

Café Gourmet Survey

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After a number of years in business, a local Café Gourmet outlet, part of a national franchise operation, wants you to conduct a customer survey to provide it with a profile of its customer base and an understanding of how its customers perceive the operation. Café Gourmet offers the full range of the usual hot and cold drinks (e.g., regular and specialty coffee, regular and flavoured tea, hot chocolate, flavoured lattes, ciders, Italian soda). The food offering is quite limited: Because of restrictions in the franchise agreement, only a small range of pastry items are offered. However, because of customer demand, store management does offer prepared bagels with cream cheese for sale. These “illegal bagels” are kept out of view and are not listed on the menu board, since the sale of these items is not approved by the franchisor; customers just need to ask for the item (sort of like a “speakeasy” enterprise of the days go by).

The store’s management is particularly interested in the views of smokers versus nonsmokers, since, at the present time, smoking is still allowed in retail outlets of this nature. About one-third of the seating is allocated to the smoking section and two-thirds is allocated to the non-smoking section. The only ventilation beyond normal air flow is when the front door is kept open, but this usually only occurs when it is warm outside. Since there are only windows at the front of the store, to satisfy these two customer groups, every month, store management switches the location of the smoking and non-smoking sections -- from the front to the back of the store and vice versa, thereby allowing each customer group the opportunity to view the passing street traffic equally throughout the year.

Café Gourmet opens at 7:30 a.m. from Monday to Saturday and at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday. Closing time is 10:00 p.m. from Monday to Thursday and on Sunday and 1:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. During all hours of operation, music, selected by the staff on duty, is played in the background.

Store management will use the results of the survey to plan the nature of its operation in the future, making any changes that are warranted. In particular, the franchisee wants to maximize the level of customer satisfaction, to every extent possible.

Questions:

1. Evaluate the identified situation in terms of the relevant marketing theories and concepts. Be specific.
2. Describe the nature of the survey that you will develop to carry out the market intelligence gathering process. Explain why it is of this nature (i.e., What questions do you need to ask and why?).