitative

The next level down is to ascertain whether qualitative or quantitative research is to be employed.

Qualitative Research: Qualitative researchers study people, places, groups, objects or ideas by observing them in person or through observation of other sources such as museum records or audio-visual media. The qualitative researcher attempts to accurately describe people, places, groups or objects.

For example, any book on ethnography will likely reveal that the research is based heavily on observation; an instance being where ethnography is often used by public health researchers to study healthy and unhealthy behaviours, among many other topics.

Quantitative Research: Quantitative researchers study people, places, groups or ideas by asking a lot of questions about them. The goal of quantitative research is to provide evidence to support conclusions.

Quantitative research to address the Net Promoter System (which is, by definition, quantitative) will be the most appropriate route in this investigation. However, a qualitative portion of investigation will be amalgamated within the process, given the study will include verbose feedback from interviewees, which will need analysis of some kind and likely not fit neatly into a simple paradigm.

A (small) degree of grounded theory *could* be argued to emerge given the NSS score may have a better application than the NPS and the qualitative component is data-driven *and* recursive (Corbin & Strauss 1998).

3.06 - Layer 4 : Strategy

On yet a deeper level still, the nature of the *research strategy* must be considered and whilst there is a sense of over-simplification from simply selecting a type of research from the readily accepted 'menu' (namely, Action, Experimental, Case-Study, Grounded-Theory, Ethnography and Archival). A process of elimination suggests survey-research would provide the 'least worst fit'.

Within the onion-layer of 'choices', it would appear that a multi-method approach (in terms of gaining quantitative data from an NPS supported with qualitative, verbose feedback) is almost pre-determined for this kind of study because a key benefit of the two different forms of research is that they complement each other: The qualitative provides a richer, more nuanced understanding of participants' thoughts, feelings and behaviours, while "statistical significance" is an easier-to-quantify criterion for evaluating the reliability and validity of quantitative findings.

3.07 - Layer 5 : Timing

The time horizon suggests a **cross-sectional research design** because ascertaining an NPS score of a company theoretically shows a snapshot of client sentiment at any given time. As will be discussed later in the findings, discussion and suggestions however, the very act of measuring a net promoter score for one company, let alone several, is not trivial.

Gaining access to clients and then speaking with them takes time (compounded with issues such as people working remotely) and this is especially true when collecting information for several companies. Consequently, something that (in theory) should be a cross-sectional 'event' can blur the lines and actually start to offer a glimpse of a longitudinal study, although that approach has not been taken in the research-design for this methodology.

3.08 - Layer 6 : Data Collection & Handling

Finally, with the 'innermost part of the onion' the choices of procedures and techniques must be addressed.

3.08.1 - Each MSP informed all their clients (at least 10 days before any phone-interviews occurred), outlining they'd be contacted [by the author] with a view to undertaking client-feedback as part of a study, where their responses would be anonymised and may ultimately be used to help service levels. They were informed the surveys were entirely voluntary and the interviewees were not obliged to take part.

The interviewees were then duly contacted over a period of three months, where in each case at the beginning of the telephone-interview, the same interviewer explained to the interviewee that the interview would most likely take less than fifteen minutes and the phone-call would be recorded, data would be anonymised, and that the recordings would be deleted at the end of the study. It was mentioned that any quantitative feedback could potentially identify them (albeit only to their particular service provider) although care would be taken to ensure any identifying information (such as any proper nouns) would be redacted. Interviewees were also told they could stop at any time and cancel the interview and/or that they would be sent copies of their data before this data was anonymised and recordings deleted.

3.08.2 - Furthermore and prior to commencing the interview questions, it was outlined that the interview was for a study the researcher was conducting, which had the dual benefit that

any insights gained might benefit the IT service industry as a whole, not least by highlighting any shortcomings with service levels provided by their supplier and that the (anonymised) information would be publicly available, as well as any aggregate responses (pertaining to the of the specific MSP) would also be shared with the MSP (again, anonymised). All interviewees were informed they could request this (anonymised) information and no participant expressed a wish to not participate or disseminate their anonymised information.

Given that the objective is to assess a Net Promoter Score for (a set of) MSPs, it is evident their clients will be geographically dispersed (for each MSP and especially for a number of MSPs), consequently telephone surveys appeared a suitable technique for collecting information as coverage can be met at (relatively) low cost (Taylor, 2002) and that the probability of response is significantly greater than for mailed surveys, as Sinclair et al (2012) showed an almost threefold increase in responses of telephone-surveys (30.2%) over the next-best response of postal surveys (10.5)%.

As De Leeuw et al. (2007) showed significant increases in average response rates were made from advance communications, appropriate communication was made by the MSP towards their clients that they would be interviewed (subject to their approval) while during the interview process; they were informed that the calls were recorded and that they'd be sent a copy of everything (recording and transcription) along with paraphrased content and a link to the MSP's Google review page (discussed later in this text). Furthermore, this method affords the interviewees a degree of privacy, as per Cachia and Millward (2011).

3.09 - Sampling

As already mentioned, Jerolmack and Khan (2014) suggest ethnography is a better method for determining behaviour (because it is based on ex-post data rather than ex-ante recordings of sentiment on hypothetical events via surveys). However, this is impractical and

unnecessary as telephone-interviews are relatively quick, efficient and anything more substantive may be met with suspicion by the interviewees (and potentially the MSPs themselves).

It is worth noting that, ideally, the samples would be random interviews (or even full-population interviews) provided by the MSPs yet, for practical reasons, the list of clients to be interviewed were simply convenience interviews, as supplied by each MSP.

3.10 - Data Analysis : What Data Was Gathered?

In the tradition of most strategic analyses, the macro landscape was first considered before narrowing the scope of view. To this end, a background to the state of the MSP industry as a whole was reviewed, with some useful information being outlined in Appendix 1, showing the growth of the industry and the current salient growth-contributors, such as security, storage etc.

Narrowing the focus, a number of MSPs were contacted with a view to conducting a client feedback process on their behalf, the benefit to them being increased insights about their clients whilst the research would provide the data for this study. It was decided six MSPs would be sufficient to provide enough information to enable a pilot investigation. These MSPs were selected so as to be sufficiently regionally dispersed that they didn't suffer localised anomalies or interference. They were unknown to each other, independent, of no particular niche or vertical and all offering approximately similar services, whilst ranging from £350K t/o to £1M t/o. In this regard, they were each asked their annual sales-turnovers for the last 4 years, along with their gross and net profits, number of clients and the provenance

of those clients (e.g. via advertising, search-engine, referrals) This information gathering, plus a sample list of their clients was not without challenge (see 'limitations').

Of the (five out of six) MSPs that finally provided their requested cross-section of clients to be surveyed, the survey questions (outlined in appendix B) were asked, after a brief rapport building introduction (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The interviewees were from a diverse range of industries, all across Southern England and one from Northern Ireland, however they were selected to be only company owners/directors (to simplify the study to a single strata of management interviewed) as other echelons are known to have different interests/drivers of satisfaction (Chakrabory et al, 2007), which would unduly complicate matters.

The data was gathered from 80 interviewees (appendix H) over a period from February 2021 to June 2021. Most interviewees required multiple calls to successfully gain an opportunity to interview them, while a number of potential interviewees were simply never successfully obtained. The durations of the successful telephone-surveys were measured, together with the average number of unsuccessful calls. The final number of interviewees per MSP and the percentage of that MSP's total population were tabulated in 'findings', along with both qualitative and quantitative information, with the interviewees' identities having been obfuscated, in line with the outline of the 'ethics' section, discussed later.

Each MSP had a minimum of 12 clients surveyed, although the average was calculated at 16, with the highest at 27. Total populations versus sample-size are outlined in **appendix C**

3.11 - Explanation of the Method Chosen : Semi-Structured (Telephone) Interviews

Semi-structured telephone interviews (SSTI) contain elements of both structured and unstructured interviews (Cachia and Millward, 2011) and were deemed a suitable choice as

this format is well documented whilst being the most common form of interview within qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) and provides an opportunity to gather data from the interviewee and capture their perspectives, both in terms of 'foreseen' and 'unforeseen' information from specific closed and open-ended questions respectively (Hove and Anda, 2005). Semi-structured telephone interviews cost less than in-person interviews, and the quality is comparable, as per Cachia and Millward (2011), whereas in-person interviews are expensive and time consuming to set up, with traveling for face-to-face meetings being unnecessary and inconsistent with environmental-sustainability.

SSTI (qv) allows for answering questions when interviewees are at their desk or elsewhere *"with the added advantage of having an interviewer available to clear out any queries"* (Cachia and Millward 2011). This saves travel costs and time (Taylor, 2002), as well as negating studio hire & costs (audio transcriptions being simple and cheap) and are particularly convenient for geographically dispersed interviewees (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014) who tend to have busy schedules (especially for business owners, as in this instance), with interviewees being equally comfortable talking on the phone as in person (Cachia & Millward 2011), plus the interviewee being as willing to speak candidly, given this more private medium (qv). People are more likely to participate in interviews if they're being conducted in their own time, which is easier to facilitate and (re)schedule by phone-appointment, as per Sturges and Hanrahan, (2004).

Whilst this process could have been undertaken by sending a client survey to the MSP's clients (via letter or email), the relatively low numbers involved (i.e. typically dozens of clients rather than thousands) means that receiving a sufficient quantity of responses to enable meaningful analysis from the relatively low response rate (Sinclair et al, 2012) would likely have made the process untenable. Furthermore, a study by Reddy et al (2006) suggests responses from telephone-interviews are substantially more considered than responses from a written survey. Reviewing client response rates for NPS from Appendix D - ClientGauge,

the response rates of surveys are typically quite low and the responses that are received tend to be polarised by their very nature, with a deficit of responses being received 'in the middle ground'. Whereas, phoning a client directly and interviewing them for a few minutes largely overcomes this issue, albeit being more time-intensive for the interviewer and disruptive to the client (Adams, 2015).

All the clients were contacted in advance by their MSP and informed of the forthcoming questionnaire (as per De Leeuw et al, 2007) and thanked for their inconvenience of having been asked by inviting them to a complementary (joint) training session, available to everyone, regardless of whether they were interviewed or not or how they responded, thereby giving them the opportunity to signal unwillingness to participate (only 3 people did this out of circa 300, i.e. 99% tacitly or actively agreed), in line with research suggesting that participants which are told in advance of a research study are more inclined to respond (Rao et al. 2010).

After (minimum) 72 hours had elapsed from sending the original notification, MSP's clients would be contacted with a view to undertaking the telephone survey, on a convenience-sampling basis.

3.12 - Survey Design : Which Questions Were Asked & Why

At the start of the interview, the interviewee was informed the call was being recorded and given the choice to discontinue, in line with standard research ethics. The recordings helped ensure accuracy, given the potential to mis-hear or mis-remember the actual dialogue (Hove and Anda, 2005). After the relevant introductions and preamble and formalities were made, with a view to putting the interviewee at ease and establishing rapport, as suggested by Brewerton and Millward, (2001), all the interviewees were asked the questions outlined in

appendix B, with the author acknowledging there is a conspicuous lack of a “Don’t Know” question, as per the assertion of (Krosnick et al, 2002) who suggest it leaves “many opinions unsaid” (examined in the ‘Discussion’ section). The more sensitive questions (e.g. asking for a testimonial or service-improvement suggestions) were asked later in the sequence, as suggested by Hove and Anda (2005).

The answers for the NSS question (defined/coined here as the ‘Net Service Satisfaction’ question) “*How happy are you with the service you receive from 0 to 10 ?*” have been shown alongside the NPS figures for comparison (refer ‘Findings’).

This question, similar yet subtly different to the NPS question, was included with a view to elicit a deeper, more considered recollection about the actual service received (rather than just a vocal willingness to refer) as it required the respondent to remember and elaborate more profoundly about the relationship in terms of utility and functionality (i.e. actual quality of service levels) rather than emotionally (i.e. if they simply know and/or like/dislike the staff/owner etc) which could then be expected to produce a more reasoned result based on actual performance, rather than personality or emotional sentiment.

Note that this question was asked *after* the NPS question. Crucially, the NPS question was asked before anything else in order that the answer was ‘uncontaminated’, as per Lau, Sears and Jessor (1990) i.e. before any other elaboration could have taken place,

It’s also why the requested ‘more information’ question was asked directly *after* the NPS question and similarly for the NSS question. It was conjectured (and potentially proved correct - see ‘Findings’) that this extra elaboration reduced the overall figures for NSS compared with NPS, although survey ‘priming’ by the sequence (Gamson & Lyengar, 1992) may be a factor in clients’ conation to offer a testimonial.

The survey questions were laid out in their particular sequence such that any 'order effects' (Wilcox and Wlezien, 1993; Knauper and Shwarz, 2004) were minimised by later questions having less importance (to the study) than earlier questions and less (directly obvious) causation.

For simplicity, randomisation or reverse-sequencing of the questionnaire weren't undertaken (to counterbalance question ordering), as outlined by Standing and Shearson (2010) plus 'survey fatigue' or other issues as proposed by Knauper and Shwarz (2004) were deemed negligible due to its brevity.

For the qualitative questions, interviewees were 'probed', not 'prompted' (Bell & Bryman 2015), where it was necessary to have more background information/sentiment.

To make this entire process more granular (For both the NPS and NSS questions, each of the 10's ,9's, ... 0's were tabulated against each other. See **Appendix E** where the correlation between NPS and NSS can be seen.

Other data, such as the company's age in years and the number of reviews received (after asking for a review as part of the NPS Process) was researched and noted (but not discussed in the interviews). This figure for reviews received has been expressed twice (in two columns), once as a percentage of the number of Google reviews received as a percentage of the *total* number of interviews per client and the other percentage received as the number of reviews received as a percentage of the 'yesses'.

The number of online Google reviews were counted (that were purely attributable to this study), after each respondent (where appropriate) had been asked (during the interview) whether they would be happy to leave a Google review and again within their confirmation

email (which contained their agreed copy of their survey-responses) and a reminder when they were informed of the imminent training session sometime later (refer appendix J), with a minimum of 3 weeks to allow for potential processing delays by Google. The author confirms that a single training session was offered to all clients (of all MSPs) by way of acknowledgement they had been sent an unexpected, unscheduled communication from the MSP-owner informing them about the study (i.e. a perceived disruption), and makes the distinction that it was not offered as an inducement to modify their responses in any way. For clarity, a review in this context is defined as a testimonial (paraphrased by the interviewer) that the interviewee has agreed will be uploaded to the MSP's Google review page. As the review/testimonial was paraphrased (albeit as faithfully as possible) it was *not* used in the qualitative research for coding responses.

In order to minimise friction as much as possible, the paraphrased review (testimonial) was emailed to the respondent shortly after the interview, along with a copy of their survey responses and a hyperlink to the MSP's Google review page, which they could copy/paste or edit as they saw fit. The process for the client to make the online review would then have been momentary and trivial. At least 3 weeks elapsed between emailing the review and counting the reviews on Google, to enable sufficient time for the respondent to submit a Google review and also for Google to process it.

Bryman & Bell (2015) recommend a 10% 'back check' (i.e. calling the clients for survey-verification) although this primarily applies to agencies to ensure their interviewers are operating appropriately. In line with this suggestion, each of the MSPs were sent their call-recordings to ensure their approval of the process (with zero ensuing complaints or retractions).

3.13 - How the Data Was Analysed

The resultant data (Appendix H - Data) was entered into a spreadsheet, whereupon both the quantitative analysis (i.e. calculating response rates, NPS scores, NSS scores and correlations) could be performed and then all the responses were codified (except for the paraphrased reviews) and iteratively analysed qualitatively as outlined in the 'findings' and 'discussion' sections. Smyth and Olsen (2020) suggest accuracy rates exceed 90% for numeric responses (e.g. NPS), although to expect much lower accuracy rates for open-ended questions (circa 70%) with those that are "*required to be field-coded into closed categories being particularly problematic*" (Strobl et al., 2008).

3.14 - Ethical Considerations

With regards research ethics, this research was conducted :

- Environmentally Sustainably : Travel was eliminated and all proceedings were conducted electronically.
- With Full Disclosure : The interviewees were all informed in advance from their IT supplier (i.e. their MSP) about a forthcoming interview and that it was a voluntary survey, aimed as part of a study, along with identifying measures to improve their service. All those interviewed had agreed to participate (the 3 that refused were deleted from the study) and were offered full copies of transcripts and call-recordings.

At the start of the questionnaire, they all gave their consent towards being questioned as part of the study, whilst having been informed beforehand that the process would take only a few minutes and they understood there was no obligation or duress to complete the survey. They were informed that this study was conducted by the author (i.e. externally to their MSP) and that their data would be anonymised in the

context of this study refer appendix I, "Pre-Interview Script". All calls were recorded and all participants were informed beforehand, none of whom expressed concern. All data kept secure in line with current data protection mandates and GDPR.

- No deceptive practices were employed and none of the interviewees were vulnerable or under 18 years old.
- Data was kept as secure as reasonably practical and all commercially sensitive information (e.g. names of the MSPs and their clients) has been redacted or codified.
- The study conformed to the 'golden rule' of virtue ethics (rather than a strict deontological based approach) while the research design was undertaken to ensure no harm would befall the participants (Farrimond, 2012) while any awareness of illegality would have been duly reported (none was found); refer to the ethical declaration (Appendix G - Ethics)

3.15 - Limitations

Limitations are discussed more fully in the conclusions & recommendation section, although the challenges faced were primarily around receiving the company and contact data from the MSPs (despite numerous reminders and ensuing promises) with only one providing the amount of their clients (rendering client-provenance calculations impossible) while one MSP failed entirely to submit any information whatsoever, resulting in the data coming from just 5 rather than 6 MSPs. The periods (to calculate historic growth) were not of equal length (not everyone provided four full years' accounts) nor were they necessarily simultaneous.

3.16 - Evaluation & Chapter Summary

Whilst this pragmatic approach originated as deductive for the qualitative component, measurements of a different KPI (the NSS rather than just the NPS) were considered early in the design in case NPS didn't explain the outcome as well as the theory would have predicted, allowing for a degree of inductive reasoning within the qualitative part of the study.

Contact data collection was problematic from the MSPs although 80 interviews were finally undertaken with sufficient rigour to establish whether NPS/NSS provided evidence of value as a growth indicator while ancillary responses could establish the value of the process. No smaller pilot study was undertaken as the scale wasn't deemed large enough (Albright et al, 2009) although this meant missing an opportunity to objectively develop the 'interview guide', as per DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) and the questionnaire was not validated.

Variance between interviewers was eliminated by having a single interviewer, however, it is accepted interviewer bias would doubtless be present (Bailar et al, 1977).

4.0 - Findings - Introduction

These findings are presented below to answer the research objective, namely whether there is a relationship between NPS and Company Growth/Performance for an MSP and how this compares to the proposed metric, NSS, by comparing company financials as well measuring peripheral company metrics, including the average number of referrals, reviews and upsells

during an NPS survey process. Secondarily, to ascertain the likely cost/benefits of implementing an NPS(NSS)/Survey/Referral process.

4.01 - Layout of The Findings

The MSPs are firstly outlined, in terms of their basic characteristics, such as age, turnover and geographic location, along with a short report of which MSPs actually contributed data.

Empirical results addressing the first two of the research objectives are outlined in the section below marked “Quantitative Findings”.

In order to add background and depth to these findings, ‘Qualitative Findings’ have been included.

Finally, resources consumed and overheads for the research, against which an MSP can consider any net benefit of implementation against benefit, were considered.

4.02 - An Overview of the MSPs

For this investigation, six MSPs initially agreed to provide access to their clients to facilitate surveying and study, of which five actually did so (after a degree of prompting and reminding). These MSPs are denoted as follows (by three letter codes), in order of NPS score in ascending order, along with their last known annual turnover, and years in business.

Company	Est.	Age (Yrs)	Last Known T/O £K	Area
PRN	2005	16	390,873	South Coast England
SLV	2002	19	681,151	South England
DSC	2007	14	786,784	Midlands England
RFM	2011	10	1,015,961	Midlands England
EHC	2016	4	340,000	Northern Ireland
	Total	63	£3,214,769	
	Average	12.6	£642,953	

Note, the information provided by company EHC has clearly been rounded and it is unknown how accurate the approximation was.

4.03 - Quantitative Findings

The growths of these MSPs is outlined below, including different columns for growth (using different assumptions)

Owner T/Over	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	T/o Growth %	NPS	Av growth % (A)	Av Growth % (B)	Av Growth % (C)	Av % (B & C)
PRN				14.42%	31.55%		T/o	50	22.98%	25.26%	16.78%	21.02%
Est. 2005			259682	297140	390873		G/P		17.22%	18.10%	13.29%	15.69%
Years - 16			165684	176006	225648		N/P		Indeterminate	4.63%	4.24%	4.44%
			29838	-13596	32603		T/o Growth %	NPS	Av growth % (A)	Av Growth % (B)	Av Growth % (C)	Av % (B & C)
DSC		3.68%	-2.86%	-13.06%	38.22%		T/O	59.26	6.49%	5.26%	4.34%	4.80%
Est 2007	650110	674018	654736	569241	786784		G/P		3.30%	2.71%	2.44%	2.57%
Years 14	327491	342666	332394	296907	362934		N/P		Indeterminate	271.76%	22.89%	147.33%
	4273	7657	-	-	50722		T/o Growth %	NPS	Av growth % (A)	Av Growth % (B)	Av Growth % (C)	Av % (B & C)
SLV				9.67%	62.54%	2.37%	T/O	58.33	24.86%	27.49%	15.07%	21.28%
Est. 2002			373,287	409,379	665391	681151	G/P		4.03%	2.34%	2.18%	2.26%
Years - 19			230,843	263,065	314,725	247,015	N/P		39.60%	49.92%	19.99%	34.95%
Customers			79	86	89	104	T/o Growth %	NPS	Av growth % (A)	Av Growth % (B)	Av Growth % (C)	Av % (B & C)
RFM			29.25%	12.84%	11.78%		T/o	62.5	17.96%	21.01%	12.89%	16.95%
Est. 2011		623,195	805,455	908,891.11	1,015,961.00		G/P		32.40%	42.91%	18.76%	30.84%
Years - 10		182,296	254,559	291,617.15	416,987.67		N/P		12.53%	1.69%	1.61%	1.65%
EHC			20.89%	25.00%	23.53%		T/o Growth %	NPS	Av growth % (A)	Av Growth % (B)	Av Growth % (C)	Av % (B & C)
Est. 2016			225000	272000	340000	420000	T/O	69.23	23.14%	28.89%	15.48%	22.18%
Years - 4			140000	150000	164000	250000	G/P		22.97%	26.19%	14.67%	20.43%
			40000	22000	35000	100000	N/P		66.60%	50.00%	20.00%	35.00%

Average Growth % (A) was calculated by summing the averages of the annual growths.

Average Growth % (B) was calculated by a straight method from first to last year, as a percentage of the first year of the period, while average Growth % (B) used the same method, as a percentage of the last year of the period.

Average Growth % (B & C) was an average of (A) and (B), measured in order to smooth out fluctuations (in relatively volatile numbers) and give a better likelihood of ascertaining a link to NPS, given that the ranges are small.

Figure 1 - Outline of Surveys vs NPS

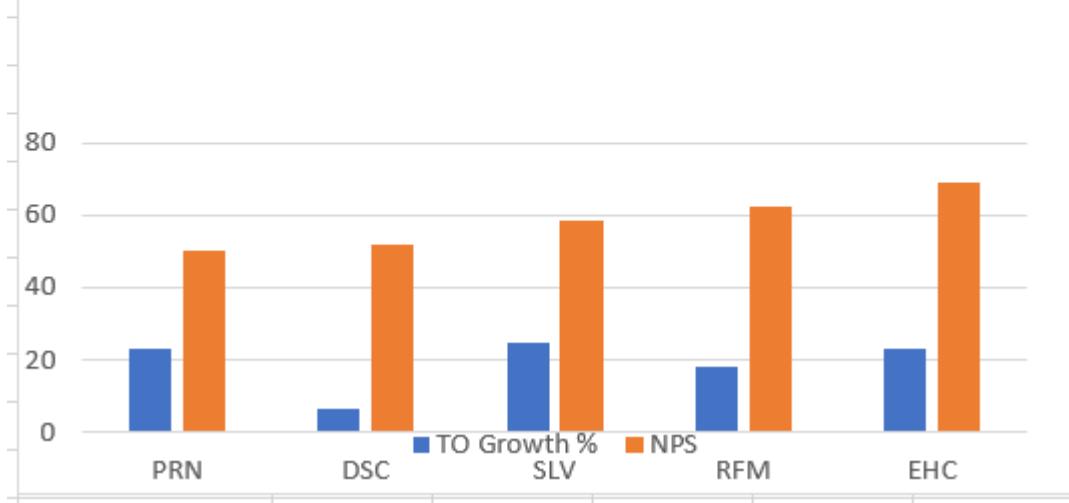
MSP	No. Surveys	Promoters	Prom%	Passives	Passv%	Detractors	Detr%	NPS	Av. NPS	C-Sat NPS	Av. S-Sat
PRN	12	7	58.33%	4	33.33%	1	8.33%	50.00	8.50	58.33	8.75
DSC	27	16	59.26%	9	33.33%	2	7.41%	51.85	8.67	14.81	8.33
SLV	12	7	58.33%	5	41.67%	0	0.00%	58.33	9.17	69.23	9.33
RFM	16	10	62.50%	6	37.50%	0	0.00%	62.50	8.94	68.75	8.94
EHC	13	9	69.23%	4	30.77%	0	0.00%	69.23	9.15	53.85	8.92
Total	80	80	61.53%	28.00	35.32%	3.00	3.15%	58.38%	8.88	53.00	8.86
		Average		Average		Average		111.00		Average	Average

For each, the ratio of promoters, passives and detractors has been included, along with the average NPS score and average NSS score.

Graphical Correlation between T/O Growth (Averaged using Method A) and NPS

Method (A)		PRN	DSC	SLV	RFM	EHC
TO Growth %		22.98	6.49	24.86	17.96	23.14
NPS		50	51.85	58.33	62.5	69.23

NPS & GP Growth %



Pearson's r of **0.376** refer Appendix F # 1

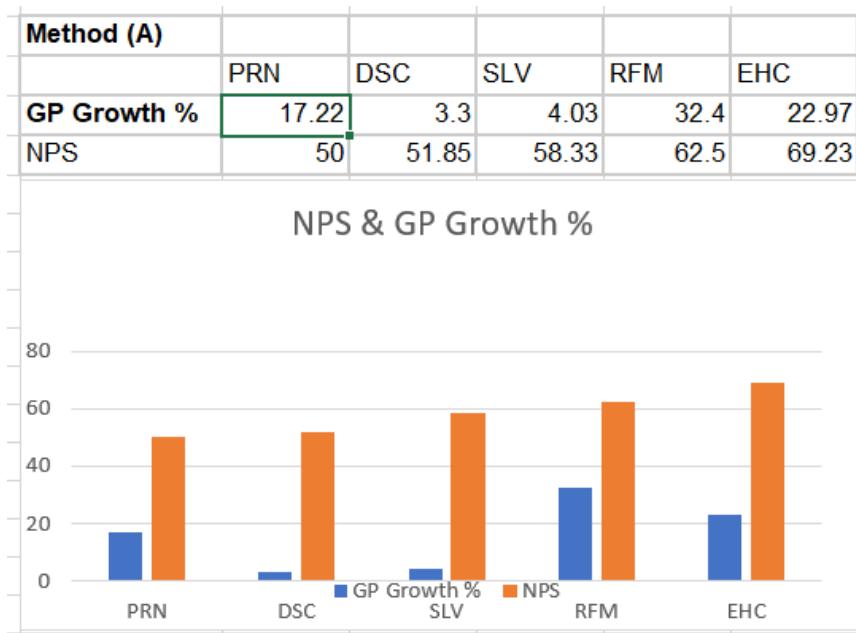
The results (above) were fed into the equation for Pearson r (below)

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

which yielded a Pearson's r of **0.372** (Refer Appendix Pearson # 1)

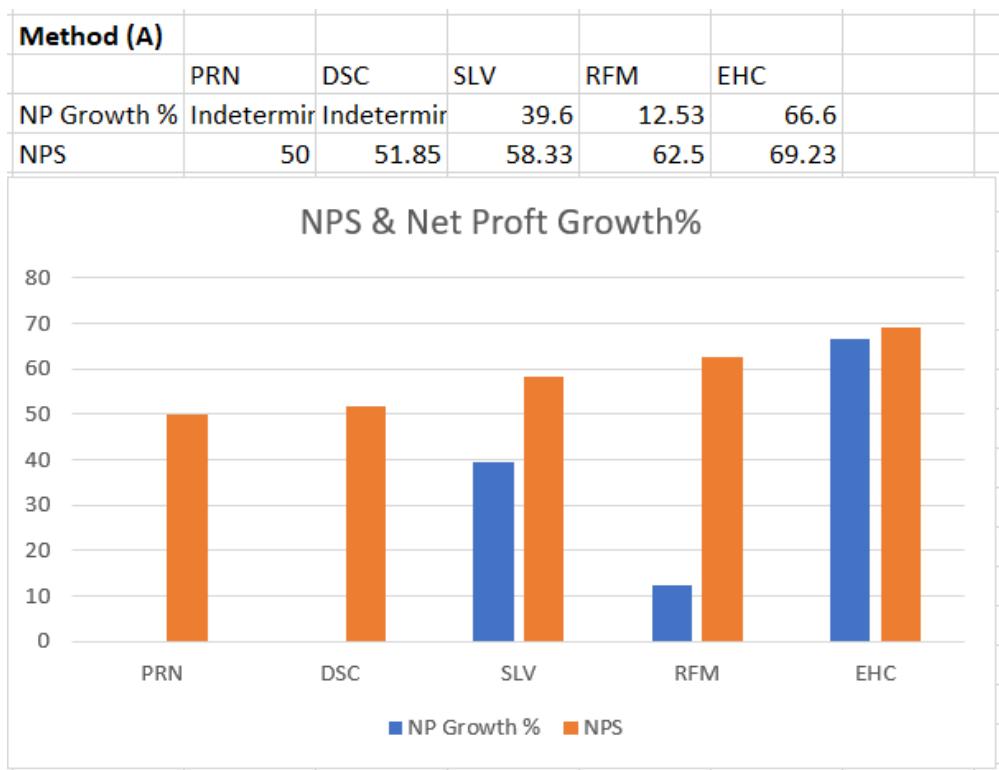
This process was repeated for Gross and Net Profits (Growth Method A) and again for Growth Method (B & C). All the calculations are in appendices X to Y and the results were as follows :

Gross Profit : Growth Method A



Pearson's r calculated as **0.551** (Refer Appendix F #2)

Net Profit : Growth Method A

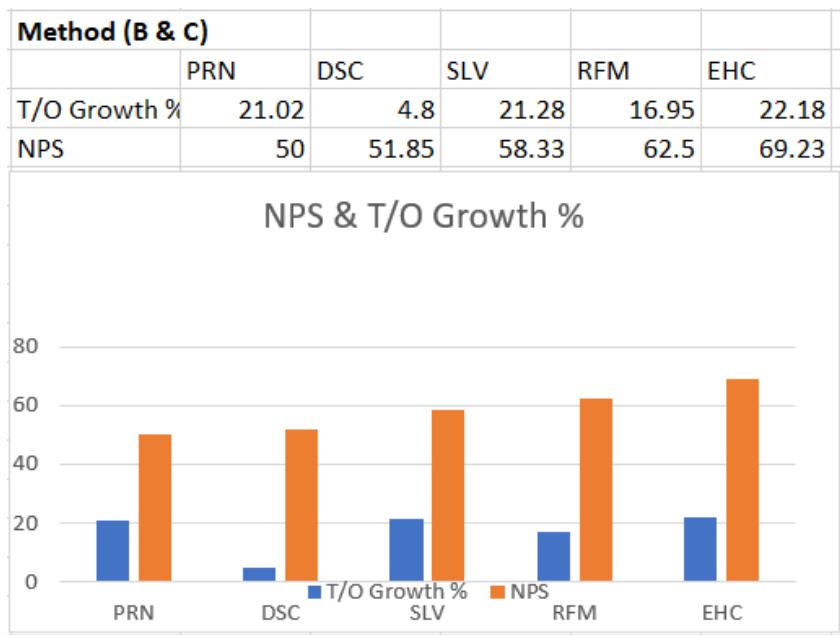


No visible correlation for NPS and Net Profit Growth, Method (A)

Pearson's r was **indeterminate** (refer Appendix F # 3)

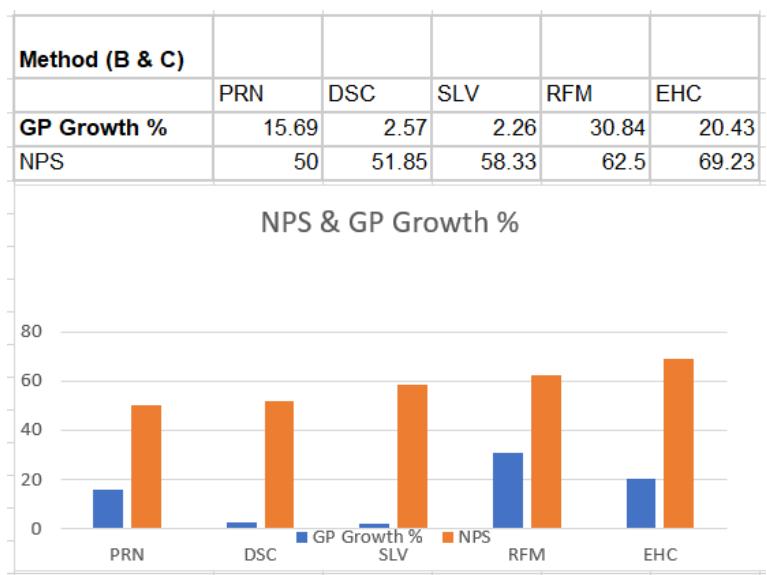
This exercise was repeated for method (B & C) i.e. averaged growth rates.

Turnover : Growth Method (B &C)



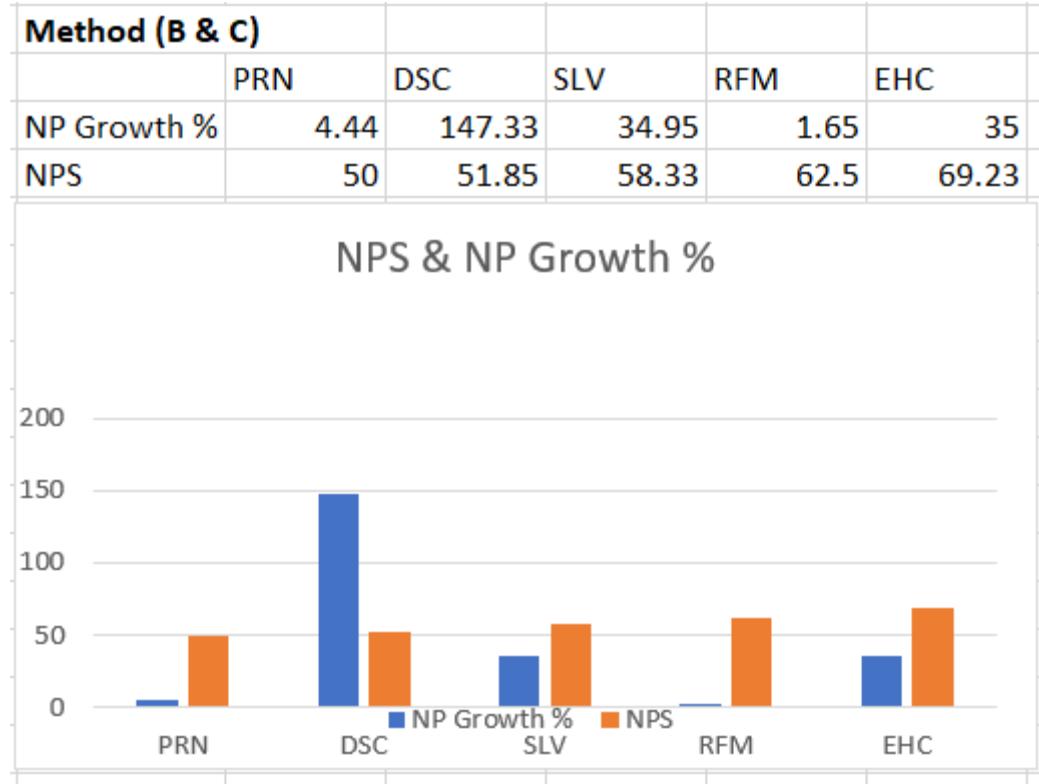
Pearson's r calculated as **0.446** (Refer Appendix F # 4)

Gross Profit : Growth Method (B &C)



Pearson's r calculated as **0.521** (Refer Appendix F # 5)

Net Profit : Growth Method (B &C)



Pearson's r calculated as **-0.328** (Refer Appendix F # 6)

Note, NSS was also calculated in the same way as NPS, using the client-satisfaction levels, giving values as per table, with the word "Satisfaction" is used (as the index from 0 to 10)

For comparisons (discussed later) correlations were tested for various combinations and were as follows : NPS against Gross Profit Growth Method (A) gives the **(best) Pearson's r of 0.551**

Average NPS against T/O Growth Method (B & C) gives a Pearson's r of **0.428**

NSS against T/O Growth Method (A) gives a Pearson's r of **0.867**

NSS against T/O Growth Method (B & C) gives a Pearson's r of **0.865**

NSS against GP Growth Method (A) gives a Pearson's r of **0.503**

NSS against GP Growth Method (B & C) gives a Pearson's r of **0.482**

Average NSS against T/O Growth Method (B & C) gives a Pearson's r of **0.796**

Other Numbers (Outlining Pearson's r)

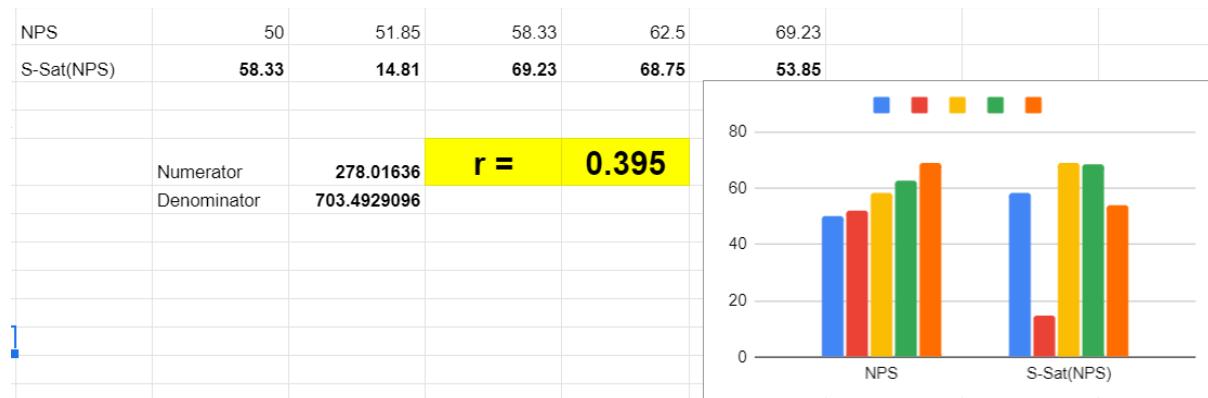
NPS against additional (Google) Reviews Received (%) is **-0.097**

NSS against additional (Google) Reviews Received (%) is **0.144**

Average NPS against additional (Google) Reviews Received (%) is **0.430**

Average NSS Against additional (Google) Reviews Received (%) is **0.492**

Correlation between NPS and NSS was **0.395**



Additionally, the following information was gathered :

MSP	Testmns(Y)	RA%	Reviews	%Rev(Y)	Rev-Rev%	Other Services	OS %	Improvement	Imp %	Referral	Ref-Rec%	Training	Training %	Other Info?	Info %
PRN	9	75.00%	1	11.11%	8.33%	6	50.00%	5	41.67%	2	16.67%	3	25.00%	0	0.00%
DSC	23	85.19%	5	21.74%	18.52%	3	11.11%	19	70.37%	2	7.41%	5	18.52%	4	14.81%
SLV	12	100.00%	4	33.33%	33.33%	3	25.00%	4	33.33%	1	8.33%	6	50.00%	5	41.67%
RFM	12	75.00%	3	25.00%	18.75%	5	31.25%	8	50.00%	0	0.00%	8	50.00%	3	18.75%
EHC	13	100.00%	1	7.69%	7.69%	4	30.77%	3	23.08%	1	7.69%	3	23.08%	0	0.00%
	69	87.04%	14.00	19.78%	17.33%	21.00	29.63%	39.00	43.69%	6.00	8.02%	25.00	33.32%	12.00	15.05%
Total		Average	Total	Average	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average

With Testimonials (Y) being the reviews agreed and RA% being the percentage agreed from the number of surveys for that MSP. The other variables, such as “other services” (i.e. upsell opportunities), “service-improvements”, referrals etc and their associated percentages were also recorded as below. (NSS was also written as ‘S-Sat’ but is the same figure).

Respondents	Google Review Red'd	NPS-Rating	S-Sat	Testimonial
80	14	708	701	69
Averages	17.50%	8.85	8.7625	86.25%
Other Services	Improvements	Referral	Training	Other Info?
21	39	6	25	12
26.25%	48.75%	7.50%	31.25%	15%
Training Regn's				
			6	
			24%	

6 interviewees registered to attend MS Teams training session (available to all clients), representing 24% of those that positively expressed an interest in training sessions during the survey.

4.04 - Qualitative Findings

The transcriptions of the 80 completed surveys were encoded for positive and negative sentiment as follows:

Positive Sentiment		Negative Sentiment			
Code	Details	Frequency	Code	Details	Frequency
Spl	Specialist	1	Avl	Available	1
Prc	Proactive	2	Esy	Easy to Deal With	1
Tem	Feel Part of Team	2	Fnd	Friendly	1
Rec	Already recommended Previously	3	Met	More Meetings Required	1
Rel	Reliable	3	Sln	Right/Appropriate Solutions/Tech	1
Cst	Value for Money	5	Tkt	Ticketing / Comms is frustrating	1
Adv	Advice	7	Mor	More Staff Needed	2
Cms	Good Comms	7	Sml	Feel Can only cope with Smaller Companies	2
Und	Know/understand the business	7	Bil	Billing/Invoicing Issues/Confusion	3
Avl	Available	8	Cmp	Competent	3
Bnd	Beyond The Call of Duty	8	Cms	Good Comms	3
Lng	Long Time Relationship	8	Err	Errors Made	3
Sln	Right/Appropriate Solutions/Tech	8	Mrn	Mornings a problem - Need more Availability	3
Nme	Know staff by Name	9	Prc	Proactive	4
Ons	Onsite	9	Und	Know/understand the business	4
Esy	Easy to Deal With	11	Cst	Value for Money	5
Fnd	Friendly	14	Dep	Depends on Who You Get/Speak To	6
Hlp	Helpful	26	Fst	Fast/Responsive	11
Fst	Fast/Responsive	41			
Cmp	Competent	60			
Total		239	Total		55

Note, where codes are the same for both positive and negative sentiment, the negative sentiment simply denotes the complement of the other (e.g. 'Fnd' in the negative column signifies a *lack of friendliness*)

Further encoding was made for concepts identified as aspirational, without having any particular positive/negative valence, which is discussed later.

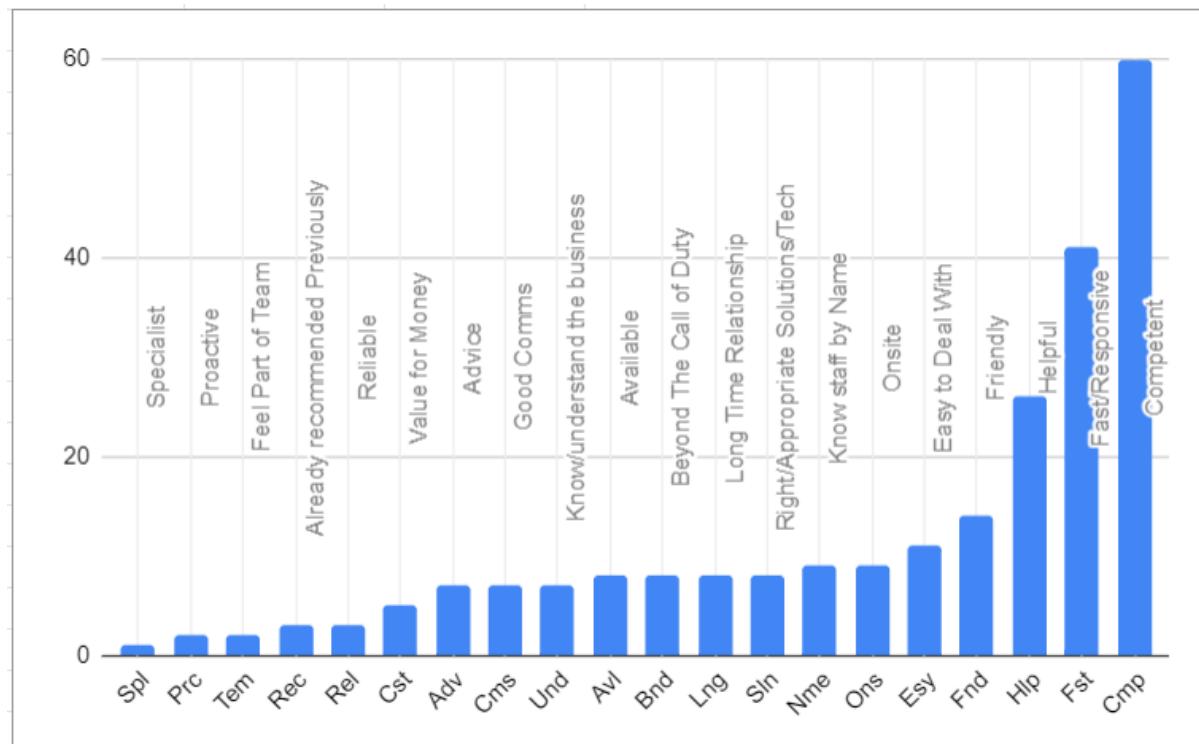
Code	Details	Frequency
Ded	Dedicated Member of Staff	3
OOH	Out Of Hours	3
Prr	Prioritised Ticketing System	2
Upd	Keep MSP & Client Abreast/Updated About New Tech	2

Additionally, the most common adjectives were counted as :

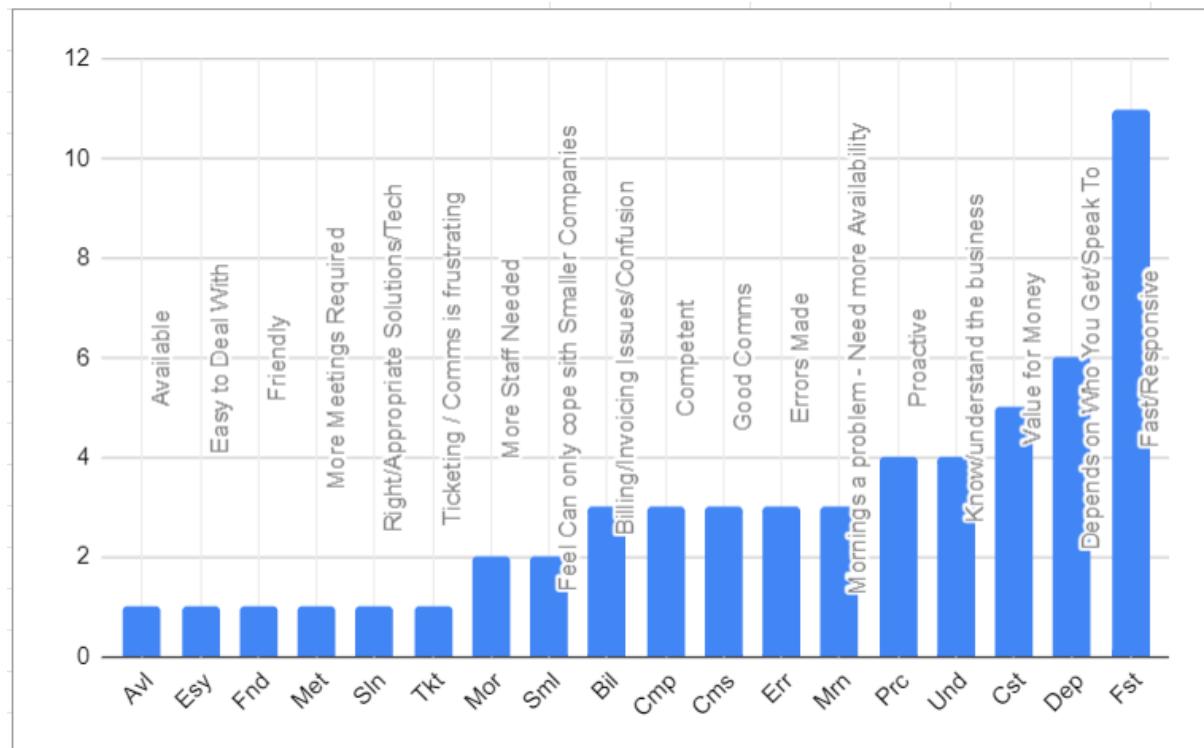
Word	Frequency
Excellent	37
Efficient	29
Responsive	24
Professional	18
Prompt	18
Personable	14
Proactive	13
Willing	11

These codes were analysed, firstly as an aggregate total and then separated into two groups, namely “Review-Givers” and “Non-Review Givers”, giving rise to the following histograms :

Total Interviewees, Positive Sentiments :

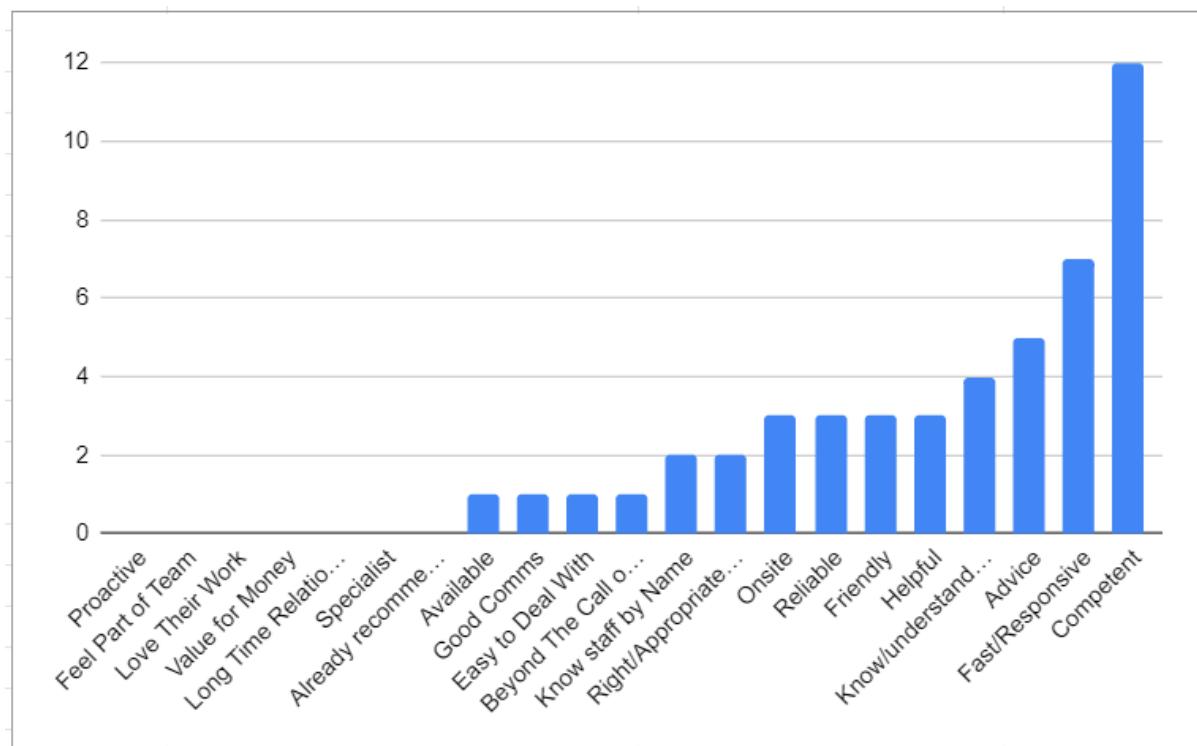


Total Interviewees, Negative Sentiments :



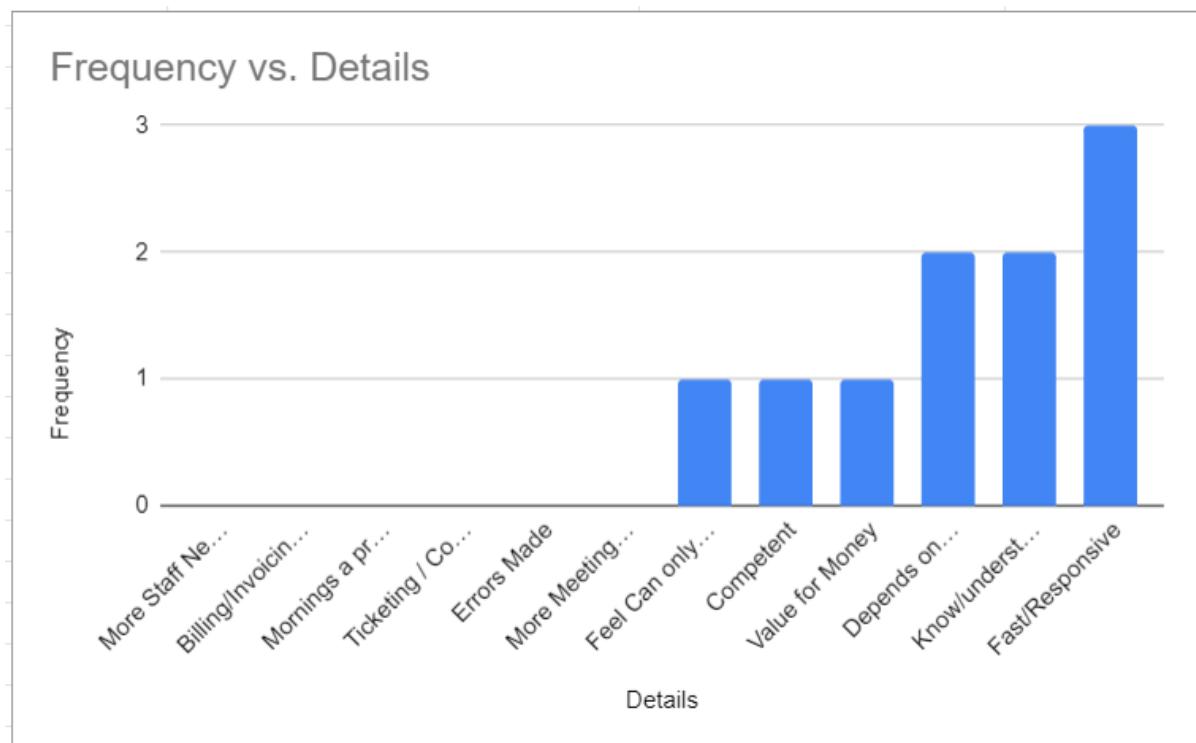
Review Givers, Positive Sentiments :

Code	Details	Frequency
Prc	Proactive	0
Tem	Feel Part of Team	0
Luv	Love Their Work	0
Cst	Value for Money	0
Lng	Long Time Relationship	0
Spl	Specialist	0
Rec	Already recommended Previously	0
Avl	Available	1
Cms	Good Comms	1
Esy	Easy to Deal With	1
Bnd	Beyond The Call of Duty	1
Nme	Know staff by Name	2
Sln	Right/Appropriate Solutions/Tech	2
Ons	Onsite	3
Rel	Reliable	3
Fnd	Friendly	3
Hlp	Helpful	3
Und	Know/understand the business	4
Adv	Advice	5
Fst	Fast/Responsive	7
Cmp	Competent	12
Total		48

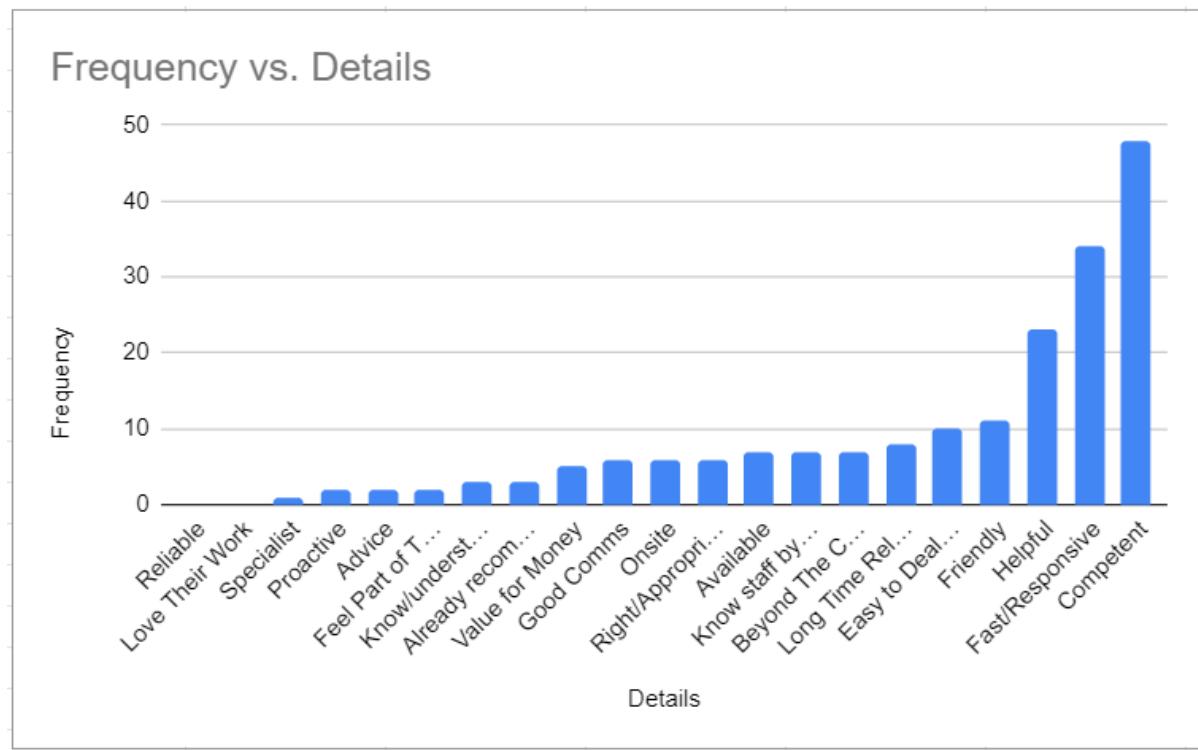


Review Givers, Negative Sentiments :

Code	Details	Frequency
Mor	More Staff Needed	0
Bil	Billing/Invoicing Issues/Confusion	0
Mrn	Mornings a problem - Need more	0
Tkt	Ticketing / Comms is frustrating	0
Err	Errors Made	0
Met	More Meetings Required	0
Sml	Feel Can only cope with Smaller C	1
Cmp	Competent	1
Cst	Value for Money	1
Dep	Depends on Who You Get/Speak	2
Und	Know/understand the business	2
Fst	Fast/Responsive	3
Total		10

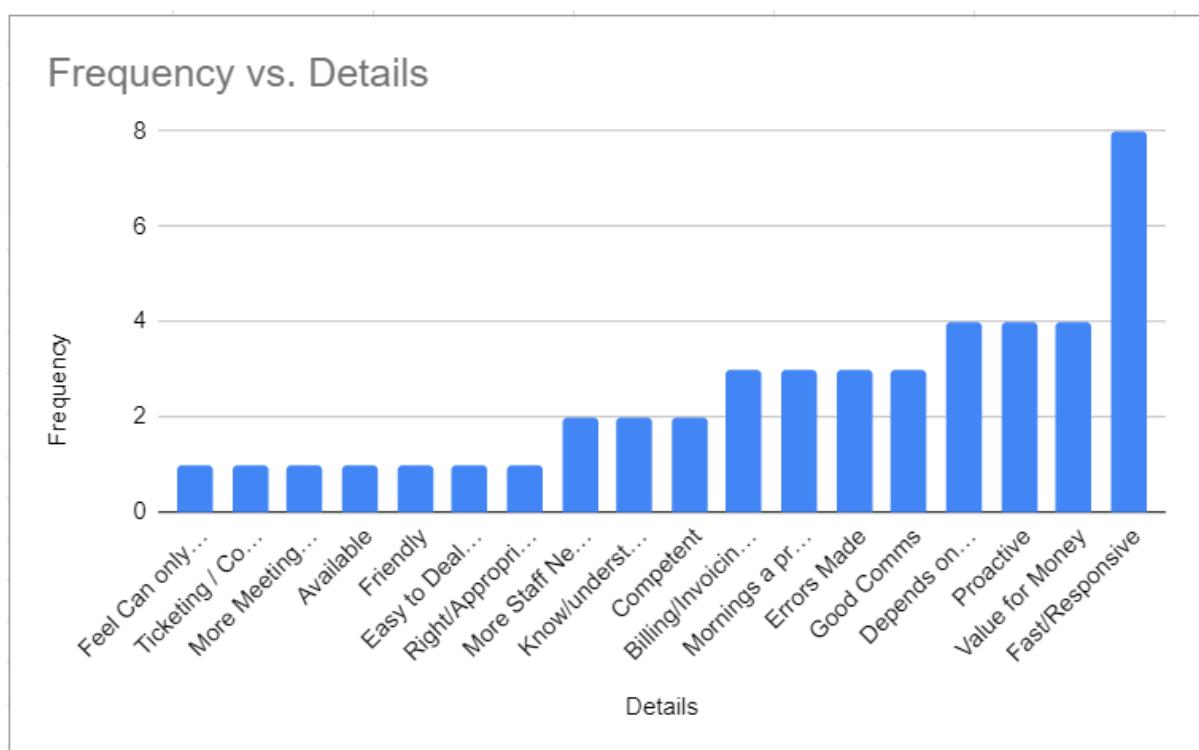
**Non-Review Givers, Positive Sentiments :**

Code	Details	Frequency
Rel	Reliable	0
Luv	Love Their Work	0
Spl	Specialist	1
Prc	Proactive	2
Adv	Advice	2
Tem	Feel Part of Team	2
Und	Know/understand the business	3
Rec	Already recommended Previously	3
Cst	Value for Money	5
Cms	Good Comms	6
Ons	Onsite	6
Sln	Right/Appropriate Solutions/Tech	6
Avl	Available	7
Nme	Know staff by name	7
Bnd	Beyond The Call of Duty	7
Lng	Long Time Relationship	8
Esy	Easy to Deal With	10
Fnd	Friendly	11
Hlp	Helpful	23
Fst	Fast/Responsive	34
Cmp	Competent	48
Total		191



Non-Review Givers, Negative Sentiments :

Code	Details	Frequency
Sml	Feel Can only cope with Smaller Co	1
Tkt	Ticketing / Comms is frustrating	1
Met	More Meetings Required	1
Avl	Available	1
Fnd	Friendly	1
Esy	Easy to Deal With	1
Sln	Right/Appropriate Solutions/Tech	1
Mor	More Staff Needed	2
Und	Know/understand the business	2
Cmp	Competent	2
Bil	Billing/Invoicing Issues/Confusion	3
Mrn	Mornings a problem - Need more A	3
Err	Errors Made	3
Cms	Good Comms	3
Dep	Depends on Who You Get/Speak To	4
Prc	Proactive	4
Cst	Value for Money	4
Fst	Fast/Responsive	8
Total		45



4.05 - Overheads Of Data Collection

Overall timings of observations were measured, enabling estimations of expense rated either internally or via an external agency (see discussion).

For the first 18 successful interviews (further analysis was deemed unnecessary), the length of the call-recordings of the were summed and divided to produce an average of 9.2 minutes (Appendix G - Average Call Time). Each MSP provided more contacts than were successfully surveyed (due to the inefficient nature of trying to contact interviewees).

On average, approximately 5 calls (circa 2 minutes each) along with approximately 5 minutes administration time (updating notes and scheduling call-backs etc) were required before a successful interview was undertaken. When one was completed, the notes were paraphrased from the audio-recordings, which took circa 20 minutes each, which were then typed up and a copy sent to the interviewees (for transparency), of about 5 minutes.

This email contained an overview thanking them for their time, along with a copy of their transcription (in line with best practice and 'triangulation' - see 'Discussion') and a direct link to the MSP's particular Google Review page (assuming they had agreed to post a review).

Therefore each completed survey required a total administration-time of circa :

5 unsuccessful calls/attempts @ 2 mins (on the phone)

plus 5 minutes admin (each) = 35 mins

1 successful survey call @ average of 9.1 minutes = 9 mins

Writing/paraphrasing call-recordings = 20 mins

Sending confirmation to respondent with copy of notes & Link to Google Review = 5 Mins

Total time (per review) : **(Apprx) 1 hour 10 Mins**

Total Reviews : **80**

The sample-sizes vs total client-populations for each MSP, along with their Net Promoter scores and reviews received are outlined here

G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Biz	Pop'n	Surveys	% Pop	Proms	Psvs	Dets	NPS %	RPS %	Ref Y	Ref N	Ref N/A	Ref Rec'd	% Yes	% Total
PRN	66	12	18.18%	7	4	1	50.00%	58.33	9	1	2	1	11.11%	8.33%
SLV	104	12	11.54%	7	5	0	58.33%	75	12	0	0	4	33.33%	33.33%
DSC	46	27	58.70%	16	9	2	51.85%	44.44	23	3	1	5	21.74%	18.52%
RFM	74	16	21.62%	10	6	0	62.50%	68.75	13	2	1	3	23.08%	18.75%
EHC	38	13	34.21%	9	4	0	69.23%	69.23	13	0	0	1	7.69%	7.69%

Note, an extra column 'RPS' has been included. This was the 'Referral' Promoter Score. It was conjectured during the study that there may be some merit in ascertaining whether there is any link between the reviews index and the net promoter score and/or the company growth.

MSP	Total Population (No. Clients)	Sample Size (No. reviews)	%
# 1(PRN)	32	12	37.5
# 2(SLV)	104	12	11.5
# 3(DSC)	46	27	58.7
# 4(RFM)	85	16	18.8
# 5(ENC)	55	13	23.6
Totals	322	80	150.1
Average	64.4	16	30.02 %

The average time required for an MSP to conduct the process to ascertain their NPS score with an average sample size **of 16** (i.e. 80/5) x average time per client (i.e. 1 hour 10 minutes) **is 18.7 hours** per MSP.

5.0 - Discussion : Introduction

5.01.1 - Recap of the Literature Review

The literature sought to critically analyse the literature surrounding Fred Reicheld's Net Promoter Score/System and thereby create a preparatory backdrop against which an empirical study to determine the efficacy of a Net Promoter System undertaken for Managed Service Providers could be undertaken and whether this could produce more than a superficial 'dashboard light', as most academics had highlighted a lack of empirical evidence (RLR) and, furthermore, whether NSS would prove superior to NPS in this regard.

5.01.2 - Reviews

Alternative (or supporting) theories were espoused by various authors (RLR) suggesting a direct link between favourable sales figures and positive eWOM, therefore creating a need to understand motivations for leaving a review.

To this end, motivational theories were considered and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, was identified as a suitable framework (RLR), specifically in relation to garnering online client-testimonials (reviews) and referrals. In contrast to this, studies showing people's tendency to do the *opposite* what they say (RLR) were considered as likely counter-arguments, together with criticisms of the framework about lack of experimental verification (RLR).

5.01.3 – Reviews - Importance

Causal linkage between brand quality and eWOM was reviewed, together with the dramatic increase in purchase-intent for websites boasting multiple reviews.

This, together with even more compelling reasons established for higher-consideration purchases (such as the near quadruple increase in conversions) confirmed the importance of reviews.

5.04 - Quantitative Considerations

Not all subjects agreed to provide a review (although the overwhelming majority did) and (very occasionally) even those that expressed positive sentiment towards the company did not wish to leave a review, simply because it was not company policy or because they felt they were unable to for another reason - the matter was never pressed. A few 'not applicable' (N/A) answers were recorded, when it was inappropriate to request a review (e.g. if the client was upset or the review score was below 6).

5.05 - The Significance of NSS

There is clear, numerically established disparity between how interviewees originally answered the NPS question then subsequently gave a more objective feedback towards actual service received, occasionally directly contradicting their earlier responses (as outlined in the qualitative analysis), which now shows early promise as a useful metric.

It is conjectured the extra elaboration elicits a more accurate response because the interviewee reflects on a more *directly-relatable* experience (i.e. satisfaction), which confirms previous studies outlined earlier (**RLR**) suggesting customer satisfaction is a better metric for financial performance. Interviewees' manifold reasons for suggesting any particular NPS score is masked by many potential motives, both conscious and unconscious, as discussed

(RLR). However, whether the interviewee would wish to engage in a conversation with a supplier about *further* products/services if they were not sincerely happy with their expressed service satisfaction (i.e.their NSS) is logically doubtful, this is arguably a cogent indicator of **TPB**. The r value (of correlation of NSS to interest in further services) confirms this relation with a correlation of **+0.56** which is **markedly contrasted** with that of the r value for NPS correlated with interest in other services, which is negative at **-0.7** (Appendix M – new insights). Buying more services is ultimately what drives future growth, so this link could be profound.

Of interest to this study is any relationship between the index of Reviews Agreed (RA% averaged at circa 87%), the index of Reviews Received (Rev-Rec% averaged at circa 17%) and the index of Referrals Received (Ref-Rec% averaged at circa 8%) during the interview. To reiterate, the relationship between RA% and Ref-Rec% is expected to be very loose, due to the randomness of the respondent knowing or being able to recall a suitable referral *on the spot*.

However, no such constraint exists with the relationship between the interviewees' confirmation of providing a review and *actually doing it*, the relationship *should* be directly proportional, if there were no other factors involved.

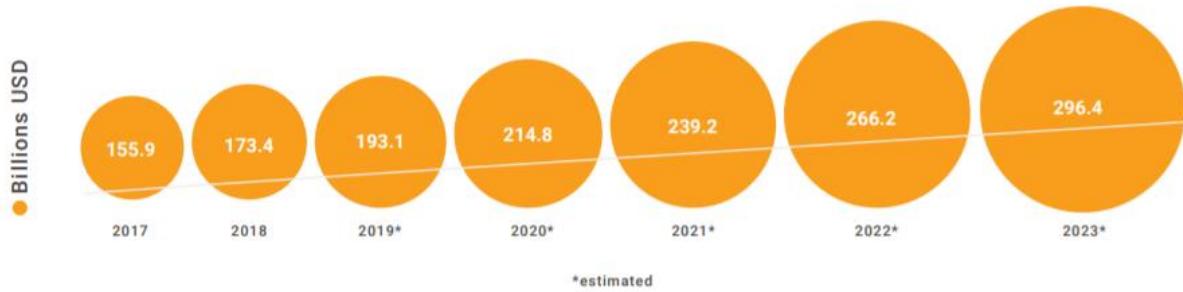
5.06 - Company Growth, Industry Growth and Noise

One of the challenges in trying to ascertain a link between NPS and company growth is in establishing exactly *what kind of growth* is being measured. For the sake of completeness, all companies were measured for increases in sales turnover, gross profitability and net profitability. These growths were also measured by averaging the sum of the average annual differences (Method A), together with a simple straight-line method (using the first period and last period, divided by first period, plus method B which was the same as method (A) but

using the last period and finally Method (B & C) which was using the midpoints of A and B. Clearly, analysing all these results and looking for correlations quickly became unwieldy and soon became an exercise in “making the numbers fit” as there were so many variations to choose from for which to ascertain NPS and NSS correlations.

One issue worth highlighting (outlined in ‘Limitations’) is that the overall MSP market is highly disruptive and growing rapidly anyway plus there are many other factors affecting any SME’s financial performances, well outside the bearing of NPS or NSS, even for well-established businesses like those chosen, undermining confidence in predictions.

FIGURE 01: Global Managed Services Market Size



Source solarwindmsp.com

As for the figures of (appendix E-2) there are slight differences between the aggregate averages (top line) and the bottom line, assumed to be rounding errors. The top-line averages (deemed to be slightly more accurate) are used here.

5.07 - Correlations

The most obvious observation is that the best correlation of Pearson’s r of (a loose) 0.551 was made for NPS and Gross Profit (Method A). However, the NSS gives a similar correlation of 0.503 and yet gives consistently better correlations across the board, with a Pearson’s r of 0.867 for Turnover (Method A) and 0.865 for Turnover Method (B & C) i.e.

nearly double, and certainly noteworthy as a value of over 8 is considered a strong correlation, with even values over 7 being widely regarded as acceptable.

Furthermore, the average NSS figure (simply taking the average figures of NSS for each MSP) yields a correlation of 0.796 for turnover growth (Method B & C) which is, again, significantly better than NPS which was just **0.428**.

As far as the other recordings are concerned, there appears no obvious correlations. It would have not come as a surprise, for example, to have seen a strong correlation between the NPS score (or NSS score) and the number of actual reviews received or even referrals received. However, the correlation shows no such link although, again, the numbers are so low as to make confidence low also. For instance, with just 6 (or less) reviews received per MSP, even a couple of extra chance reviews would make a significant difference and this effect is magnified several-fold when looking at the number of referrals, where the numbers are in the order of 0's, 1's and 2's per MSP.

Appendix J shows the stark contrast in r values for the NPS figures and NSS figures about (declared) conation to give a testimonial, with the r value for NPS to agreeing to providing testimonials showing a 'fair' degree of correlation at 0.645 whilst that of the NSS shows **almost no correlation** at just 0.192. However, this **relationship was reversed** in terms of the **actual percentage testimonials received**, whereby the NPS had a negative r figure of (-) **0.097** whilst the NSS figure was significantly stronger (although still weak) at plus (+) **0.279**.

The main point of interest is the striking disparity between the number of reviews offered and those actually received, given the average reviews agreed was **87.04%** (from all reviews) and yet the actual number received was only **17.33%** (19.78% if taken as the percentage of reviews from those agreed rather than total surveys undertaken). The reasons for this are

discussed later in this chapter, although it appears to corroborate the '**problem of planned abstainers**' (RLR).

A slightly deeper view reveals that interviewees gave broadly similar answers to the question "One a scale of 0 to 10, how likely would you be to refer them to a colleague" and "On a scale of 0 to 10, would you rate them in terms of the service you receive?" yet the strength of feeling was slightly lower, consistently.

Consequently, the correlation between NPS and NSS could be expected to be very high, yet it is only **0.395**. ***This is surprising*** and underpins the value of a study to test a different metric and gives more weight to the previously mentioned study suggesting customer satisfaction (specifically CEQ) offers a better prediction of financial success than NPS.

Customer satisfaction and conation to refer are surprisingly different, despite any apparent surface similarity, and comprise divergent attitudes and behaviours.

Many of the interviewees outlined having received service for a long time (with the concept of longevity having been captured/codified in the qualitative part of this study) and it is hypothesised whether the interviewees feel a sense of obligation to give a higher NPS rating that would be warranted due to personal sentiment accrued over time, whereas the NSS number reflects a truer picture of the *actual* service-level received which, in turn, may (for whatever reason) actually be a better predictor of company growth. One MSP in particular (DSC) had a very pronounced disparity between NPS and NSS for this precise reason, causing the NPS figure to be more a function of "loyalty over substance".

A limitation of this study was in not mapping demographic information (such as age) about the survey interviewees in order to gain an insight into whether (e.g. older) people are indeed more reliable at following up on their verbal commitment to provide a review, as previously mentioned age vs consistency research (**RLR**).

Whilst reviewed evidence showed that clients who have a higher degree of commitment are more likely to volunteer as client advocates (**RLR**), this research found no significant correlation between creating positive reviews and those clients demonstrating a high Net Promoter Score (i.e. *declared* intention not necessarily manifest behaviour for advocacy).

Furthermore, the number of *actual* referrals induced by the survey was very low, which probably should not be a surprise because asking people who they can think to refer during the course of a phone-call is problematic in that they're unlikely to be prepared, plus other behavioural factors, discussed later. Nevertheless, the average referral rate was still 7.5%, meaning that a contact name was provided for the MSP to reach out to.

Of those surveyed, almost a third (31.25%) were interested in receiving information about a Microsoft training session, either for themselves, a team member or for someone else. All the interviewees were reminded (by email) after the exercise with a link to a training session, where 6 interviewees registered, representing 24% of those that expressed an interest in training and 7.5% (i.e. 6/80) of the total interviewees. A number of other MSPs' clients also expressed an interest in the training (all clients had been invited for completeness) so whilst some others received a training session, they were ignored for the purposes of this study as they weren't interviewed.

As far as making the case for the value of the exercise (to an MSP) is concerned (costs are discussed later) an encouraging number of interviewees (over a quarter at 26.25%) expressed an interest in discussing extra products/services with the services with the MSP. Whilst it's difficult to quantify the value of these potential upsells, with a quarter of interviewees signalling interest in more services, clearly this exercise can be monetised to offset costs (at the least) with potential net cash-inflows being likely.

Almost half (48.75%) of the interviewees identified ways to improve their service offering, thereby providing scope for the MSPs to increase service-alignment, operational efficiency or offer market-led value in other ways, thereby increasing sustainable competitive advantage, specifically given the reported 93% increase in online reviews (**RLR**) after taking visible remedial action in line with customer feedback.

There may be an inverse correlation between the number of service-improvement suggestions and the net promoter score, NSS score and RPI (Review Percentage Index).

The question “Anything else?” (which was asked in case there were any pressing issues that the respondent felt the MSP should know about - outside the remit of this study) was recorded as having a 15% response (i.e. 12/80). This data has the least interest academically, although practically it served as a useful “catch-all” for any issues outside the remit of the other questions, with occasional useful pieces of information (such as key staff leaving the client) which would be of interest to the MSP and if nothing else offering relationship-strengthening value.

5.08 - The Qualitative Findings

One of the larger challenges of thematic analysis is knowing how to codify/theme the substantial content of narratives. If it's to be pre-coded (to fit with existing theory) then it needs to link with the existing literature review. However, inductive analysis (which thematic analysis is) requires the unconstrained mindset where the researcher wears the hat of an ‘interpreter’ to remove ‘arrogance’ of pre-existing concepts (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). This striving for theoretical saturation of encoding choices and reviewing subsequent theory or inducing theory can potentially result in overwhelm. Thus, whilst this iterative process is insightful, time constraints can make this process challenging.

Being iterative, there is a potential to change the nature of the research questions during the process, which may come at the expense of validity of the quantitative analysis.

It was noted that in some of the qualitative data, some of the codes were both positive and negative for the same recipient. This initially confusing situation was accounted for when the transcripts were reviewed and can be accounted for in two ways. The first is that the respondent simply provided extra information later during the interview, which negated (some of) their earlier comments. Interestingly, some interviewees started by providing highly positive feedback which then distinctly cooled, becoming more critical as they'd been asked to elaborate upon service satisfaction and then having been asked about ways the company/service could be improved.

The second explanation for dual valency of a particular code representing a concept (e.g. 'Fst' for Speed of Response) was discovered that what had once been the case was no longer the case. For example, the MSP known as DSC have a couple of examples whereby their interviewees complained the technical-staff historically *understood* their particular business ('Und') however, key technical-staff departed and they were left feeling that their business wasn't understood any more or that it *depended* upon whom they managed to speak with during a service call ('Dep').

Comparing the information between the sets of review-givers and non-review givers, it's evident that in both sets, **competence** is the most important (positive) factor, by a long way (over 50% above the next highest factor), followed by **speed of response**, in a similar part of the curve.

However, the factor that's most important (in both sets) for negative sentiment is speed of response (or lack of it). The opposite of competence (i.e. **incompetence**) features much further down the curve in both sets. It is presumed that had the interviewee felt the company

weren't competent, they'd simply not continue their relationship with them, whereas suffering a slow response is irritating (and highly prominent on the graphs) however people are perhaps more tolerant (or less likely to terminate the contract). Again, the numbers are few, so statistical significance can't be confidently implied from any of the other figures, except **competence** and **speed** of response, as these are particularly striking in both sets.

The combined profile (i.e. all interviewees in both sets) paints an interesting profile in that, again, for the positive traits, competence is considered key, followed by speed and friendliness, with a noticeable drop-off to the next highest of "Easy to Deal With", with the rest of the categories flattening out at low levels. That's not to say they're not important (e.g. Availability, Communications etc) it's just that at numbers around 5,6,7 they're only a small fraction of those main salient categories, namely Helpfulness, Speed and Competence. Speed is over twice as highly rated at friendliness, which is itself rated twice as much as cost. This is clearly important as MSPs concerned about their value proposition should not be unduly concerned with price. That works on the basis of course that clients are happy, once they're *established* clients, and that at the pre-sales part of the buying process, price will likely be significantly more influential.

Again, with the combined profile, speed is by far the most important factor, followed by "depends who you speak with". In some instances, it appears that interviewees feel they get good service but only if they get through to their preferred contact. The uncertainty of this is likely to be a significant factor and therefore making the support process more predictable would be a recommendation here.

Further down the list, a lack of "understanding the business" is significant, as well as cost and lack of proactivity. Taking the trouble to have regular meetings with the interviewees (via the same staff ideally, building rapport) should overcome all these issues (as it has already been seen price is much less of a factor with happy clients). One noticeable opportunity that

MSPs may wish to consider adding extra resources earlier in the morning, as this seems to fit with what clients want (again, helping make the MSP market-led) and a potential USP which may have a significant impact for various businesses that rely heavily on early morning IT availability.

As an aside (and outside the scope of this paper), some codes were created for “Wants” which were considered to be categories that interviewees feel the MSP could/should provide although it had little bearing on strength of feelings, and this was addressed largely in the “How Could The People, Processes or Products” be improved question. As can be seen, the responses are low (even for the combined list) although, again, these features should not be missed by the marketing people. Nor should the choice of words. Certain words were noticed to appear multiple times and consequently, these could be used in marketing-communications such as sales copy, e.g. (helpful-19, quickly-17, excellent-15 etc).

Perhaps the most obvious factor to be mentioned is the average NPS for review-givers is 9.21 contrasted with that of 8.77 for non-review-givers and they apparently are considering more services too, at 35.71% versus 24.24%. This is a relative increase of around 47%, while the other factors (reviews, referrals and training) were broadly the same. (The numerator is low however at just 5 units, rendering this observation of little statistical merit).

Occasionally (and confusingly) interviewees used both positive and negative sentiment (i.e. the same code was identified) for the same issue. An example being where a respondent historically found their provider was good in one area but this deteriorated (perhaps due to a staff-member leaving or another reason).

5.09 - Combined

Overall, the qualitative research appears inconclusive and it is conjectured whether augmenting the quantitative component of the NPS study with a multiple-choice option to respond about their reasoning would retain simplicity whilst offering more insightful feedback. Some of the responses may have simply been borne from loyalty and an option expressed as (e.g.) *“I like the company and would be inclined to recommend them but ...”* with a series of choices may offer an insight into a degree of ‘emotionalism’. Only further testing would ascertain this and there would likely be issues of contamination, e.g. due to interviewees trying to provide **consistency** with their responses at the ‘expense of accuracy’ **(RLR)** and **pre-framing** to contend with.

An attempt could be made to try and reduce social desirability bias (where the respondent feels obliged to provide more flattering responses) by introducing a question along the lines of *“Without naming anyone, what would the most critical person in your company say about company?”* thereby allowing a degree of distance between the respondent and their answer, as studies have shown a strong correlation between espousing a subject’s peers’ views and their own (true) views.

5.10 - Review : Intent, Behaviour & Signalling

It’s already been mentioned that the Theory of Planned Behaviour suggests intent is the best predictor of behaviour. However, as has been alluded in the literature review, there are many arguments why people’s declared intent and behaviour can be out of alignment.

As the brewery survey revealed **(RLR)**, where there was a huge discrepancy between types of beer consumed, there may well be issues of embarrassment or even denial. The Texas Tech University **(RLR)** example demonstrated 83% of consumers were prepared to give a positive review, while only 29% actually did, which is similar to findings in this study where

87% of interviewees were prepared to give a review, yet only 19.78% (of those that agreed) actually did, suggesting this is likely not an isolated anomaly.

Even in (most of) those cases where the NPS was high and the accompanying feedback was highly favourable towards the MSP, there seems no confirmation of a link between sentiment and behaviour. It is conjectured that some degree of normative compliance may have been exhibited either upon asking for the NPS figure or the ensuing Google review, thereby artificially inflating the espoused conation of the respondent.

It is also noted that in at least two of the reviews, some interviewees gave an ex-post positive review and/or a referral, even after leaving a poor NPS figure with accompanying lukewarm sentiment. As mentioned, this could be attributable to guilt (RLR) although this argument towards negative post-fact motivation becomes more circular when one considers the arguments outlined earlier (**RLR**) about the effects of party 'A' being changed in light of **guilt** about their *perceived* implications towards party 'B'.

On top of this, various forms of social desirability bias may be inherent (likely amplified were the MSP owner to have conducted the survey), which could stem from simple acquiescence bias. Alternatively, the lack of behaviour could be a function of reactance, with the subject feeling 'pressured' into leaving a review yet not articulating their feelings, perhaps unknown even to themselves. However, it is recognised that further study needs to be undertaken otherwise these postulations may be subject to a fundamental attribution error, where a simple situational disposition (e.g. not seeing the survey follow-up email due to being busy, inbox clutter or work-related overwhelm) may be mistaken for dispositional attributions (such as cognitive dissonance between holding unfavourable yet unexpressed views alongside being asked to leave positive reviews).

The "attitudinal fallacy", coined to describe the "ABC Problem" outlined earlier, also serves to highlight an over-reliance on The Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework, without recognising the previously mentioned lack of empirical studies to verify it and numerous

inconsistencies that have been demonstrated, also demonstrated here. On top of this, interviewees' antecedal states cannot be ignored (or predicted) and are likely to underpin much of the discrepancy theorised earlier concerning attitude measurement being temperamental, especially when asking about conation to 'recommend a business' which is likely viewed as a favour, rather than service-satisfaction, which is purely utilitarian and presumably less influenced by antecedal states, e.g. mood.

The eagerness with which the business-world has adopted the Net Promoter score without significant further empirical research underpins a naive dependence on over-reporting. It was suggested (**RLR**) most studies have become mere exercises in studying "finger movements" at a computer – pressing the right button or operating a mouse" rather than social experiments in the celebrated tradition of the word.

The "attitudinal fallacy", coined to describe the "ABC Problem" outlined earlier, also serves to highlight an over-reliance on The Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework, without recognising the previously mentioned lack of empirical studies to verify it and numerous inconsistencies that have been demonstrated.

5.11 - Costings

The costings (in terms of time) were estimated in the findings as 1 hour 10 minutes per survey, averaged at 18.7 hours per MSP surveyed in the study.

However, this does not take into consideration training, preparing the information, communicating with the clients beforehand etc. It would not be unreasonable therefore to suggest that a member of staff could take most of a working week to implement the process, even for a relatively small sample of clients, which would have to be conducted over a

number of weeks to allow for call-backs to be scheduled etc. Using an average salary (refer <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>) for 2021 of £539, this would likely cost approximately three to six times this figure if managed by an agency.

Given the likely (ongoing) sales of some of the referrals, the value of the client feedback, increase in client retention and online impact of extra Google reviews, these costings for the survey are considered trivial.

5.12 - Chapter Summary

This chapter related the findings to the theories outlined in the literature review and conjectured as to the deviance from theoretical (expected) findings to those actually measured. The principal points arising were that online reviews, whilst particularly instrumental in potential client's elaboration are less likely to be gathered than either NPS or declared intent would suggest, with NPS being a poor indicator of MSP growth. Qualitative analysis was inconclusive, as are the manifold potential reasons why intent and behaviour are significantly out of alignment, yet all the issues notwithstanding, commercial benefits of an NPS process almost certainly justify the relatively low costs incurred.

6.0 - Conclusion & Recommendations

6.01 - Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of this study, where its purpose was to discover whether there is a direct correlation between NPS and growth in company revenue and whether a proposed metric (NSS) provides better insights.

These points were examined in detail while any ensuing increases in revenue (from conducting an NPS survey) would necessitate further, longitudinal research.

6.02 - Contribution to Knowledge

This study found NPS is unreliable as an indicator of company growth within the MSP industry, due to too many other factors that can contribute to growth in such a turbulent, disruptive industry. Furthermore, it proposes a more faithful metric (Net Service-Satisfaction Score, NSS, calculated in the same way as NPS) which generates a more reliable personal evaluation of sentiment.

Additionally, this study confirmed an overwhelming disparity between proposed intent to leave a review and actual behaviour (by over 80% to less than 20%) whilst simultaneously showing there is little to no link between NPS and leaving reviews.

6.03 - Recommendations : Improving Overall Improve Review Percentage

The study has highlighted both the value of client-feedback and also of the gap between declared intent and behaviour in terms of providing reviews and therefore these recommendations focus on reducing that gap :

Priming : Different words and phrases could be embedded within the questionnaire that might help elicit a more productive response (or reduce reactance).

Follow-up : Clients are busy and this study simply included one email with the review-link and one general follow-up email (again thanking people of their survey participation) although multiple follow-up communications of mixed modality(e.g. email, phone, letter etc) could be employed, albeit to a degree of diminishing returns.

Social Proof : Perhaps including some collateral about how many other people have already helped could induce normative compliance, all within the envelope of “subjective norms”, as this is highlighted as a component within by TPB.

Self-Efficacy : Announcing to interviewees they'll receive a post-survey-link to the Google review, along with pre-written (paraphrased) text may potentially highlight their self-efficacy (in that they are particularly able to complete/perform their declared intent very easily) and increase results accordingly, in-line with TPB.

Reciprocity : Offering more complimentary training for **all** clients (irrespective of their involvement in a survey). The free IT training was successful to a degree although the training offered was rather limited in scope due to resource-limitation (qv) and therefore this theme could be expanded; doubtless more variety and frequency of training would appeal to (and therefore motivate) a wider audience.

Cognitive Dissonance : By outwardly assuming and thanking people for their (already agreed) reviews, it's conjectured cognitive dissonance (caused by agreeing to provide a review but not yet having given it) along with the relatively frictionless ease of having readily available review-links) may increase reviews.

Closed Loop Feedback : By closing the loop between client-feedback, action (e.g. improving the service in line with feedback) and communicating the revised service-offering, clients will see their feedback is taken seriously and thus be more inclined to leave more positive feedback in future as well as action their own reviews.

Reduce Proximity : The distance of the relationship between the person asking (for the desired action) and the person doing the action impacts the potency of the request and

therefore if the MSP company owner asks/thanks the respondent in their regular communications, this would have more impact than a researcher doing it. It also therefore increases status/authority figure etc - again shown to have a positive impact on modifying behaviour.

Timeliness/Urgency : There was no specification as to when the review or feedback would be made and perhaps leaving it open-ended may have reduced compliance, whereas if some arbitrary timeline was established (e.g. submitting the review within 24 hours) this may precipitate more action.

Asking in Advance : Asking for client-referrals as part of the process may be helped if the interviewees were to have more time to think of suitable referrals. Therefore, sending advance notice of this particular question (when informing the interviewees about the forthcoming survey) could be applied. (It could have the *opposite* effect, so should be tested)

6.04 - Conclusions

It's clear that in answering the net promoter question, client sentiment belies significantly more complex issues that the respondent would likely care to admit or even know about being affected by. Whilst that may be irrelevant to Reicheld's logic (in that his promise of a single number being able to predict the outcomes of a company's growth) as he effectively suggests the ends justify the means, this paper has shown conclusively that a single metric simply does not do this justice, neither can it. Concerning reviews and referrals, people simply do not do what they say will, consistently. Asking just a few extra questions elicits much more useful, meaningful, granular and, crucially, *practical* information, for very little increase in time/cost.

On its own, NPS could be dismissed as a ‘vanity metric’. It could be useful as part of a suite of questions yet alone, it misses much of the nuance of client’s feedback, such as how services could be improved or whether there are issues that the provider needs to be aware of as well. Furthermore, on its own it may be perceived as indulgent and self-serving (to the interviewee), which may not strengthen the client-relationship as much as asking questions about improvement and service-related issues.

It was conjectured whether re-framing the question may have merit, to say “*Based on your levels of client-service received, how likely are you to recommend the company to a colleague, from 0 to 10*”. However, upon reflection, there may be too many issues contained within this one question and again the granularity can only be resolved from asking supplemental questions. In short, there appears to be no substitute for asking *more questions* (although only a few as brevity is valued by interviewers and interviewees alike), *better questions* and then being seen to address the issues - anything less could be construed as a lazy exercise in vanity and self-serving promotion. The NPS question and movement has merit in that it has likely re-ignited overall appetite for client-feedback and, however the fashion of NPS may wax or wane, the value of better understanding clients’ sentiment and market forces will not.

Future technology may assist e.g. with the issues of compliance with the interviewer and reactance, such as perhaps using an AI to ask the questions or by providing sentiment analysis after the interviews direct from audio removing errors from laborious manual, thematic iterations, likely prone to error.

The study has demonstrated empirically that implementing a process to solicit feedback with a minimum number of questions (but not merely one question) generates reviews, referrals, consumers-insights, upsell opportunities and other valuable, peripheral data which strengthens client-suppliers relationships, likely far in excess of the cost of implementation. It

has also been shown that in (almost) all regards, the NSS figure yields more insightful results and provides better prediction of referrals, reviews and (financial) results.

Social risk associated with passing client-referrals is often cited, although there is scant mention or citation concerning social risks associated with leaving online reviews and it is conjectured whether this may contribute towards the disparity between declared volition to provide a review and actually doing so.

Irrespective of these findings, the NPS 'movement' has brought that much-neglected part of marketing (i.e. client feedback) into prominence, which should be applauded.

7.0 - Limitations : Resources

Time limited what could be achieved in a study like this for one person to implement. Were time more available, the study could have looked at a larger number MSPs to conduct the study upon and then increased the sample size (out of the population size per MSP). Despite initial agreement, four other MSPs simply did not provide the necessary contact information with which to conduct the study. Furthermore, none of those that did provide the contact information have knowledge as to the provenance of their own clients (e.g. advertising or referrals etc), which would have provided a useful cross-examination.

This time limitation had consequences in that a relatively small sample with which the study was undertaken may lessen the statistical confidence of the study, both in terms of the raw numbers of MSPs (and their subsequent clients) and also the relatively short time-periods over which the patterns of growth were measured. Additionally (as has been noted by other critics of the NPS process) the process of attributing longitudinal causality post-fact (i.e.

historic growth attributable to current NPS) from a cross-sectional study is itself contentious. If nothing else, the IT industry is continuously disrupted and in any case, any particular IT company's growth could be attributable to multiple reasons, not just NPS, with this latter variable being extremely difficult to justifiably isolate, although acquisitions were specifically ruled-out.

Whilst getting hold of the contacts themselves was inefficient (the largely accidental nature of getting to speak with any particular respondent provided a degree of randomness in the sampling) the fact that the contacts were provided by each MSP could introduce selectivity bias and indeed the MSPs themselves were likely atypical in that they agreed to cooperate with the study, whereas many poorer-performing MSPs may simply not be interested nor willing to participate, thus skewing the results and it is not obvious how to enlist a large, random sample of MSPs to include poorer performing ones too.

7.1 - Limitations : Accuracy

Reicheld himself predicted that bias/errors would arrive from four quadrants, namely : Fear of retribution, Bribery (or mutual 'back-scratching'), sample bias and grade inflation. This research would clearly not cause the latter as there's no incentive/reason to distort the results. Equally, bribery is out of context here, leaving sample bias and fear of retribution (i.e. clients' concern that their responses may affect their service). This latter was deemed of low risk (in this instance), while sample bias is discussed earlier.

Whilst interviewer bias was intentionally kept as low as possible, with the same interviewer used throughout the entire survey (Bailar et al, 1977) being the codification of the qualitative information may have been prone to subjective interpretation and indeed the policy of asking MSP client's company owners led to a particular viewpoint where a more stratified research methodology may have provided more comprehensive feedback.

The best correlation (for NPS) was for gross-profit growth (calculated via method A) yet the relative small sizes of the MSPs mean that any profits are highly volatile, likely rendering the numbers untrustworthy and the turnover figures would have been more satisfactory had they shown a better correlation.

The qualitative research necessitates significant repetition. Iterating through the data causes fatigue and de-sensitisation which likely reduces accuracy of the thematic study.

Furthermore, there is a natural “blurring of the lines” in terms of demarcation of concepts. For example, under the concept of “Fast” (encompassing phrases as “responsive”, “timely”, “quick” etc) should the researcher include “Same-day” or is this not considered fast enough? Or, does “On-site” apply if the MSP and client are in the same office? Same building? Same street? Further demarcation/granularity requires more resources.

Lastly, in terms of the take-up of IT training offered, the results (whilst encouraging) were relatively low and it was felt this may be under-represented given that only one training webinar was offered and conducted, about one particular subject (i.e. MS Teams as it was felt this may be contemporary with Covid sentiment and requirements) and a longer study, offering multiple training choices (and times to suit) would likely have increased take-up dramatically and consequently the perceived benefit of this part of the study.

Further reading highlighted the importance of collecting meta-data (e.g. interviewees’ ages, length-of-tenure, company-type etc) to facilitate cross-comparisons and it is recognised this was an omission in the methodology, although arguably, additional questions negate the supposed simplicity of an NPS style interview, as outlined in the literature review.

Also, further reading re-emphasised the importance of a pilot study (which had previously (been discounted in the methodology due to the relatively few interviews) where the NSS

questions and ancillary questions could have been more rigorously developed.

8.0 - Future Research

Small B2B businesses don't have the same profile as those outlined in the literature review so research in this area could benefit from much larger scale surveys in order to gain greater statistical confidence and also across disciplines in the B2B professional services industry for cross-referencing (e.g. accountancy, legal services, HR etc), acknowledging previous studies into declining rates of predictive ability (from CAST) for more competitive companies. Conducting studies on larger MSPs, where the figures are publicly available could ensure figures are less erratic and choosing these larger MSPs by probability (rather than convenience) would again increase statistical confidence, thereby accessing a broader spectrum of MSPs, including poorly performing ones.

The studies would benefit greatly from being longitudinal and future-facing rather than cross sectional, using historic growth data (as previously discussed), which would give the additional insight into financial values associated with associated upsells and referrals. Linking the NPS to overall referral rates of new clients (the author acknowledges the difficulty in accessing this data) would prove hugely insightful.

Perhaps the most revealing insight would be whether the Net Satisfaction Score (NSS) coined and defined in this study (and calculated in the same way as NPS), would remain a superior indicator of growth and sentiment during these proposed larger, longitudinal studies and whether it can be improved by reduction in compliance, as earlier suggested.

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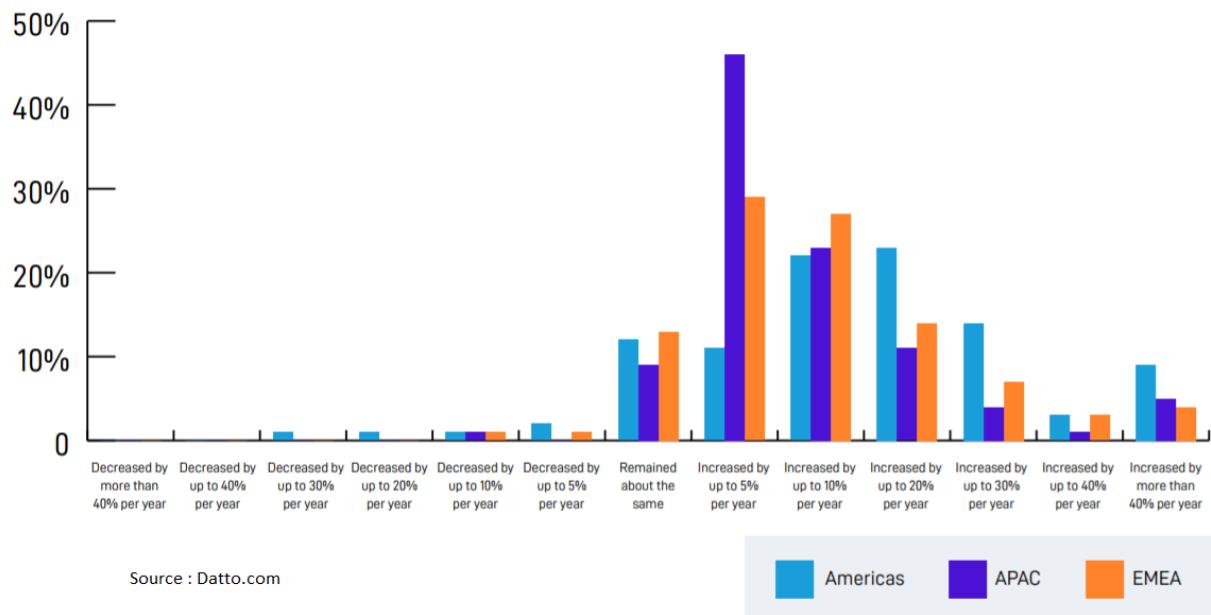
You, Y., Vadakkepatt, G. G., & Joshi, A. M. (2015). A Meta-Analysis of Electronic Word-of-Mouth Elasticity. *Journal of Marketing*, 79(2), 19–39. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.14.0169>

10.0 - Appendices

Appendix A Industry Growth Rates & NPS Scores

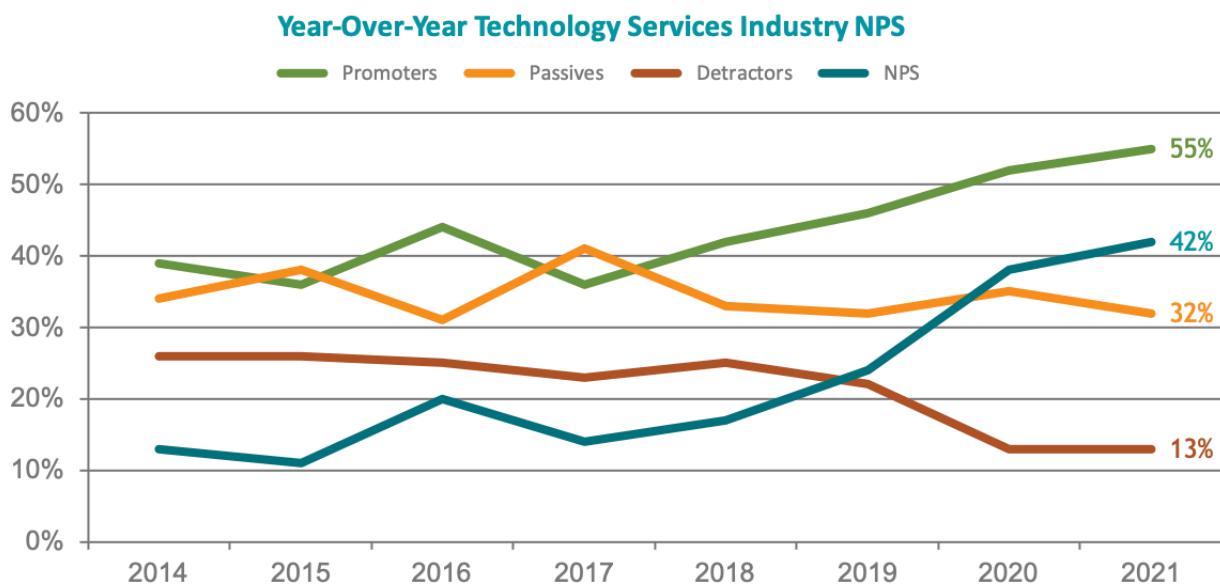
Figure 10. Annual Growth Over past Three Years

In the past 3 years, on average, how much growth or decline in total revenues per year did you experience?



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Net Promoter® Score	13%	11%	20%	14%	17%	24%	38%	42%
Average Score	7.54	7.51	7.75	7.62	7.62	7.94	8.21	8.33
% Promoters	39%	36%	44%	36%	42%	46%	52%	55%
% Passives	34%	38%	31%	41%	33%	32%	35%	32%
% Detractors	26%	26%	25%	23%	25%	22%	13%	13%

Source <https://www.clearlyrated.com/solutions/2021-nps-benchmarks-technology-service-providers/>



Source <https://www.clearlyrated.com/solutions/2021-nps-benchmarks-technology-service-providers/>

Appendix B : Questions Asked

**Q1.a 1- From 0 to 10, How Likely Are You To Recommend Us to a Colleague ?
(10 is Highly Likely, 0 is very unlikely)**

Q1.b Any Comments Relating To That Last Question ?

**Q2.a From 0 to 10, How Happy Are You With The Service you Receive ?
(10 is Extremely happy, is 0 Extremely Dissatisfied)**

Q2.b Any Comments Relating To That Last Question ?

**Q3.a Would You Be Prepared To Leave a Positive Google Review?
If happy to do so, can we paraphrase it here for you
and send it to you for approval and then to add to Google.**

Q4 Are There Any Other Products or Services You Might Like To Know About ?

Q5 How Could We Improve Our Products, People or Processes?

**Q6. Can You Think Of Any People People We Could Send Some Complimentary
IT Training Vouchers To?**

Q8. Is there anything else you think we should know ?

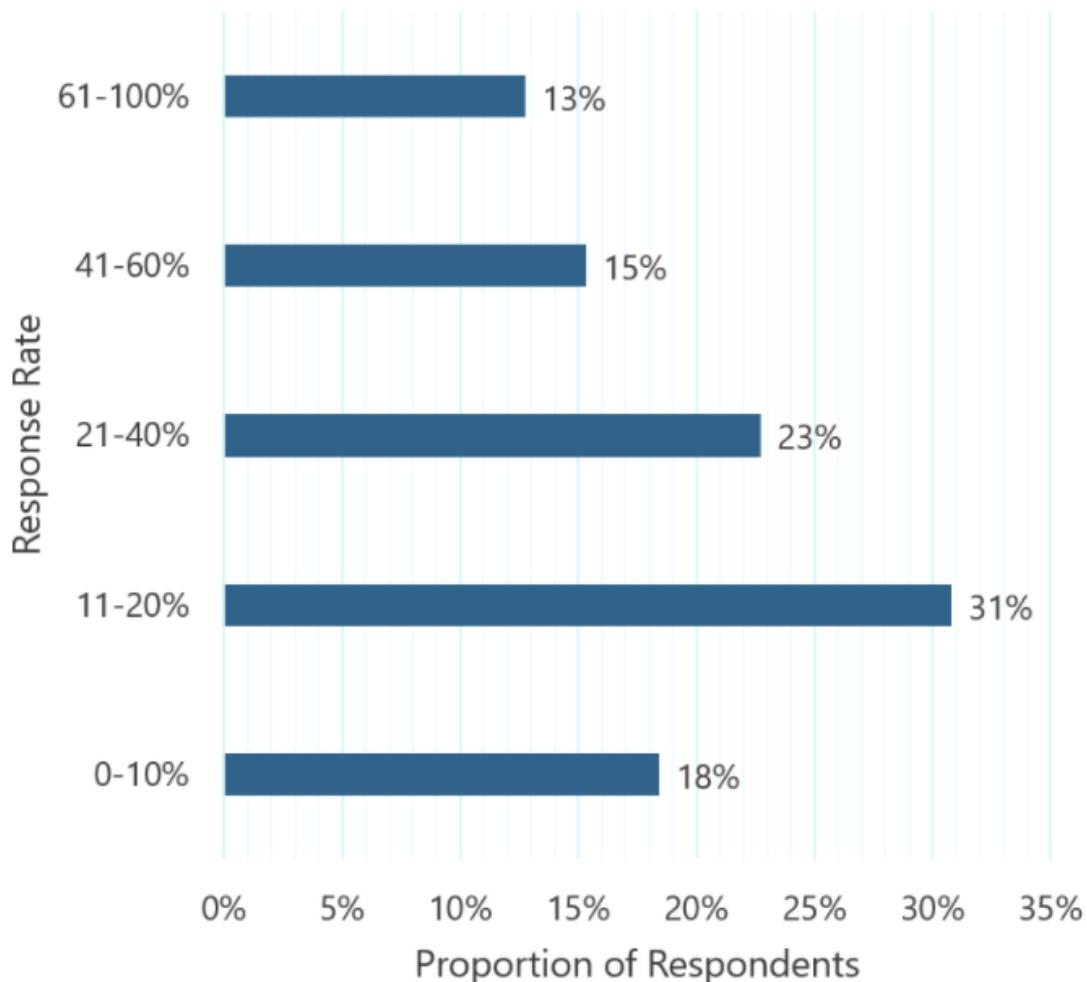
Appendix C : Sample / Population Sizes

MSP	Total Population (No. Customers)	Sample Size (No. reviews)	%
# 1(PRN)	32	12	37.5
# 2(SLV)	104	12	11.5
# 3(DSC)	46	27	58.7
# 4(RFM)	85	16	18.8
# 5(ENC)	55	13	23.6
Totals	322	80	150.1
Average	64.4	16	30.02 %

The average time required for an MSP to conduct the process to ascertain their NPS score with an average sample size **of 16** (i.e. 80/5) x average time per client (i.e. 1 hour 10 minutes) **is 18.7 hours** per MSP.

Appendix D – Client Gauge

By Response Rate



NPS Customer Response Rates : Source : CustomerGauge.com

Appendix E – Correlation between NPS and NSS

MSP	No. Surveys	Promoters		Passives		Detractors		NPS	Av. NPS	NSS	Av. S-Sat	NPS		NSS			
		Pass%	Detr%	Pass%	Detr%	Pass%	Detr%					% Promoters	61.25%	% Passives	35.00%	% Detractors	3
PRN	12	7	58.33%	4	33.33%	1	8.33%	50.00	8.50	58.33	8.75						
DSC	27	16	59.26%	9	33.33%	2	7.41%	51.85	8.67	14.81	8.33						
SLV	12	7	58.33%	5	41.67%	0	0.00%	58.33	9.17	75.00	9.33						
RFM	16	10	62.50%	6	37.50%	0	0.00%	62.50	8.94	68.75	8.94						
EHC	13	9	69.23%	4	30.77%	0	0.00%	69.23	9.15	53.85	8.92						
Total	80	80	61.53%	28.00	35.32%	3.00	3.15%	58.38%	8.88	54.15	8.86						

Appendix E – 2 : NPS and NSS Data

MSP	Testmns(Y)	A		%Revs(Y)	Rev-Rec%	Other Services	OS %	Improvement	Imp %	
		RA%	Reviews							
PRN	9	75.00%	1	11.11%	8.33%	6	50.00%	5	41.67%	2
DSC	23	85.19%	5	21.74%	18.52%	3	11.11%	19	70.37%	2
SLV	12	100.00%	4	33.33%	33.33%	3	25.00%	4	33.33%	1
RFM	12	75.00%	3	25.00%	18.75%	5	31.25%	8	50.00%	0
EHC	13	100.00%	1	7.69%	7.69%	4	30.77%	3	23.08%	1
	69	87.04%	14.00	19.78%	17.33%	21.00	29.63%	39.00	43.69%	
	Total	Average	Total	Average	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total

Appendix F : Calculations of Coefficient of Correlation(s)

Pearson's r # 1

	Calcuation of Pearson's r for Average T/O Growth % (Method A) against NPS						Sum
(y - \bar{y}) squared		15.163236	158.659216	33.339076	1.267876	16.434916	224.86432
(x - \bar{x}) squared		70.257924	42.667024	0.002704	16.957924	117.679104	247.56468
(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})		-32.639508	82.277072	-0.300248	-4.636868	43.977792	88.67824
(y - \bar{y})		3.894	-12.596	5.774	-1.126	4.054	0
(x - \bar{x})		-8.382	-6.532	-0.052	4.118	10.848	0
y	Growth %	22.98	6.49	24.86	17.96	23.14	
x	NPS	50	51.85	58.33	62.5	69.23	
19.086	Mean y						r = 0.376
58.382	Mean x						
		Numerator	88.67824				
		Denominator	235.9416526				

Pearson's r # 2

Calculation of Pearson's r for Average GP Growth % (Method A) against NPS							Sum
(y - \bar{y}) squared		1.527696	160.883856	142.898116	269.485056	48.804196	623.59892
(x - \bar{x}) squared		70.257924	42.667024	0.002704	16.957924	117.679104	247.56468
(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})		-10.360152	82.851888	0.621608	67.601088	75.784128	216.49856
(y - \bar{y})		1.236	-12.684	-11.954	16.416	6.986	0
(x - \bar{x})		-8.382	-6.532	-0.052	4.118	10.848	0
y	Growth %	17.22	3.3	4.03	32.4	22.97	
x	NPS	50	51.85	58.33	62.5	69.23	
15.984	Mean y						r = 0.551
58.382	Mean x						
		Numerator	216.49856				
		Denominator	392.9135618				

Pearson's r # 3 - Indeterminate

Calculation of Pearson's r for Average NP Growth % (Method A) against NPS							Sum
(y - \bar{y}) squared		#VALUE!	#VALUE!	251.349316	125.798656	1836.465316	#VALUE!
(x - \bar{x}) squared		70.257924	42.667024	0.002704	16.957924	117.679104	247.56468
(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})		#VALUE!	#VALUE!	-0.824408	-46.187488	464.880192	#VALUE!
(y - \bar{y})		#VALUE!	#VALUE!	15.854	-11.216	42.854	#VALUE!
(x - \bar{x})		-8.382	-6.532	-0.052	4.118	10.848	0
y	Growth %	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	39.6	12.53	66.6	
x	NPS	50	51.85	58.33	62.5	69.23	
23.746	Mean y						r = #VALUE!
58.382	Mean x						
		Numerator	#VALUE!				
		Denominator	#VALUE!				

Pearson's r # 4

Calculation of Pearson's r for T/O Growth (Method B & C) against NPS						
(y - \bar{y}) squared		14.243076	154.902916	16.273156	0.087616	24.344356
(x - \bar{x}) squared		70.257924	42.667024	0.002704	16.957924	117.679104
(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})		-31.633668	81.297272	-0.209768	-1.218928	53.524032
(y - \bar{y})		3.774	-12.446	4.034	-0.296	4.934
(x - \bar{x})		-8.382	-6.532	-0.052	4.118	10.848
y	Growth %	21.02	4.8	21.28	16.95	22.18
x	NPS	50	51.85	58.33	62.5	69.23
Mean y		17.246				
Mean x		58.382				
		Numerator	101.75894	r =	0.446	
		Denominator	227.9292113			

Pearson's r # 5

Calculation of Pearson's r for GP Growth (Method B & C) against NPS						
(y - \bar{y}) squared		1.774224	138.956944	146.361604	271.656324	36.869184
(x - \bar{x}) squared		70.257924	42.667024	0.002704	16.957924	117.679104
(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})		-11.164824	76.999216	0.629096	67.872876	65.869056
(y - \bar{y})		1.332	-11.788	-12.098	16.482	6.072
(x - \bar{x})		-8.382	-6.532	-0.052	4.118	10.848
y	Growth %	15.69	2.57	2.26	30.84	20.43
x	NPS	50	51.85	58.33	62.5	69.23
Mean y		14.358				
Mean x		58.382				
		Numerator	200.20542	r =	0.521	
		Denominator	383.9974595			

Pearson's r # 6

Calculation of Pearson's r for NP Growth (Method B & C) against NPS						
(y - \bar{y}) squared		1618.774756	10538.25434	94.556176	1851.064576	93.586276
(x - \bar{x}) squared		70.257924	42.667024	0.002704	16.957924	117.679104
(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})		337.241388	-670.548992	0.505648	-177.172832	-104.943552
(y - \bar{y})		-40.234	102.656	-9.724	-43.024	-9.674
(x - \bar{x})		-8.382	-6.532	-0.052	4.118	10.848
y	Growth %	4.44	147.33	34.95	1.65	35
x	NPS	50	51.85	58.33	62.5	69.23
Mean y	44.674					
Mean x	58.382					
		Numerator	-614.91834	r =	-0.328	
		Denominator	1874.696416			

Appendix G : Calculation of average survey timings

Respondent	Mins
1	11
2	6.58
3	9.47
4	10.17
5	11
6	5.36
7	11.18
8	18.54
9	9
10	5.4
11	5.01
12	11.14
13	9.46
14	11.05
15	9.06
16	9.39
17	7.44
18	5.26
Total	165.51
Average =	9.195

Appendix G Ethics

Information Redacted for Data Protection.

Appendix H : Data Collected

Respondent	Google Review Red'd	Last Review	NPS-Rating	Service happiness
PRN1		Mar-21	9	9
PRN2		May-21	9	9
PRN3		Mar-21	10	10
PRN4		Jun-21	6	9
PRN5		Mar-21	10	10
PRN6	5*	Mar-21	9	9
PRN7		May-21	10	10
PRN8		May-21	7	8
PRN9		Jun-21	8	8
PRN10		Jun-21	7	5

PRN11		Jun-21	9	8
PRN12		May-21	8	10

Respondent	Google Review Red'd	Last Review	NPS-Rating	Service happiness
SLV1	5*	Jun-21	10	10
SLV2		Jun-21	10	10
SLV3		Jun-21	8	10
SLV4	5*	Jun-21	10	9
SLV5		Jun-21	8	9
SLV6		Jun-21	8	8
SLV7		Jun-21	8	8
SLV8	5*	Jun-21	10	10
SLV9		Jun-21	10	10
SLV10		Jun-21	10	10
SLV11	5*	Jun-21	10	10
SLV12		Jun-21	8	8

Respondent	Google Review Red'd	Last Review	NPS-Rating	Service happiness
DSC16	5*	June-	8	8
DSC17		June-	10	10
DSC18	5*	June-	10	10
DSC19		June-	10	10
DSC20	5*	June-	10	10
DSC21		June-	7	9
DSC22		June-	10	10
DSC23		June-	10	10
DSC24		June-	8	8
DSC25		June-	9	7
DSC26	5*	June-	10	10
DSC1		Mar-20	8	9
DSC2		Mar-20	9	9
DSC3		Apr-20	10	10

DSC4		Apr-20	10	8
DSC27		Apr-20	5	5
DSC5		Apr-20	8	8
DSC6		Apr-20	10	9
DSC7		Apr-20	10	9
DSC8		May-20	9	9
DSC9		May-20	8	7
DSC10		May-20	9	7
DSC11		May-20	8	8
DSC12	5*	May-20	8	7
DSC13		Apr-20	8	8
DSC14		Apr-20	2	2
DSC15		Jun-20	10	8
Respondent	Google Review Red'd	Last Review	NPS-Rating	Service happiness
RFM1		Apr-21	10	10
RFM2	5*	Feb-21	9	8
RFM3		May-21	8	7
RFM4		May-21	7	7
RFM5		Apr-21	8	9
RFM6		Apr-21	10	10
RFM7		Mar-21	10	10
RFM8		Apr-21	10	10
RFM9		Jun-21	10	10
RFM10		Jun-21	7	8
RFM11	5*	Jun-21	8	9
RFM12		Jun-21	10	10
RFM13		Jun-21	9	9
RFM14	5*	Jun-21	9	9
RFM15		Jun-21	8	8
RFM16		Jun-21	10	9

Respondent	Google Review Red'd	Last Review	NPS-Rating	Service happiness
EHC1		Apr-21	10	10
EHC2		Mar-21	10	10
EHC3		Apr-21	9	9
EHC4		Mar-21	8	8
EHC5		Mar-21	10	9
EHC6		Mar-21	10	9
EHC7		Apr-21	10	9
EHC8	5*	Apr-21	8	9
EHC9		May-21	10	10
EHC10		May-21	8	8
EHC11		May-21	9	9
EHC12		Jun-21	8	8
EHC13		May-21	9	8

Respondent	NPS - Comments
PRN1	Would give a 10 but he's a teacher - he'd struggle to give a 10 for anything or anyone!
PRN2	[Obfuscated] respond swiftly and if there is any problem, we are confident that can speak to anyone in the organisation about it from junior to director level.
PRN3	<i>[Obfuscated] operations are complex, yet we find dealing with [Obfuscated] easy. In particular, the process of emailing them when issues arise not only solicits a fast resolution, but fits in well with our record keeping and is cost effective</i>
PRN4	<i>The team is great and will always help and do a good job. But in the last 3-4 months it has become confusing as to what is chargeable outside the monthly arrangement. He ([Obfuscated]) gave the example where a laptop had recently crashed and the problem derived from the wrong configuration.</i>

PRN5	Used [Obfuscated] for a long time and not looked back since commencement. Previously used a single consultant and have found [Obfuscated] a step up giving them a complete IT service where any problem is solved from minor issues to servers dropping out..
PRN6	All the staff at [Obfuscated] take the time and trouble to get to know our business. This is especially useful as it means when an issue arises a lot of the ground has already been covered.
PRN7	Very quick. Very helpful and Friendly
PRN8	The service and results from [Obfuscated] started off really well but in recent times whilst they do sort out any problems there is a specific problem getting hold of anyone in the mornings as all in meetings.
PRN9	There is nothing they've not been able to help with
PRN10	They have not been as good as they used to be. Whilst when they do get on the job they are good, there have been problems with doing things in a timely manner. For example; When recently an employee could not log in, it took a day before that person could work on that pc. It tends to be just the simple things that are late on.
PRN11	Extremely helpful and professional. There is always someone available to deal with any IT issue. When we moved to new offices the IT arrangements were handled efficiently by [Obfuscated] and the change went smoothly.

PRN12	<p>I do Love working with them, they are really really good. I think sometimes I can be a bit impatient. If I want something done, I wasn't it done immediately. If it has to be scheduled in or something, that's the only reason I'd give an 8. I'm used to having an IT Department, in a big corporate company. They do the best they can but I'm really impatient. They're great guys. Very helpful. One in particular - [Obfuscated] - he's bl**dy amazing. He's really helpful and I always feel he goes above and beyond. They all do ... but [Obfuscated] is my favourite. Normally if you put a request to them, they'll come back to you the next day or that day if they can. That's why I like to phone them as well. I like to get [Obfuscated] because he does what it says on the tin.</p>
Respondent	Comments
SLV1	<p>If there is a problem it is sorted out by [Obfuscated] straightaway. They have been instrumental in advising on the selection and installation of new computers and this has been very successful.</p>
SLV2	<p>Their contact at [Obfuscated] is always available and helps them with a variety of IT issues often by an immediate call back and resolving by remotely operating the computer. Confident that they know what they are doing. They know the company and its systems well and have handled upgrades in a manner that saves vital time.</p>
SLV3	<p>Work in the same building as them so there is an almost instant response when needed. The company has contracted and now uses them less and the relationship has become a little cagey. They installed a network system very effectively and have also maintained it well.</p>
SLV4	<p>Comments Never let them down. Very responsive and highly competent.</p>
SLV5	<p>Very friendly and helpful and have become very familiar with the club's operations and its IT requirements. They have been particularly helpful in giving good advice on the best and most appropriate software.</p>

SLV6	[Obfuscated] has been with the company for 2 years and during that time there have been no problems that [Obfuscated] have not handled completely. Although the service levels are modest; requiring maintenance of the server and handling of ad hoc issues usually over the phone; she has found them helpful and value for money.
SLV7	[Obfuscated] are a very pleasant company to deal with. Generally any issue is handled quickly by them. This is greatly assisted by the fact that they are very local so hardware as well as other problems can be sorted out more or less immediately
SLV8	[Obfuscated] have been a very good service provider and when any IT or related decision is required they will always refer that to them for advice and guidance. During a period when [Obfuscated] was out of action [Obfuscated] stepped in to handle all the IT for the company for which they remain very grateful. They did a great job handling a Sharepoint/ Office 365 migration.
SLV9	[Obfuscated] are always on hand and able to provide a fix for any IT problem that might arise. We are a relatively small business but IT is important to us and they have been of great help with installation of equipment and with updating our systems.
SLV10	[Obfuscated] are always willing and able to help with anything IT related. They have just done a major systems upgrade and that was handled really well.
SLV11	Provide excellent technical support, friendly and really know what they are doing. We have relied on them to advise on the purchase of IT equipment, its installation and ensuring it continues to work for us.
SLV12	Personable and responsive. They have high levels of understanding how small organisations and businesses run; Getting things done on a low budget.
Respondent	Comments

DSC16	Sometimes they're not as reactive as would like. This co-insides with [Obfuscated] Leaving. We always seemed to deal with Dave; He understood the process. Things seems to take a lot longer. Dave left Beginning March – I appreciate we've not had much time to establish a reconnection.
DSC17	The way they've looked after us through Covid 19 was exemplary. When it was necessary to ramp up their services, they did.
DSC18	A number of projects recently have all been implemented without any business disruption at all.
DSC19	They just do what they say, in a reasonable amount of time
DSC20	The great thing about [Obfuscated] is that there is no job too big or too small for them. Everything is done professionally. Naturally in IT and technology there are problems but if there is one, it's always well communicated and the solution is found quickly.
DSC21	Sometimes I think they're not proactive enough – they need to be. I find there's opportunities here which they need to pursue - they need to push more.
DSC22	Very happy to recommend [Obfuscated]. I've already recommended my sister
DSC23	Just that they are extremely helpful although there is a caveat : you have to get through to the right people
DSC24	Sometimes the service is a little slow.
DSC25	Nobody is perfect
DSC26	My only caveat would be the size of the business that you're recommending them to, given their limitations in resources. i.e a to a large company. Not because of their capability, just to be clear.

DSC1	In terms of day to day stuff, [Obfuscated] works with [Obfuscated]. He has spoken to [Obfuscated] initially but not much since. Working with [Obfuscated], he finds him responsive and helpful. Doesn't like giving a 10/10(ever), and would like to review things occasionally for extra value add. In general, [Obfuscated] is very responsive - maybe review pricing, whether there's other value added areas they can offer?
DSC2	9.5 out of 10. Everything we've ever asked them to do is always done. They provide the service and it's always about the service. Cost is obviously important. Anything we ask them to do gets done, anything. Great staff. If we want something different or new - whenever [Obfuscated] has been out to us, it's always as seamless as can possibly be.
DSC3	Efficient and delivered the products and services they said they would.
DSC4	They're very helpful every time I need any help and all problems tend to get resolved very quickly. But the main reason [we're happy to recommend] is that we have been using them for many years and we treat them as our outsourced IT company so therefore it's natural for us to recommend them for IT problems.
DSC27	Nobody is perfect
DSC5	Generally very good service. Now and again we require help and guidance and in some cases urgent issues need to be resolved quickly. We find that [Obfuscated] come back quickly to tackle these.
DSC6	Have never had any problems with this provider. Their client interaction has been excellent particularly during a time of IT change for the company.
DSC7	[Obfuscated] are based in Malta and rely very much on [Obfuscated] to look after their remote server. This arrangement has worked very well and pleased to persist with it.

DSC8	Very happy with [Obfuscated] and especially appreciative of the assistance given when a crisis arose when the network was down for a number of days. [Obfuscated] promptly set up a 4G temporary solution. They have also solved a laptop issue where the manufacturer was unhelpful.
DSC9	Providing the products and service that is required although irritated that it can take hours to get back to them after an issue is raised. (Quoted 6 hours with 3 phone calls made to [Obfuscated] to chase up).
DSC10	[Obfuscated] have been great. As well as providing a comprehensive IT service they have assisted us with a number of other matters beyond the strict remit. They have been particularly helpful in progressing our vital sales reporting system.
DSC11	Always had a good service from [Obfuscated]. Although recently been a glinch they normally respond quickly. Whenever an upgrade is required they have sorted that out efficiently.
DSC12	They have a good relationship with [Obfuscated] such that when a problem arises it is solved quickly. Have been particularly pleased with assistance on acquiring the right laptop
DSC13	Very efficient and personable showing an interest in the Society and wanting to do the best for them. When [Obfuscated] took over the systems were not good and have been improved bit by bit greatly helped by [Obfuscated] understanding that they are a charity which can only release funds over time.
DSC14	Up until a year ago this would have been a 9. Now can't get hold of anyone when needed. Have emailed and called
DSC15	Always there to help especially out of hours. Especially impressed that helped on bank holiday. Sort out problems in an hour or two and will come in if cannot fix remotely.
Respondent	Comments

RFM1	They are just a nice company to work with. We have been dealing with them for a long time and they have always sorted out our IT.
RFM2	The only thing would be the service ... sometimes the response we have as a small business. If something has gone down, it needs to be sorted quick than normal.
RFM3	They are approachable and unlike many IT companies they deal with problems quickly when they arise.
RFM4	There have been situations where they have not always got resolution, where [Obfuscated] staff have gone for the quick fix and where the skillsets of that particular individual were not appropriate. An example of this is where their Virtual Machine packs up every 2/3 weeks and rebooting takes 3/4 hours out of their business. Perception that alterations are not thoroughly tested. It's a shame [Obfuscated] not involved day to day any more
RFM5	Always helpful and swift to react when a ticket is raised. Always responding on all issues however trivial. For example even solved photocopier problem
RFM6	Happy with the services such that recently renewed our contract. Pleased with the help given in improving their IT security. [Obfuscated] and the rest of his team always always responsive to our needs.
RFM7	I've recommended [Obfuscated] to several contacts and clients so I already do that, without issue.
RFM8	There are never any problems in dealing with them. Whilst it often seems that they take a long time in responding, when they do the problem is always sorted out. Their provision of laptops has always been good.
RFM9	Anything IT is handled by them - from broadband to all the machines they run. A comprehensive service that has been excellent for them. Not just IT but all the things that are associated such as providing effective invoicing capacity.

RFM10	Generally happy with the service provided and feels that exactly what it says on the tin. So not particularly engaged with them one way or the other.
RFM11	Very satisfied with the service provided. Especially pleased with the assistance given when internal systems were set up that required significant sensitivity and compliance with GDPR.
RFM12	We find [Obfuscated] IT to be highly proactive in sorting out any problems we might have.
RFM13	Any problems are sorted out straight away by them
RFM14	[Obfuscated] have provided excellent support across EPOS WIFI and the functioning of tablets etc and have always been willing and able to help out. They have been very quick to get onto these problems.
RFM15	[Obfuscated] cover all the bases as a hosted IT service provider. All that they provide works effectively for the limited requirements of the business.
RFM16	Have worked with IT Service providers a long time (and also worked in an IT company for several years) and [Obfuscated] are the first outfit who really know what they are doing and communicate properly. Without [Obfuscated] would not have been able to set up an effective home office and this shows the remarkable lengths they go to to assist. Not only do they provide the right hardware , but they make sure all of it works.
Respondent	Comments

EHC1	We have used [Obfuscated] for some years now and they provide all our I.T. support and there has never been a problem that they have not successfully resolved. We are particularly grateful that they have resolved problems on I.T. that has not been installed by them.
EHC2	They're very quick at response. They sort out our problems pretty quickly, and understand the need to have our IT up to date and working well to keep business running.
EHC3	Any issues have been dealt with promptly. As the company has moved forward new and better systems have been required and [Obfuscated] have responded well to their needs.
EHC4	Generally speaking. 8 is a good score for me!
EHC5	As an accounting practice our computer systems are vital for our operations and also for those of our clients. Because of the confidence we have in the service and the response from the owners and employees of [Obfuscated], we have recommended [Obfuscated] to a number of our clients and have in no way been let down. This positive feedback has further improved our own reputation.
EHC6	Any issue arising is dealt with quickly. They Fulfil their needs in wide ranging areas from Technical to new equipment and software. Good value for money especially sometimes delivering at cost price because they are a charity

EHC7	<p>[Obfuscated] have provided us with excellent client service and have always found a solution to any IT issue. They were particularly helpful at a time when we changed service provider and they came in, removed and replaced the server and worked effectively with the new provider.</p>
EHC8	<p>We are always able to get hold of them when needed and they have come in to provide installation on time. Their technical knowledge is good</p>
EHC9	<p>There have been no reasons for complaint about the service and products provided by [Obfuscated]. There is usually a response to any problem within 10 minutes of it being logged and the updates and weekly reports are helpful.</p>
EHC10	<p>[Obfuscated] have given us no reason for complaint in the entire time we have been using them. There have been no issues that they have not been able to solve. The recent upgrade to Windows 10 was handled well by them.</p>
EHC11	<p>We are a farming business with limited IT needs but the two individuals we interact with at [Obfuscated] are back to us usually within an hour and have been willing to come out to us and sort out any problem. They are friendly and efficient.</p>
EHC12	<p>[Obfuscated] have a good team of people with considerable IT knowledge and they have always resolved any issue that has arisen. They are always very helpful.</p>
EHC13	<p>We are able to ring at any time and get to speak to our nominated member of the [Obfuscated] team. Always responsive with never an issue that they are not willing to help with even outside their remit.</p>

Respondent	Service-Comments
PRN1	Y:Very happy with the service we receive.
PRN2	Y:There are very few delays in responding and providing a solution to any issue that arises.
PRN3	Y:We monitor incidents and malfunctions closely and our reviews show none of these can be attributed to [Obfuscated].
PRN4	Y:The service is excellent; the team are great and always resolve issues and do so in a timely manner. Believes that the terms of the service is an issue that can be resolved and is on the point of being so.
PRN5	Y:As a critical Supplier to the Electronics industry, there are complicated issues sometimes and neither the management or employees want to spend any time on the IT around these and other issues. The company has grown and now has a big network and this is handled prefficiently by [Obfuscated].
PRN6	Y:The system [Obfuscated] runs is efficient and responsive with any staff member able to handle our needs.
PRN7	Y:We don't need to use their services very much except when things do go wrong. We then find them quick to react and able to sort out the problem efficiently.
PRN8	Y:Service when engaged on a task is excellent. They are efficient and knowledgeable. But problems almost always arise first thing and waiting is then required.
PRN9	Y:The service is excellent . Emails are responded to quickly. The only problem is that they find that [Obfuscated] are often in meetings in the morning which is exactly the time when they would like to be in touch and when problems arise.
PRN10	Y:The ticket system is not working for them; emails are not effective in getting action and it has had to be a phone call.
PRN11	The service is brilliant.
PRN12	They're always friendly and helpful.
Respondent	Comments
SLV1	The service has been friendly and reliable and they have shown an excellent understanding of their business needs.
SLV2	They resolve problems quickly and are come back immediately with quotes when something extra is required.

SLV3	The service has always been good; such that they have felt [Obfuscated] to be part of the team.
SLV4	They have taken the trouble to get to know the business well and this means communication is always good.
SLV5	The service is really good. When a problem cannot be solved remotely they can deal with it quickly because of their commitment and familiarity.
SLV6	The service fits their modest requirements and is mostly over the phone
SLV7	If there are any IT issues, they're confident that there will be someone on hand to do their best to help. Whilst updates might be run and monitored through the evenings, the differential between morning starts is itself an issue.
SLV8	We just email and the issue is handled straight away.
SLV9	The service has been efficient and friendly.
SLV10	Our staff have minimum levels of IT knowledge and could be described as having Technophobia. Nevertheless [Obfuscated] deal with us with significant patience and understanding. During a recent spell of BT problems we were kept informed throughout.
SLV11	The service has always been both reliable and swift. We have also relied upon them to provide informal tutoring on using software that we are not accustomed to.
SLV12	Responsive; they talk problems through and come to a resolution. Communicate well and both parties are able to talk candidly by email and phone. They understand the education sector and will work around things such as lecture times etc
Respondent	Comments
DSC16	Same
DSC17	Not Particularly
DSC18	N
DSC19	N
DSC20	N
DSC21	Not off the top of my head. When we've gone through some processes recently with [Obfuscated], they've been right in their initial ideas. They've then allowed us to go onto a different path - letting us make mistakes. We need more forceful leadership really

DSC22	Just that they're brilliant ... the whole team. There's nobody that doesn't that go the extra mile. Not one of them. Always really quick to respond - esp. now that we're all working from home.
DSC23	Depends on who has provided the service. If I call the main helpline, I would probably better off calling [Obfuscated] or [Obfuscated] to get better service
DSC24	None
DSC25	With hardware problems : substantial call out charge : being a charity – this hits quite hard.
DSC26	The only thing that is tricky : we're very lucky : Damien deals with all the issues . He's the sales director. Occasionally, when they go through to someone else, the service isn't quite as good because Damien is exceptional.
DSC1	I think Alex is very responsive and good - so yes,a nine.
DSC2	As before
DSC3	If there is a problem related to IT then [Obfuscated] will sort it out for them. Not the quickest in attending and delivering
DSC4	No-one is perfect, obviously. There tends to be a short delays between asking for their help and receiving the solution. But, that's not a criticism, it's just a fact of life. There's always a slight delay when you ask anyone to do anything. If I was to ring them and they could always fix it in that instance, they'd get a 10. Not many people can provide that service can they? Most people tend to come back within an hour or two or eve a couple of days. Service is very good, can't complain.
DSC27	5/10 Need to speak with [Obfuscated] but [Obfuscated] only gave 5/10
DSC5	As before
DSC6	We have never been kept waiting for any length of time when an issue has arisen.
DSC7	[Obfuscated] are very quick to react should any problem arise and are on to it in minutes. They are in touch with us regularly and often getting back to any call we make within 10/15 minutes.
DSC8	Any issues we have ever had on the IT front have always been sorted out in a timely fashion and it is appreciated that [Obfuscated] always proactively chase up.
DSC9	Content with the service in general but concerned about a growing delay in getting back to them.

DSC10	We are generally satisfied with the levels of service and appreciate their time constraints. We have found that from time to time there are issues with getting through to the right person who we know will be able to handle the problem.
DSC11	Service generally good.
DSC12	[Obfuscated] staff are helpful and polite and on the whole provide a good service. Disappointed that in recent times the first person taking the call does not have a prior knowledge of their set up and it comes across as a bit like a call centre.
DSC13	They respond quickly and if it is something complicated they will look into it and provide a solution even if it takes a couple of weeks.
DSC14	If he had the time he would be looking for a new provider
DSC15	Would always like to talk through problems with two manager/owners of [Obfuscated] and do get a better response if go direct but it is always sorted. All people are always friendly and like dealing with them.
Respondent	Comments
RFM1	We like it that they do everything for us and that in particular they do that without baffling us with IT jargon. They have given useful advice and are prepared to go the extra mile."
RFM2	As above , i.e. speed of response
RFM3	Pleased that the problem was sorted out by a conversation with the director at [Obfuscated] but a year ago there was confusion over an unexpected invoice for a call out. Confident that this unlikely to reoccur with communication now much better and whilst things may be urgent they do no want unexpected bills.
RFM4	This score would have been much lower a short while ago, but with the introduction of a new ticketing system things have improved recently. There has been a lack of attention to detail. For example; a licence expired because had not been renewed and office was offline for a day.
RFM5	Good to work with and have been particularly patient when dealing with minor issues or with staff members not versed in IT.
RFM6	Not used that often as systems running generally OK, but when they are required always happy with the service provided.
RFM7	9.5 to 10. Nothing really, all good.

RFM8	The service has been good without significant problems
RFM9	Cannot fault the service. They respond with a positive solution straight away or at the very least on the same day
RFM10	Content with service - they do get back quickly when there is a problem
RFM11	Once we engage with [Obfuscated] on a problem they are able to sort it out for us.
RFM12	Service is excellent and their proactive approach really helps in running our business efficiently
RFM13	Always able to get hold of someone so very pleased with the service provided.
RFM14	[[Obfuscated] IT] Provide a rapid and effective service and have always been willing to help out; coming into the shop for example when it was needed.
RFM15	They are responsive and will sort out any problem however long that may take.
RFM16	Excellent response and communication. Many other service providers will offer a helpdesk and a superficial solution to a problem. [Obfuscated] will drive down to the real problem. This was illustrated recently by the need to unscramble a Teams connection problem where they discovered that Global had never actually logged on properly.
Respondent	Comments
EHC1	[Obfuscated] have always gone beyond the Service Level Agreement we have with them. Our working relationship with them is excellent and we are particularly impressed with the provision of staff by them whereby they have a "specialist" for each function.
EHC2	As before
EHC3	Comments [Obfuscated] have been providing them with a service since 2013 and have been effective in improving and evolving their software and hardware situation as it has evolved
EHC4	Could be a bit faster. A bit more resource at times. Automated answering system could be faster. Understand they service multiple clients, so I suppose it is what it is.
EHC5	They are excellent to deal with and responsive to our needs.

EHC6	Service is good. They have worked with other suppliers and [Obfuscated] are definitely one of the better ones. Very patient in dealing with an organisation of technophobes. No question is too stupid.
EHC7	Excellent levels of service; they come in promptly when the problem is not capable of resolution remotely.
EHC8	We have never had any service issues with them. Whilst we do find the costs expensive this is made up for by the service levels.
EHC9	Confident that IT issues can be passed across to them.
EHC10	A good, prompt service from experts in their field.
EHC11	The service has been prompt and effective and they have been able to answer any of our questions.
EHC12	When problems have come up they have handled these there and then.
EHC13	A highly responsive and personable service.

Respondent	Other Services	Improvements	Referral
PRN1	Y: Cyber Essentials Certification.	Y: I think they could possibly have more staff so they could continue to support more companies as they grow and develop	N
PRN2	N-Cannot envisage anything that might be needed above current requirements.	N-Quite content with the services that exist as long as they remain reactive and that level of service is maintained.	N
PRN3	N-Not currently	N-None identified	N
PRN4	N-None	Y: There needs to be clarity on what is and what is not included in the service agreement.	N

PRN5	N-Not at moment	N-Cannot think of any	N-Thought hard but could not think of any referrals but will talk to colleague who may know of other businesses in their sector or on the estate.
PRN6	Y:Possible that will need to look at telecomms in the future	N	Y:[Obfuscated] at [Obfuscated] may be possible referral.
PRN7	N-Nothing	N-Service is exactly what we need so no improvements identified.	N
PRN8	Y:Email Security	Y:Account call required	N/A
PRN9	Y:They need better internet connection and are in talks with [Obfuscated] about alternatives to their current set-up.	Y:The inability to get hold of anyone in the morning because of [Obfuscated] in-house meetings could be alleviated if just one member of staff was designated as available.	N
PRN10	Y:They are having a demo shortly for a specialized food manufacturing system which would include handheld equipment etc. Whilst this is not general IT they have not yet engaged with how these might interface and the inevitable involvement of [Obfuscated] in that.	Y:They understand that covid has brought on these service problems, but it would be at least more acceptable if they were just given a time when the problem could be realistically tackled.	Y:[Obfuscated]. The [Obfuscated]. [Obfuscated]@[Obfuscated].co.uk
PRN11	N-Nothing	N-Could not think of any ways and are happy with them as their IT provider.	N

PRN12	<p>Y:I emailed [Obfuscated] yesterday. We're thinking about getting our own servers. Would like to get this sorted out quickly. Might need another phone connected to the phone system. I've never really understood how our phone systems works and I'm not sure they do because I think it's done by a third party.</p>	<p>N-I don't think they need to improve their people because their people I think are great.</p> <p>Probably one of the things that I don't find frustrating is that when I call them early in the morning, they're always in a meeting, which I understand that they have to have but it's not particularly helpful if you've got an issue that you need to speak to one of them with. Or if it's urgent. You have to wait until they all come out of the meeting. Maybe they could just ... I don't know.</p>	<p>N-Can't really think of anyone. We're not client lead in terms of IT.</p>

Respondent	Other Services	Improvements	Referral / Training
SLV1	N-None Needed	N	N
SLV2	N-They have what they need.	N	N
SLV3	N	<p>Y:[Obfuscated]</p> <p>accounting/billing is poor.</p> <p>The billing particularly is erratic with no response to emails and without a structure that would be beneficial to both parties.</p>	N

SLV4	Y:Appreciate that most companies have staff retention issues and that [Obfuscated] have high levels of competence and knowledge but have found themselves dealing with an individual yet to gain those competencies and knowledge.	N	N
SLV5	N-Feel that they already understand any needs with the work that has already been done.	Y: Ideally, High Post would like a 24/7 out-of-hours service.	N
SLV6	N	N-Service fits their needs.	N
SLV7	N	Y:[Obfuscated] start work at 7.00 am and it has always been a frustration that there is no IT cover until 8.30 at the earliest. They find that the 3 engineers that provide the service appear stretched and that leads to what they perceive as a slapdash approach. This has manifested itself when they changed from server to cloud emails and where mapping was not done fully requiring some problem solving 6 months later.	N
SLV8	Y:They would like information on products that [Obfuscated] have run successfully	N	N

SLV9	N-Not able to identify any.	N-No ways he can think of	N
SLV10	N-None that can think of.	N-None she could think of	N
SLV11	N-Could not think of any.	None	N
SLV12	Y:Probably not [Obfuscated]'s field, but looking to find ways of analysing data.	Y:Help desk is not talking to them in the right way and would wish to keep business conversations limited to the management team at [Obfuscated]. Was promised monthly meetings at outset but only one has taken place. Understand that Covid intervened.	Y:[Obfuscated] [Obfuscated]Ltd enquiries@[Obfuscated].co.uk [Obfuscated] [Obfuscated]
Respondent	Other Services	Improvements	Referral / Training
DSC16	N	Y:Communication : I don't really understand what they provide in the first place. I inherited the business – everything was tuped over. This is not meant in a 'bad way' ... they've been here ... we've met Damien and happy with the service.	N
DSC17	Y:Spoken to [Obfuscated] about quoting for a phone system. Please can this be chased up.	Y:Reduce the price?	N-Can't think of one right now

DSC18	<p>Y:The only thing from our part of view would be having a weekend out of hours service : we're heavily regulated - this would hopefully be formally arranged : realise there's a cost involved. Regulars might push for this further down the track.</p>	<p>Y:Out of Hours Service</p>	N
DSC19	N-Can't think of anything	N	N
DSC20	N	<p>Y:They lost one of their long-service members of staff. Perhaps they could be onboarded quicker? But, I know that they're taking on someone else so they know the reasons why – [Obfuscated] knows it's all okay.</p>	N
DSC21	N	<p>Y:Their call centre process seems to work quite well. We've got [Obfuscated] for 20 years. But staff always ring me when there's a problem - not [Obfuscated]. So [Obfuscated] need to be more pro-active. Better Comms. To help me out, make [Obfuscated] the default first step that the staff call"</p>	N

DSC22	N	<p>Y:That's a toughie. One area there's possibly room for improvement : communications between each other and tend to become very busy and focused – they forget timelines sometimes : it's an observation rather than a criticism</p>	N
DSC23	N - We're a fairly new client, and sorted out lot of what was needed at the outset.	<p>Y:First line support : whoever answer the helpline, could maybe be a bit friendlier?"</p>	N
DSC24	N	<p>Y:We recognise that [Obfuscated] have taken on new staff. A little bit more support would be useful on hardware and software on how to use it. It be better for us if we could understand it all better. It's like getting furniture from Ikea - but with no instructions – you roughly know what it looks like ... When we call the office number : staff change - sometimes it can seem a little bit faceless. We onnly call when we need a problem sorting quickly</p>	N-Still thinking about this one

DSC25	N	<p>Y:They have to remember they are not speaking to computer geeks!</p> <p>Might be able to help with records management/archiving</p>	<p>Y:[Obfuscated], [Obfuscated] BID (business improvement development)</p>
DSC26	N	<p>Y:If everyone was as good as [Obfuscated] and [Obfuscated] that'd be brilliant, but that's obviously not possible. The only other possibility ... they're fairly proactive, but maybe could be strategically more proactive. Things like : you need to start thinking about this; start looking at that. etc</p>	N
DSC1	N	<p>Y:Probably. Operationally it's fine. Just need to occasionally have a more formal review - every 6 months or whatever i.e. have more account management reviews. Got stuck into the technicals with [Obfuscated] since inception but nothing from [Obfuscated] since then i.e. since July last year. More account reviews please.</p>	N-Possibly
DSC2	<p>N-Difficult question!</p> <p>Can't answer it!</p> <p>Everything we've asked for, we've already had.</p>	N	<p>Y:Send a referral/training ticket to [Obfuscated] : Speak to G**** D**** : g****@*****.co.uk(Obfuscated) email her next week.</p>
DSC3	<p>N-None that come to mind as they have just gone through an upgrade to accommodate remote working.</p>	<p>Y:Not the quickest in attending and delivering</p>	None

DSC4	N-It works well as it is - I don't need any help in any other services. If I did, I would go to them.	Y:For me, response time is always the most important thing. If they could improve the speed with which they respond, that would be a good thing, however, that's not a criticism, we're not overly upset with their response time - but any improvement would be good.	N
DSC27	N	Y:Lots	N
DSC5	N	Y:Sometimes we will ring in and the person answering is not aware that we are a long-standing client. This is surprising given we have a business relationship going back 6 years.	N
DSC6	N-None that can be thought of. The company would rather keep its IT as uncomplicated as possible.	N-Not able to think how	N
DSC7	N-It's a simple operation, so, unlikely	N-Nothing that we can think of.	N-Not able to think of any one to participate or in need of services as remote from UK.
DSC8	N-Already have VOIP for example so feel they have the leading industry standards.	Y:Maybe improve the initial contact response although appreciate that once on the case problems are sorted promptly.	N
DSC9	N/A	N/A	N/A

DSC10	N-None that can think of. The company is in a situation where due to the pandemic the sales force was let go. It now seems likely that the parent Italian company will continue in the UK rehiring some staff.	N-All Ok	N
DSC11	Comments were short largely because service is satisfactory and very little contact and then it is brief and on the phone.	N	N
DSC12	N	Y:Would like those taking the initial call to be more knowledgeable about their business.	N
DSC13	N-Not at the moment	N-Happy with the service.	N
DSC14	N	Y:As Before	N
DSC15	Y:Their software needs updating and they have a 7 year old server that should be renewed and back up drivers need updating. Already in touch on these issues and action needed as early as next month.	Y:Start an hour earlier.	N
Respondent	Other Services	Improvements	Referral
RFM1	N-We are a lot smaller than we used to be so unlikely that we would need any extra services.	Y:Excellent that their laptops come to us without the irrelevant bits that you would get when purchasing in the retail market, but we do not feel they are always as competitive as they should be on price	N

RFM2	N-Been here now 5 years. Whether he'd [would] recommend any of your kit to be upgraded. { Maybe have an account call} A call wouldn't hurt. Most of the boys know how they operate. Anything that can make them effective would be good.	Y:Probably ... when we put the first initial call in – they could ask the urgency. So they can rate it from high to low priority ?	N
RFM3	No, they feel that they are kept in touch in all areas	Y:Have had to be chased for software updates. Given they can log on and see the preparedness of our services would like our Antivirus especially to be always up to date.	N
RFM4	Y:Will soon want to implement Voice Over IP	Y:There's a virtual machine that constantly packs up. It needs to be addressed really. They need to wait 4 hours each time, even longer on the weekends. More testing needed.	N-Problem with seeking referrals is that all the other companies that he interacts with are large corporations.
RFM5	N-Would ping an email to them if needed to.	N	N
RFM6	Y:we will be reviewing the telephony system at some point. But have already flagged this with them.	Y:When a ticket is raised the job is always done promptly but we are not necessarily informed of that and sometimes involves unnecessary chasing.	N

RFM7	No .They're quite flexible and notify me when new services are available.	N-I don't think they could. They answer my emails and pick up the phone. A lot of the time, I text N***(Obfuscated) direct and I get a response.	N-Regarding passing them to other businesses, let me speak to some people first. I wouldn't want them receiving communications without speaking to them first.
RFM8	N-None mentioned	Y:Take a long time to get back once the ticket has been raised but we have great confidence that the problem will be sorted.	N
RFM9	Y:Already engaged in conversations with them about a new photocopier/ print system solution.	N-Cannot think of anything	N
RFM10	N	N	N
RFM11	N	Y:They are often dealing with quite a few different people and it can be confusing. Whilst the service is good they can often be waiting for a day for further action once a ticket has been raised. Would like only two people that know their company.	N
RFM12	Y:Very interested that [Obfuscated] are an Apple Approved provider as they feel that technology might very well suit them in the near future.	N-Not able to think of anything	N
RFM13	N	N-Not able to think of anything	N
RFM14	N	N-None mentioned	N

RFM15	N	<p>Y:Not convinced that the VOIP solution that is currently in situ is the most appropriate and feel that the choice is limited because of [Obfuscated]'s restricted list of providers. Not convinced that the VOIP solution that is currently in situ is the most appropriate and feel that the choice is limited because of [Obfuscated]'s restricted list of providers.</p> <p>Disappointed that it took a month recently before it was realised that the encryption problem was due to conflicting updates.</p>	N
RFM16	<p>Y:We have the Microsoft world well organised and the next thing to do is integrate Apple solutions and will need advice and hand holding to do that. For example we take many on-site photos and need a better way to resolve the Jpeg/Apple format. Our website works but we will soon need to upgrade</p>	<p>N-So pleased with what has been done through the personal connections in [Obfuscated] that would not like to see that disappear as they grow.</p>	N
Respondent	Other Services	Improvements	Referral
EHC1	N-None that can think of	N-Not able to come up with anything	N

EHC2	Y:More information about VOIP systems & Comms via the web. i.e. answering the phone via a computer.	N-More specific account person : dedicated to their needs. At the moment it's whoever answers the phone.	Y:[Obfuscated] [Obfuscated] on 0287 [Obfuscated]
EHC3	N	Y:The only area is that of researching ahead for future IT solutions	N
EHC4	N-Don't know the answer to that - don't know what else they do. {Maybe a client account call needed !? }	N-Could be a bit faster response whenever they call. If you could detail how urgent it needs to be on the ticket : amber, green red etc. i.e. a Priority system, there's no way to mark it at the moment.	N-Send them to him & he can pass them on to him.
EHC5	N-None that we can think of.	N-None that we can think of.	N-[Obfuscated] are happy to continue recommending [Obfuscated] but are unable to pass names across directly in any way because of client confidentiality.
EHC6	Y:They will be looking at a CRM system in the next 12 months and a second site is a definite possibility and will be seeking help in setting up.	N-Very reactive but would like regular checks on a consultative basis particularly giving them an idea of the things they do not know are available. The newsletter is good and could be expanded.	N-Will Let us Know
EHC7	N-They do already keep them up to date	N-Suit what they need. Competitive pricing would be helpful as they are currently sourcing product outside of this relationship.	N-Can't Think of Any
EHC8	Y:[Obfuscated] are likely to do more around machinery integration and analysis, though it is	N-A little disappointed that [Obfuscated]'s perceived specialism and preference is always for a Microsoft solution whereas Decom	N-Not able to give referrals as new to Northern Ireland.

	likely that they would prefer a non Microsoft solution.	would like options such as Dropbox.	
EHC9	N	N	N
EHC10	Y:Looking at some more upgrades, particularly how they might be able to get their desktops to interact more effectively	Looking at some more upgrades, particularly how they might be able to get their desktops to interact more effectively	N
EHC11	N	Y:Whilst we understand the business reasoning behind it and accept there are limits to what levels of service can be provided to such a small user; we were disappointed to see the demise of the online support offering.	N
EHC12	N	Y:The migration from Microsoft to Apple has not been seamless and the issues that brought were not anticipated by either party. Felt they are lacking in knowledge in this area.	N
EHC13	N	N-Not able to think of any	N-can't think of any

Respondent	Training	Other Info?
PRN1	Working with schools? Esp if offered IT Training. Not sure if [Obfuscated] wants schools? Would [Obfuscated] be suited for much with bigger companies? For companies of 30 staff or so? For [Obfuscated]sion.	N
PRN2	Not required	N
PRN3	None Mentioned	N

PRN4	None Mentioned	N
PRN5		N
PRN6	None Mentioned	N
PRN7	None Mentioned	N
PRN8	N/A	N/A
PRN9	Y:J****(Obfuscated) particularly interested in Cyber Security.	N
PRN10	Y:[Obfuscated] interested in Advanced Excel The[Obfuscated] is on the Isle of Wight.	N
PRN11	Y:S*****(Obfuscated) very keen on Cyber Security training. They do not use Teams. NOTE CONTACT [Obfuscated] HAS LEFT THE COMPANY.	N
PRN12	N	N
Respondent	Training	Other Info?
SLV1	N-None Needed	N
SLV2	Y:She would be keen for a member of her finance team to receive some Advanced Excel training.	Y:[Obfuscated] is leaving her post as FD by the 18th of this month.
SLV3	N-No training needs as technically proficient.	Y:When the company grows again they will probably not go down the Microsoft route as they feel it is too restrictive.
SLV4	N	Y:[Obfuscated]Leaving the Company in 3 weeks
SLV5	Y:S******(Obfuscated) is one of 4 who require at least some IT type knowledge. For the moment it would be just her and she is not as strong as she would like to be in Excel.	N
SLV6	N-Not sure that they need significantly more knowledge to run their limited IT.	N-Nothing occurs.
SLV7	Y:Training for [Obfuscated]	N
SLV8	Y:K******(Obfuscated) is interested in Cybersecurity. He runs inhouse videos for his staff on Office365 etc	Y:They are looking at how they can examine Sharepoint sites going back over a year or more.
SLV9	N-No training needs that he could relay.	N- Feels that all the bases have been covered.
SLV10	Y:Teams training probably top of the list	N-None that can think of.

SLV11	Y:W*****([Obfuscated]) have often relied on [Obfuscated] for brief tutoring in a number of areas. For example; until very recently the use of Teams was negligible. Hence training interest(now).	N
SLV12	N	Y:Would like to have someone talk to students about running an IT business.
Respondent	Training	Other Info?
DSC16	N	Y:Arrange call with Sue to clarify services
DSC17	N	N
DSC18	N	N
DSC19	N	N
DSC20	N	N
DSC21	N	Y:We are having a server for risk - Landmark software ... [Obfuscated] could have offered that, but's that's all, [Obfuscated] manage everything else for us.
DSC22	N	N
DSC23	N	N
DSC24	N	Y:Donation to be sent to the [Obfuscated] helping people with mental health and wellbeing issues.. Include [Obfuscated] on promotional communications
DSC25	N	Y:Charity sponsored is [Obfuscated]
DSC26	N	N
DSC1	Y:Interested in receiving training - not necessarily for himself but likely for other colleagues.	N
DSC2	Y:Send a referral/training ticket to T*****([Obfuscated]) : Speak to G*** D*** : g*****@*****.co.uk email her next week.([Obfuscated])	N
DSC3	N	N
DSC4	N	N
DSC27	N	N
DSC5	N	N

DSC6	N-Not appropriate for any staff to attend IT training and all other companies that knows of happy with their IT , but would always recommend [Obfuscated].	N
DSC7	N	N
DSC8	Y:Possible that may do training. He would be initial contact.	N
DSC9	N/A	N/A
DSC10	Y:He may be interested in training; especially security.	N
DSC11	N	N
DSC12	N-No interest at the moment in training but maybe when things calm down.	N
DSC13	N	N
DSC14	N	N
DSC15	Y:Interested in training. 2 or 3 in the company but no-one outside as deal with large companies.	
Respondent	Training	Other Info?
RFM1	Y:Would like to do more networking but not especially interested in the training. Note : retiring soon and will be closing business.	N
RFM2	N	Y:Account Call
RFM3	Y:Interested in Teams and Excel but no specific staff or outside individuals that can nominate. Their clients generally ask them for recommendations on Accountancy packages rather than IT support	N
RFM4	Y:Interested in training - especially Advanced Excel for one particular staff member.	N
RFM5	Y:Some interest in training for staff in particular advanced Excel.	N
RFM6	N	N
RFM7	Y:Happy to receive training vouchers. Will send the training details to staff members.	N

RFM8	N	N
RFM9	N-Not required	N
RFM10	Y:Might be interested in training	Y:Does have friends who are starting up businesses that might ultimately need an IT service provider.
RFM11	N-Not required	N
RFM12	N-No individuals that can think of to suggest for training etc	N
RFM13	N-Fully up to speed on training.	N
RFM14	Y:Excel Training Please	N
RFM15	N	Y:As per improvements
RFM16	Y: VOIP - never had time to read up how it works. Excel - He has forgotten a lot about how to get the best out of it. TEAMS - They have a number of of public sector clients all of whom prefer this method.	N
Respondent	Training	Other Info?
EHC1	Y:Very interested in training - have [Obfuscated]sed this already with D****(Obfuscated)? TEAMS training - they are looking at workshops for their installers . Technical team of 8 staff.	N
EHC2	N	N
EHC3	N	N
EHC4	N	N
EHC5	N	N
EHC6	N	N
EHC7	Y:[Obfuscated] specifically interested in Teams training	N
EHC8	Y:Always interested in training options for the team and would be interested in bulletins on up-coming topics.	N
EHC9	N	N
EHC10	Training could be of special interest dependent on the topics.	N
EHC11	None	N

EHC12	[Obfuscated] interested in Excel module.	N
EHC13	N	N

Appendix I : Pre-Interview Script

“Hello [name], thank you for agreeing to participate in this short telephone survey. Please note that this call is being recorded for reference purposes, is that okay?”

[Interviewer ensures consent is signalled before proceeding]

“I’d like to point out that it’s most likely we’ll be concluded within fifteen minutes and outline some formalities before we begin, so that you’re fully informed about this process.

Firstly, a copy of your responses and the recording of this interview will be sent to you for you to keep (or not) as you see fit and you can request that your responses be amended afterwards if you change your mind about your responses. You can ask that your responses be destroyed and you are free to stop this interview at any time and your data will be destroyed. Assuming you do proceed, any information you give will be anonymised as far as practicable and the recordings will be deleted from our systems after you’ve received your copy.

The purpose of this process is part of a study that I’m conducting and consequently I can’t offer any incentives for completing this questionnaire, however I’m providing a MS Teams training session for everyone that was invited to this survey (regardless of whether or not they are interviewed or how they responded) as a thank-you for receiving our communication.

I’m completely independent from [Name of MSP] and I’d invite you to be as candid as you care to be. Whilst the information you provide will be disseminated to the academic community, a copy of all the aggregate feedback for [Name of MSP] will be sent to them (anonymised) unless of course you object and I can send you a copy of the dissertation once it’s been fully completed and marked, should you wish me to.

The hope is that any insights as a result of the provided here will help both the academic community at large and also [Name of MSP] to improve their processes and service as well as other MSPs that refer to the work.

Are you happy to proceed?"

[Interviewer ensures consent is signalled before proceeding]

Appendix J – Reminder Email About Leaving a Review

Dear [FName],

This is a quick reminder that on [Date], we'll be running our complimentary training session about Microsoft Teams. As a valued client, you're welcome to attend (all our clients are welcome and have been invited) as a thank-you for communications as part of our client-feedback survey, irrespective of whether you elected to offer feedback or not and whatever feedback you gave. Remember, we can only get better if you let us know how.

Here is your registration link if you've not already joined.

[Link]

Additionally, here is your registration link to our Google feedback page, if you've not left your feedback yet – we appreciate your candid reviews!

[Link]

Appendix K – Pearson's r values for Conation to Provide a Testimonial

Co.	NPS	NSS	Surveys	Would Refer 'Y'	% 'Y'
PRN	50	58.33	12	9	75.00
DSC	51.85	14.81	27	23	85.19
SLV	58.33	75	12	12	100.00
RFM	62.5	68.75	16	13	81.25
EHC	69.23	53.85	13	13	100.00
	r for NPS / NSS		0.375		
	r for NPS / % Y		0.645		
	r for NSS / % Y		0.192		

Appendix L – r values for Conation to Provide a Testimonial & Referrals Received

Pearson's r for NPS and conation to leave a review was **0.645**

Pearson's r for NSS and conation to leave a review was **0.192**

Pearson's r for NPS and % of referrals received from total surveys was **-0.097**

Pearson's r for NSS and % of referrals received from total surveys was **0.279**

Pearson's r for NPS and % of referrals received from % Would Refer was **-0.181**

Pearson's r for NSS and % of referrals received from % Would Refer was **0.230**

Appendix M – r values for Conation To Want To Find About Other Services

Pearson's r for NPS and conation to receive information about other services was -0.07

Pearson's r for NSS and conation to receive information about other services was +0.56

Appendix N – r values for Improvement Suggestions

Pearson's r for NPS and Suggestions Received for Service-Improvements was -0.63

Pearson's r for NSS and Suggestions Received for Service-Improvements was -0.70