

Unlocking the Strategic Power of Member Feedback

Leveraging Member Insights to Inform Club Strategy



The Strategic Power of Member Feedback

Key Takeaway

In today's world, data has become strategic assets to clubs in making better decisions. Whether you are familiar with a data-informed approach or re-imagining ways to leverage member data, unlocking the strategic power of your members' feedback holds tremendous value.

In this whitepaper, we explore the true potential of moving beyond member surveys into a strategy-informed insights mindset. New approaches to understanding your members, along with a case study from Medinah Country Club, can help to chart your path towards an organizational focus of maximizing feedback in your club's strategy.

Evolving Importance of Member Data to Inform Strategy

Hearing and understanding the voice of your members is now more critical than ever. Clubs don't listen by collecting feedback – clubs listen by using this data to inform opinions, thoughts, and actions. Used correctly, member feedback allows us to seize opportunities, understand unique challenges and uncover emerging issues. The key is understanding how to leverage research to exceed the wants and needs of members successfully.

Collecting member feedback about their experience is extremely valuable as it:



Measures satisfaction

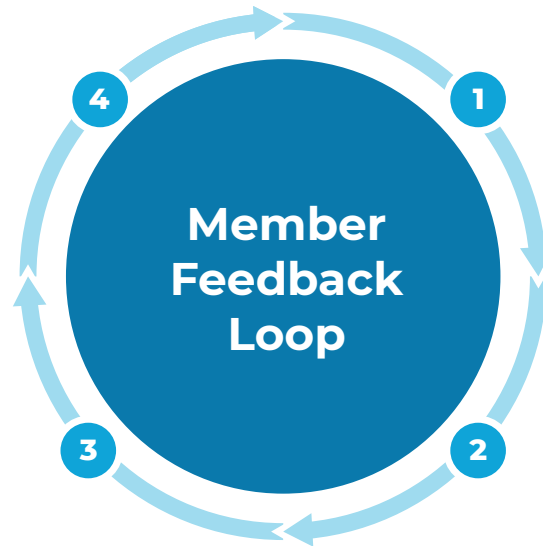


Helps identify improvement opportunities



Demonstrates a club's value of member opinions

However, the challenge is using the information effectively to inform operations and strategic actions. By re-imagining the potential of member feedback, clubs can leverage a forward-thinking mindset to capture often-lost opportunities, beginning with a re-envisioned Member Feedback Loop.



1 Set the Strategic Purpose: Start by asking, what do you want to accomplish with the feedback? To move beyond satisfaction surveys, focus on asking your members to share insights about the moving parts of your organization and how you can exceed their expectations.

2 Collect Member Feedback: This type of applied research is driven by the need to reach a specific, practical objective, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Even the most systematic approaches must be based upon asking the right questions, the right way. Too often, questions added to an existing feedback tool don't allow for the maximum potential in informing club decisions.

3 Analyze Data: By going beyond descriptive data, analysis can assess the face-value meaning of data (i.e., level of satisfaction) while understanding implied insights behind the data. Asking the right questions and leveraging advanced analysis techniques often reveal the reasons for members' behaviors and actions.

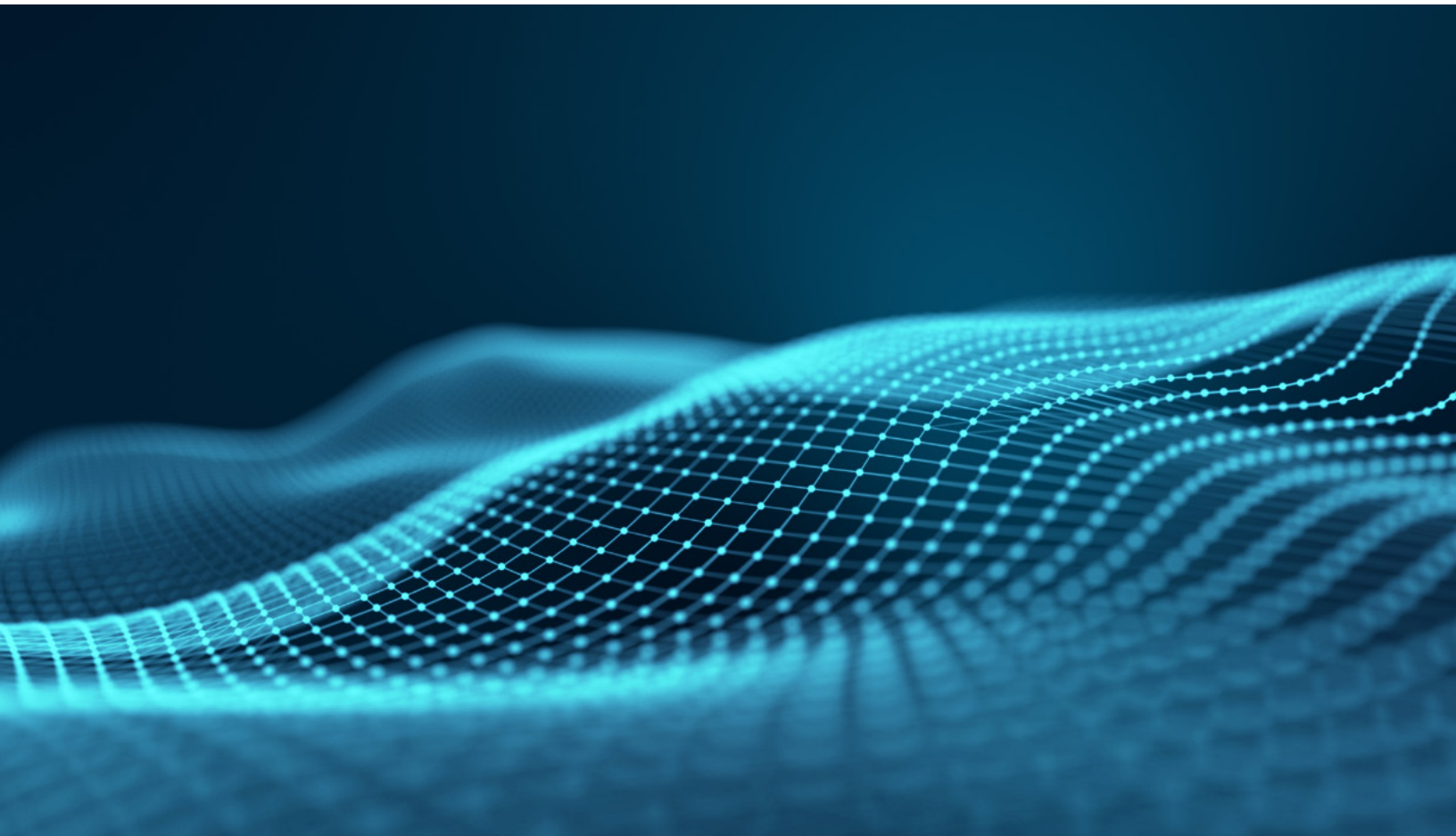
4 Inform Actions: Ultimately, you need data that informs your club's decisions, not drives them. In clubs, governance and management insights are critical to inform actions, and pairing these with member insights to create the right data-informed strategy is crucial.

Traditionally, member feedback has been focused on gathering, learning, and applying the data to pursue operational outcomes. However, moving into a data collection model beyond simply gathering opinions about past experiences is a genuine opportunity for member surveys and feedback to inform club strategy.

Pivoting Toward Feedback Opportunities to Leverage Member Insights

Member feedback is more than annual surveys to collect opinions, it is the fundamental building block to meeting and exceeding expectations. But turning feedback into accurate information is accomplished by more than analyzing survey results. It is pairing data with management's understanding as leadership experience is invaluable in sifting through the various sources of information to determine operational outcomes. Ultimately, feedback provides a strategic opportunity to supplement current knowledge by delving deeper into the thinking of your members.

**But how do you collect data and, more importantly,
how do you integrate results into your club's
ongoing operations?**



Exceeding
Member
Expectations



Unlocking the True Potential of Member Surveys

Satisfaction: traditionally identified as annual or semi-annual, satisfaction surveys to assess the various areas of the club serve an essential role in identifying opportunities for improvement.

Up to 73% of data goes unused for analytics, even as businesses talk about big data, using technology to capture more data, and acknowledging the value of this information.¹

Strategic direction: these surveys inform the strategic process and direction of the club. Informed by focus groups and listening sessions, strategic surveys turn identified themes into questions to assess potential strategic paths.

Pulse: shorter and more frequent surveys that allow clubs to understand information collected more regularly than annual surveys. Pulse surveys typically measure the same metric over time and at regular intervals.

Real-time: live review data collection points throughout the club that request members provide immediate feedback concerning their interactions. When partnered with other operational data, these advanced data collection techniques effectively identify trends before they become a problem (or a lost opportunity).

There is a tendency to attempt to accomplish more than one of the above with each survey. After all, members don't want to complete more surveys, do they? That's just it – it depends on your members, and how a club shares the value and utility of collected information. Members are often more than willing to exchange their thoughts and opinions if they see the direct benefit of sharing them. If you have used previously collected data and communicated its use, members are more apt to engage, knowing that their voice can make an impact.

¹[Up to 73 Percent of Company Data Goes Unused for Analytics. Here's How to Put It to Work](#)

Leveraging Satisfaction Impact Assessments to Support Club Strategy

Turning member feedback into insights sounds relatively simple. Collect the data, analyze it, and leverage the information to make data-informed decisions. But how do we go from the current model of descriptive data to capitalize on the promise of data? It starts by thinking about the true potential of data, especially as it relates to member satisfaction.

Current practices typically start by examining touchpoint satisfaction (i.e., 3.7 out of 5) to determine which touchpoints are ranked lowest and then course correct to increase these ratings. Heat maps allow clubs to decide which areas need attention based upon overall rankings. These comparisons can be found on different member profiles or even how a club performs over time. Benchmarking takes data to the next level by adding context – not only do you know how you are performing against other internal areas, but how they compare to comparative averages.

Using these methodologies allows a club to assess which areas are performing below or above expectations. However, are these areas critical to a club? To answer this question, GGA's Satisfaction Impact Assessment (SIA) takes standard satisfaction data and further assesses which touchpoints have the most significant potential to impact club satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The primary goal of the SIA is to leverage satisfaction survey data to assess which touchpoints contribute to customer dissatisfaction, enhance overall satisfaction, directionally impact both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the level of impact that increased touchpoint satisfaction can have. By examining the structure of touchpoints, this assessment creates a detailed understanding of which touchpoints are most important and the specific areas where improvement should be emphasized. The SIA revolutionizes how we think and look at service satisfaction by categorizing each touchpoint into one of four categories. This classification is not based on explicit performance, but their impact on overall satisfaction and how much, or how little, each touchpoint impacts satisfaction.

The Advantage of New Approaches

Four Categories of the Strategic Impact Assessment

Level 1 – Critical

Level 1 attributes are frustration-generating areas that should be further examined to understand what drives member dissatisfaction and how resources can be deployed to address these issues. Members see these as areas of critical emphasis moving forward, either by revising the member experience or ensuring ongoing quality given their importance to overall member satisfaction.

Level 2 - Influential

Level 2 attributes are areas of the club that have been identified throughout the SIA analysis process as being of distinct interest. While these club areas are not of immediate concern based upon the analysis, the underlying data structure indicates they serve a special role in the member experience, and clubs should monitor their overall satisfaction ratings.

Level 3 – Monitor

Level 3 attributes directly influence overall member satisfaction, both positively and negatively. Touchpoints falling into this category need to be regularly monitored through ongoing club efforts as these areas can directly increase or decrease overall member satisfaction based upon their performance.

Level 4 – Asset

Level 4 attributes generally perform well and create excitement for your club. These are not seen as less important; instead, they should be highlighted and commended for their role in satisfying your members' needs. While no club areas should ever be ignored as classifications can always change, these touchpoints encompass areas not appearing in the first three categories.

“Research is to see what everybody has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.” –A. Szent-Gyorgyi




How Medinah Country Club Leveraged the Results of These Next-level Insights



The primary reason for implementing SIA methodology is to help management deploy their resources in the most effective manner.

Our client, Medinah Country Club, wanted to supplement their understanding of member satisfaction to identify how limited resources could be deployed to impact member satisfaction. When examining the initial satisfaction data of its Oasis dining outlet, members identified the most opportunity for improvement in the frequency of menu change, timeliness of service, healthy menu selection, and overall menu selection. When compared to other areas of the Oasis, it was clear that these were the greatest areas of opportunity, which was only confirmed when looking at comparatives outside of Medinah Country Club.

However, the SIA results told a more nuanced story of these operational opportunities. Further analysis found that unlike other areas of the Oasis, only timeliness of service was an area that could influence overall satisfaction negatively without having a positive influence if rated highly.



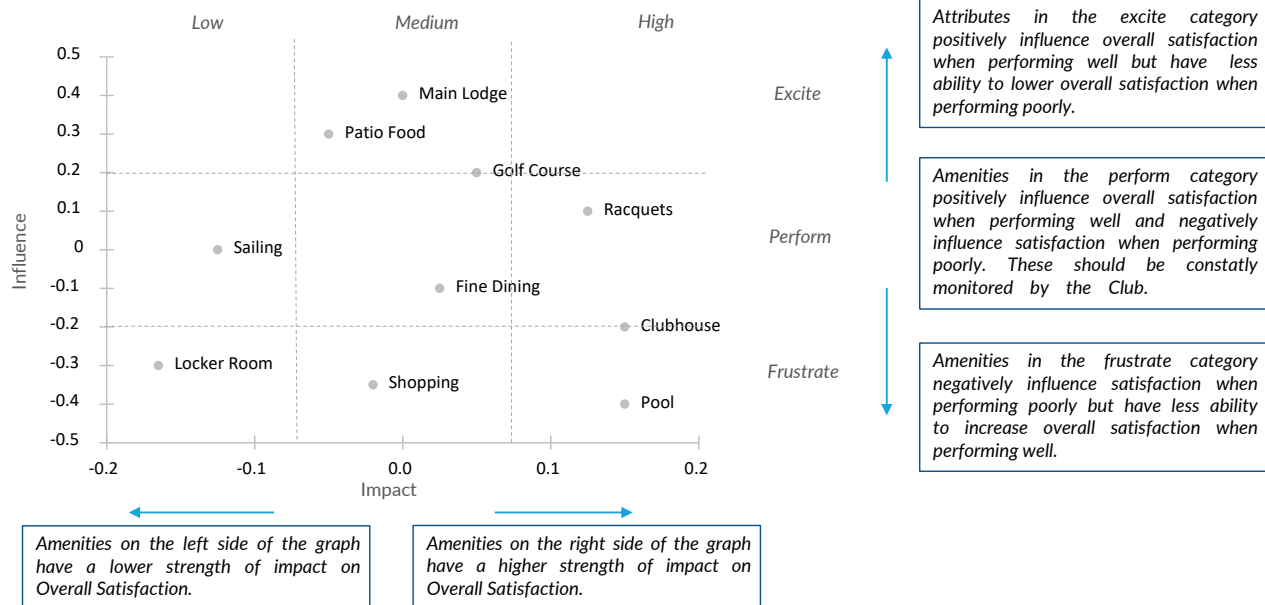
“Historically, our club considered additional investment based on member satisfaction scores. By delving deeper into member feedback with this new methodology, we achieved a clearer understanding of where further investment should be directed. The strategic value of insights garnered through the analysis of member satisfaction provides management and boards tangible evidence to support their decisions.”

–Robert Sereci, CCM, GM/COO, Medinah Country Club

These results indicate that timely food and beverage service is a core consideration of membership as members don't see it as a differentiator but a club attribute that simply needs to meet their expectations. This is where the capabilities of the SIA emerge to identify nuanced differences between touchpoints to determine which areas are of the greatest importance. The remaining touchpoints of menu change frequency, healthy menu selection and overall menu selection were all identified as touchpoints that could positively and negatively influence satisfaction based upon their ratings. However, they only had a moderate level of impact on overall satisfaction – meaning that even if overall touchpoint satisfaction increased, it would have minimal effect on overall member satisfaction. Considering that a high-touch club such as Medinah can have hundreds of customer interaction points, identifying these differences allowed their team to focus on those interactions that impact overall satisfaction significantly.

Throughout the analysis of the entire club, similar scenarios emerged – areas of initial concern were relegated to lower levels of importance so emphasis could be placed in other, higher priority areas of the club while other areas of potential concern emerged. By examining the complexity of member satisfaction, each touchpoint was placed into one of four categories (critical, asset, influential and monitor) to identify the greatest opportunities. An example of these higher priorities are shown in the SIA output below.

Strategic Impact Assessment – Sample Outcome



The Satisfaction Impact Assessment examines satisfaction data to understand the potential positive and negative influence that each area of the club has on overall member satisfaction. Through this analysis, touchpoints are classified into one of three areas: excite, perform, or frustrate. Touchpoints also fall into specific impact zones to indicate their strength of impact on overall satisfaction so leaders can target those areas of greatest impact. Additional SIA steps examine all touchpoints, and their potential impact on overall satisfaction, to determine appropriate categorization. This is a sample outcome and is not reflective of the outcomes from Medinah Country Club.



Delivering on the Promise of Data-informed Decision Making

Ultimately, club decisions are increasingly informed by member insights, but getting there will take time. While there is no singular approach that every club should take given inherent differences between organizations, there are fundamental processes and opportunities available to every club.

From rethinking the importance of data in strategic planning to how data is collected and analyzed using advanced methodologies, every club has the same opportunity to understand members and exceed their expectations.

Insight 1 – Strategy Leading Outreach

Too often, we don't let the data tell us the most important things. For instance, how likely are members to share their experiences? How satisfied are they with their club? How easy is it to enjoy their club?

Regardless of what a club needs strategic insight into, examining these three questions is a significant first step to thinking beyond satisfaction. To answer these questions, clubs should consider the following:

- ◆ **The Net Promoter Score** examines the overall customer experience and focuses on understanding the potential for growth for a club.
- ◆ **The Customer Effort Score** assesses how much effort a member has to exert to use the facilities and services of the club (i.e., ease of use).
- ◆ **The Customer Satisfaction Score** examines overall satisfaction with a club and is the comprehensive view that every leader needs of their membership.

Insight 2 - Asking the Right Questions

Receiving effective feedback from members is more than asking questions; it's ensuring you leverage existing information to ask the right questions and then analyze them with the proper technique. Every question is not designed and structured the same way, and while it might not be noticeable, having the right partner who knows how to get the most out of your members is imperative. Creating the right questions starts with spending

The Path To Rethinking Data

time speaking with and listening to your members in a structured format such as through focus groups or listening sessions. By creating an environment where members see their opinions being heard, surveys are more dynamic and investigate areas outside traditional views on what might be necessary. Questions that members respond to should take on new emphasis in trying to understand the stated and hidden meaning of opinions. With the time constraints in today's environment, efforts should focus on collecting valuable insights as efficiently as possible.

Insight 3 – Data Informing Strategy

The rallying cry has been to be data-driven, to let the data guide your decision-making. Instead, think about the goal as being data-informed. Data is merely an important tool in your toolbox, and the collective knowledge of management and governance/boards should always be consulted. We don't let data drive the decisions; we use insights from data to help inform our next steps to make the best decisions possible. From a strategic standpoint, this means creating additional insights and finding new ways to differentiate your club and your value proposition, and ultimately driving its success.



The Strategic Power of Member Feedback

It's normal in any business to want to maintain the status quo. It's comfortable, it's safe, and it's easier than making changes. That kind of thinking has cost many companies their position at the top of their categories – think Kodak, Blockbuster, Polaroid, and Sears. You assume that since it's worked for you in the past, it will work for you in the future. In reality, the status quo only works for so long. If you're going to grow, you must use member feedback to your advantage. And if the methodology used to understand your members is pushing the limits of what you have done in the past, you're probably onto something big. At the end of the day, you can have data without information, but you cannot have information without data.

If you would like to learn more about unlocking the strategic power of member feedback at your club to grow membership, lower costs, and improve member satisfaction, let's have a conversation about how GGA Partners can assist you.

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