

# CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

## Self-Report Feedback Questions: Rapid Literature Review

Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Team

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**PennState**

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## Executive Summary

This report was created in response to a request for customer satisfaction, self-report feedback questions from the Semper Fit program with an emphasis on Semper Fit's Recreational Swimming program.

To assist in question development, Semper Fit staff provided the Technical Assistance (TA) team at the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse) with multiple documents highlighting each Semper Fit program. Based on the *MF Program Measures of Effectiveness* document, Semper Fit gauges the effectiveness of the Recreational Swimming program through tracking the following outcomes:

Does the Semper Fit Recreational Swimming program improve quality of life and provide a safe environment for Marines and families to participate in water-related activities at aquatic facilities and beaches?

- Change in number of rescues and drownings.
- Change in number of dependents successfully completing swim lessons.
- Change in participation at aquatic facility events.
- Change in reported satisfaction with program (p.4).

This rapid literature review focuses on the last measure of effectiveness, "change in reported satisfaction with the program" and provides a repository of evidence-informed questions including the Net Promoter Score (NPS), structure, process, and outcome measurements. The TA team identified both CORE and FLEX measures that can be used to assess customer satisfaction and outcomes of Semper Fit programs. As requested by Semper Fit, the NPS, structure, and process questions are generalizable to all the Semper Fit programs, whereas, the outcome questions have been tailored to gather feedback specific to the Recreational Swimming program.

These findings include the following elements:

- Net Promoter Score: background, question, and calculation.
- Structure and process questions as measured through SERVQUAL: background, original SERVQUAL questions, and questions adapted for recreation services.
- Outcome questions: tailored to Semper Fit's Recreational Swimming program.
- Bank of self-report customer feedback questions: core questions that can be adjusted to meet the needs of various Semper Fit programs, as well as questions tailored to the Recreational Swimming program.

Please note that this rapid literature review provides a preliminary examination of the research. Thus, given the brief timeline, this report is not intended to serve as a comprehensive review of the literature, nor are the resources provided endorsed by the Clearinghouse.

## Introduction

The TA team at the Clearinghouse conducted a brief, rapid literature review on the topic of customer satisfaction self-report feedback questions. Research examining customer satisfaction was identified by searching peer-reviewed journal articles with an emphasis placed on research published between 2010 and 2020. While this literature review focused on articles published after 2010, several “parent” articles published before 2010 were identified as pertinent to the topic. These include articles outlining and critiquing the SERVQUAL model and the Net Promoter Score. Consequently, literature published before 2010 and identified by the TA team as pertinent to the topic is included in this report. Search queries included various combinations of the following terms: *self-report feedback, customer satisfaction, customer service, Best Practices, Net Promoter Score, SERVQUAL, fitness, gyms, and parks and recreation.*

## Program Evaluation Using the Flexicution Method

The flexicution method of program evaluation uses a two-tier approach of measurement: CORE (i.e., tier one or common elements) and FLEX (i.e., tier two or flexible elements). Using both CORE and FLEX measurements creates continuity in program evaluation by measuring common elements across all programs that fall under an umbrella (i.e., Semper Fit), while allowing evaluators to account for differences in delivery and priority elements of individual programs (Saathoff-Wells, Karre, Davenport, Campise, & Perkins, 2017). When reviewing this document, and in subsequent evaluation planning, the Semper Fit team is encouraged to identify topics, domains, and questions that should be measured across all programs (i.e., CORE measures) and those that can be adjusted to meet the needs of an individual program (i.e., FLEX measures).

## Net Promoter Score

### Background

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) was first developed by Frederick Reichheld in 2003. Reichheld set out to find a simple way of measuring customer loyalty by correlating customers’ survey response data to their referral or purchasing behavior. After

analyzing data from more than 4,000 customers, Reichheld believed he found one survey question that predicted customer behavior in most industries. That question is the foundation of the NPS (Reichheld, 2003).

## The Question

According to Reichheld (2003), the ultimate question is: On a scale of 0 – 10, how likely is it that you would recommend [company X] to a friend or colleague? In the case of Semper Fit, the question is: **On a scale of 0 – 10, how likely is it that you would recommend Semper Fit to a friend or fellow Marine?**

**Table 1**  
*NPS Measurement Scale*

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all likely					Neutral					Extremely Likely

## Measurement

The question, “How likely is it that you would recommend [company X] to a friend or colleague?” is measured on an 11-point Likert scale. A score of zero means “not at all likely,” a score of five means neutral, and a score of ten means “extremely likely.” To calculate a Net Promoter Score, follow the steps below (Reichheld, 2003):

- Group customers into three categories: (1) “promoters” or those who give a rating of nine or ten; (2) neutral or “passively satisfied” or those who give a rating of seven or eight; and (3) “detractors” or those who give a rating of zero to six.
- Calculate the percentage of customers who are “promoters” and “detractors.”
- Subtract the percentage of “detractors” from the percentage of “promoters.” That number is your company’s Net Promoter Score.
  - **Net Promoter Score = % Promoters - % Detractors**

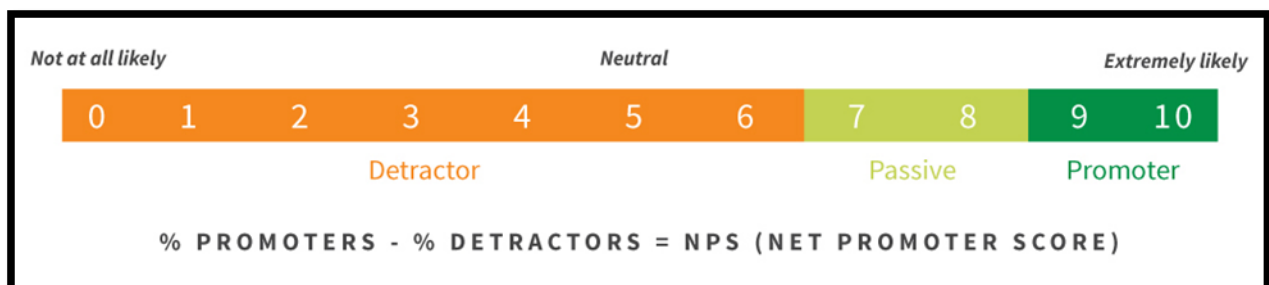


Image source: Satmetrix Systems Inc. (2017)

A company’s NPS will range from -100 to 100. A score of -100 would indicate 100 percent of customers *would not recommend* the company to a friend. Whereas, a score

of 100 would indicate 100 percent of customers *would recommend* the company to a friend. In general, if a company has a negative NPS, they do not have strong customer loyalty.

### **Criticism of the Net Promoter Score**

The NPS is a well-recognized customer satisfaction and profit growth indicator; however, the robustness of the tool in the scientific domain remains limited (Stander, 2016). While most researchers agree that customers' willingness to provide a referral to a company is important, many believe that a single question cannot and does not address everything Reichheld claims it does.

Specifically, the NPS provides a single score but lacks the capability to provide a course of action on how to improve that score. To do so, researchers argue that a distinction is needed to determine what the NPS means in terms of loyalty: is it a consequence, indicator, or cause of loyalty? If the NPS is an indicator of loyalty, a company may try to increase the measure itself; however, if it is a consequence of loyalty, a company may try to increase loyalty to make the outcome or NPS increase (Grisaffe, 2007). Additional criticism for the NPS comes from the grouping of customers (i.e., detractors, passives, and promoters); not including the percent of customers labelled as "passive" in the overall NPS; and not including the option for "no answer" in the scale (Kristensen & Eskildsen, 2014). While the NPS is a useful tool to measure customer satisfaction, the inability to provide actionable outcomes suggests it is not the ultimate question and should be used in conjunction with other customer satisfaction measures.

## **Development of Structure and Process Questions Using the SERVQUAL Model**

### **Background**

The SERVQUAL model was developed in 1988 by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry to measure consumers' perceptions of service quality in the service and retail industries. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988) perceived service quality differs from satisfaction as "perceived service quality is a global judgement, or attitude, relating to the superiority of service, whereas satisfaction is related to a specific transaction (p.16)."

The SERVQUAL measurement instrument contains 22 questions; each question is measured on a 7-point Likert scale and is asked twice. First, a question is asked to measure customers' expectations. Next, it is asked to measure how well the organization performed. Service quality is determined by a *gap score* (i.e., subtracting

customers' expectations and performance). Each of the 22 questions in the SERVQUAL model fall into one of the five dimensions listed below (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

- **Tangibles:** physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.
- **Reliability:** ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- **Responsiveness:** willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- **Assurance:** knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
- **Empathy:** caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers (p. 23).

While the SERVQUAL model calculates a gap score, other service quality measurements focus solely on organizational performance and do not ask about customers' expectations. Some researchers have noted that *performance only* measures are better predictors of satisfaction than gap scores; however, it is also noted that the gap scores are useful in tracking data trends and visitor expectations over time (Burns, Graefe, & Absher, 2003). Additionally, the SERVQUAL model addresses the functional quality of a service; it does not address the outcomes of that service (Hossain, 2014).

Thus, if an organization would like to use a simplified SERVQUAL model without the customer expectation questions, the literature supports this type of modification to measure customer satisfaction. However, if outcome measures are desired, the SERVQUAL model cannot be used as a standalone questionnaire.

### Original SERVQUAL Model Questions

Listed below are 22 questions using the five domains of the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988, pp. 39-40). As mentioned, the original SERVQUAL model asks a question twice to understand a customers' expectation and perception on that topic. Some questions are asked in a positive manner, others in a negative manner. Those asked in a negative manner are noted with a “(-)” in the table below. Structure and process questions using the SERVQUAL model adapted for recreation services, such as Semper Fit's programs, are provided in the next section (*Application of the SERVQUAL Model in Recreation Services*) and in the question bank listed at the end of this report.

**Table 2**  
*SERVQUAL Model Question Bank*

Dimension	Question #	Expectations	Perceptions
Tangibles	1	They should have up-to-date equipment.	Semper Fit has up-to-date equipment.

Tangibles	2	Their physical facilities should be visually appealing.	Semper Fit's physical facilities are visually appealing.
Tangibles	3	Their employees should be well dressed and appear neat.	Semper Fit's employees are well dressed and appear neat.
Tangibles	4	The appearance of the physical facilities of these firms should be in keeping with the type of services provided.	The appearance of the physical facilities of Semper Fit is in keeping with the type of services provided.
Reliability	5	When these firms promise to do something by a certain time, they should do so.	When Semper Fit promises to do something by a certain time, it does so.
Reliability	6	When customers have problems, these firms should be sympathetic and reassuring.	When you have problems, Semper Fit is sympathetic and reassuring.
Reliability	7	These firms should be dependable.	Semper Fit is dependable.
Reliability	8	They should provide their services at the time they promise to do so.	Semper Fit provides its services at the time it promises to do so.
Reliability	9	They should keep their records accurately.	Semper Fit keeps records accurately.
Responsiveness	10	They shouldn't be expected to tell customers exactly when services will be performed (-).	Semper Fit does not tell customers exactly when services will be performed (-).
Responsiveness	11	It is not realistic for customers to expect prompt service from employees of these firms (-).	You do not receive prompt service from Semper Fit's employees (-).
Responsiveness	12	Their employees don't always have to be willing to help customers (-).	Employees of Semper Fit are not always willing to help customers (-).
Responsiveness	13	It is okay if they are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly (-).	Employees of Semper Fit are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly (-).



Assurance	14	Customers should be able to trust employees of these firms.	You can trust employees of Semper Fit.
Assurance	15	Customers should be able to feel safe in their transactions with these firms' employees.	You feel safe in your transaction with Semper Fit's employees.
Assurance	16	Their employees should be polite.	Employees of Semper Fit are polite.
Assurance	17	Their employees should get adequate support from these firms to do their jobs well.	Employees get adequate support from Semper Fit to do their jobs well.
Empathy	18	These firms should not be expected to give customers individual attention (-).	Semper Fit does not give you individual attention (-).
Empathy	19	Employees of these firms cannot be expected to give customers personal attention (-).	Employees of Semper Fit do not give you personal attention (-).
Empathy	20	It is unrealistic to expect employees to know what the needs of their customers are (-).	Employees of Semper Fit do not know what your needs are (-).
Empathy	21	It is unrealistic to expect these firms to have their customers' best interests at heart (-).	Semper Fit does not have your best interests at heart (-).
Empathy	22	They shouldn't be expected to have operating hours convenient to all their customers (-).	Semper Fit does not have operating hours convenient to all their customers (-).
	Notes:	Questions with a (-) must have the scores inversed before analyzing.	XYZ has been replaced with "Semper Fit" in the above questions.

## Application of the SERVQUAL Model in Recreation Services

The SERVQUAL model has been used in a variety of settings. However, not all researchers agree with the five dimensions listed above, and many have noted the SERVQUAL model must be adapted to meet the needs of a particular service (Burns et al., 2003). Of interest, Crompton, MacKay, & Fesenmaier (1991) found that, in the context of recreation services, only four of the five domains are applicable (i.e.

assurance, reliability, responsiveness, and tangibles). Burns et al. (2003) further tested the SERVQUAL model with the four domains of recreation satisfaction (i.e., facilities, services, and information, and the previously untested experience domain) with water-based recreationists at various lakes within the 10 US Army Corps of Engineers lakes.

The 19 questions below are taken from the SERVQUAL model listed in the article by Burns et al. (p.369, 2003). Questions with an asterisk (\*) were found to be significant predictors of customer satisfaction within their respective domain. For example, the customer satisfaction score for “Accessibility for those with disabilities” predicted customer satisfaction within the facilities domain. In this respect, Semper Fit could potentially employ *flexicution* methods by allowing program managers to choose from a list of core customer satisfaction questions within specific domains. If Semper Fit staff choose the domains to measure across all programs and allow question choice at the individual program level, programs are afforded both structure and flexibility.

**Table 3**  
*SERVQUAL Model Adapted for Recreation Services Measurement Scale*

On a scale of one to five, indicate how satisfied you are with Semper Fit's...				
1	2	3	4	5
Least Satisfied		Neutral		Most Satisfied

**Table 4**  
*SERVQUAL Model Adapted for Recreation Services (Burns et al., 2003)*

Domain	Question	
Facilities	Accessibility for those with disabilities	*
Facilities	Sufficient number of recreation areas	
Facilities	Appearance and maintenance of the area	*
Facilities	Value for fee paid	*
Services	Availability of staff to answer questions	*
Services	Visibility of staff	
Services	Safety and security at the area	*
Services	Courteous and friendly staff	*
Services	Opportunity to offer suggestions to staff	*
Services	Adequate ranger/visitor assistance patrols	*
Information	General information about the area	
Information	Nature/historical information about the area	
Information	Safety information	*
Information	Ease of obtaining information	*

Information	Current and accurate information	*
Experience	Opportunity to recreate without feeling crowded	*
Experience	Opportunity to recreate without interference from other visitors	
Experience	Compatibility of recreation activities at the area	*
Experience	Places to recreate without conflict from other visitors	*
	*Significant predictor of customer satisfaction within the Domain.	

## Development of Outcome Questions

### Background

Based on the information provided by the Semper Fit team, the main evaluation question for the Recreational Swimming program is: “Does the Semper Fit Recreational Swimming program **improve quality of life** and **provide a safe environment** for Marines and families to participate in water-related activities at aquatic facilities and beaches (*MF Program Measures of Effectiveness PowerPoint*, p.4)?”

Semper Fit can determine if the Recreational Swimming program *provides a safe environment* by measuring the change in the number of rescues and drownings, other safety data, as well as the participants’ satisfaction with the safety of the program. However, determining if the Recreational Swimming program *improves quality of life* is more subjective as the term *quality of life* encompasses many components and must be defined before attempting to measure it.

According to the *Leaders Resource Guide: Semper Fit & Recreation*, the “aquatics centers provide a safe location to learn and **enhance life skills** and **drowning prevention knowledge** while **improving physical fitness** (p. 2).” Life skills are further defined as: “decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness/mindfulness, assertiveness, empathy, coping, resilience, equanimity, goal setting, time management, learn how to relax, negotiate/compromise (*Semper Fit Risk & Protective Factors spreadsheet*).” Based on these definitions, in the context of the Semper Fit Recreational Swimming program, improving quality of life may be measured as enhancing life skills and improving physical fitness.

### Outcome Questions

The TA team used the above information to develop the following self-report, outcome questions for the Semper Fit Recreational Swimming program. These questions, as written, can be measured on a 5-point Likert scale, as listed below.

**Table 5***Outcome Questions Measurement Scale*

On a scale of one to five, indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:					
1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	Not Applicable

**Table 6***Outcome Questions for Semper Fit's Recreational Swimming Program*

Topic	Question
Drowning Prevention	After participating in Semper Fit's program, I feel confident in my ability to save someone from drowning.
Drowning Prevention	After participating in Semper Fit's program, I feel confident in my swimming abilities.
Physical Fitness	Swimming has increased the amount of physical activity I participate in each week.
Physical Fitness	Swimming has improved my physical fitness.
Life Skills	The Recreational Swimming program allows me to connect with my peers.
Life Skills	Swimming allows me to relax.
Life Skills	The Recreational Swimming program provides opportunities for personal growth.
Life Skills	Swimming allows me to escape life stress.
Life Skills	Participation in the Recreational Swimming program helps me set realistic goals for myself.
Life Skills	Participation in the Recreational Swimming program has enhanced my trust with peers.

## Question Bank

The questions listed throughout this document are provided on page 14 as options for Semper Fit to use in the evaluation of their programs. The Net Promoter Score and structure and process questions may be used Semper Fit wide, whereas the outcome questions were developed for use within the Recreational Swimming program. Due to the request for brevity and simplicity, the structure and process questions pertaining to

expectations and those that are not significant predictors of customer satisfaction within their respective domains are not included in the question bank.

Please note that these questions should serve as a starting point. This document provides a preliminary examination of the research. It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive review of the literature nor provide a comprehensive list of evaluation questions.

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**Table 7****Question Bank for Semper Fit's Recreational Swimming Program**

<b>Domain/Topic</b>	<b>Question</b>
<b>Net Promoter Score Question</b>	
On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 = "not at all likely," 5 = "neutral," and 10 = "extremely likely:"	
Loyalty	How likely is it that you would recommend Semper Fit to a friend or fellow Marine?
<b>Customer Satisfaction: Structure and Process Questions</b>	
On a scale of one to five, how satisfied are you with Semper Fit's Recreational Swimming program's... 1 (Least Satisfied) 2 3 4 5 (Most Satisfied)	
Facilities	Accessibility for those with disabilities
Facilities	Appearance and maintenance of the area
Facilities	Value for fee paid
Services	Availability of staff to answer questions
Services	Safety and security at the area
Services	Courteous and friendly staff
Services	Opportunity to offer suggestions to staff
Services	Adequate ranger/visitor assistance patrols
Information	Safety information
Information	Ease of obtaining information
Information	Current and accurate information
Experience	Opportunity to recreate without feeling crowded
Experience	Compatibility of recreation activities at the area
Experience	Places to recreate without conflict from other visitors
<b>Outcome Questions</b>	
On a scale of one to five, indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: 1 (Strongly Disagree) 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree) N/A	
Drowning Prevention	After participating in Semper Fit's program, I feel confident in my ability to save someone from drowning.
Drowning Prevention	After participating in Semper Fit's program, I feel confident in my swimming abilities.
Physical Fitness	Swimming has increased the amount of physical activity I participate in each week.
Physical Fitness	Swimming has improved my physical fitness.
Life Skills	The Recreational Swimming program allows me to connect with my peers.
Life Skills	Swimming allows me to relax.
Life Skills	The Recreational Swimming program provides opportunities for personal growth.
Life Skills	Swimming allows me to escape life stress.
Life Skills	Participation in the Recreational Swimming program helps me set realistic goals for myself.
Life Skills	Participation in the Recreational Swimming program has enhanced my trust with peers.

## Additional Assistance

The TA specialists at the Clearinghouse are happy to assist you. We provide support to professionals as they examine and make informed decisions about which programs fit specific situations and are worth the investment. Whether it is connecting you with the resources and tools to conduct a needs assessment in your community, suggesting the best evidence-based program or practice for your situation, or developing an evaluation plan, our team of experts is a call or email away.

Please visit our website at [www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu](http://www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu) or call 1-877-382-9185 to speak with a TA specialist.

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