

2015 OBFS Transparency Initiative Survey: Executive Summary

Overview

The 2015 OBFS Transparency Initiative Survey was conducted in the spring of 2015 by the Office of Business and Financial Services (OBFS) at the University of Illinois, to better understand customer and staff perceptions of the transparency initiative undertaken by OBFS. The UIC Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) assisted with the survey.

The original frame sample comprised OBFS customers, divided into two groups – business managers (BMGs) and others, and OBFS staff. All business managers were included in the final sample, as were a randomly selected sample of 6,000 non-business manager customers (non-BMGs) and OBFS staff, resulting in a final sample of 6,677 potential respondents. A single questionnaire was developed for the study, but the wording of each question was customized for staff respondents versus customer respondents, and data were collected by means of an online survey.

Of the 6,677 to whom the initial survey invitation was sent, 900 completed the questionnaire, for an overall response rate of 13.3%. However, when asked about the OBFS unit with which they work most often, 284 customers indicated that they do not work with OBFS at all, and 6 did not respond to this question. As a result, these 290 customers did not proceed to rate OBFS as a whole or its units and exited the questionnaire. This effectively reduced the total number responding to the rating questions to 610.

Results: Ratings of OBFS as a whole

Highlights of the results are presented below with more detailed results available in the full report.

Generally, OBFS staff rate various aspects more positively than do OBFS customers. On a few aspects, non-BMGs provided more positive ratings than did BMGs.

Satisfaction with general level of transparency. On a scale ranging from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied), the mean rating given by all customers and OBFS staff to the question asking about general satisfaction with the current level of transparency in OBFS is 2.7. This rating lies between “Not very satisfied” and “Moderately satisfied,” and is closer to “Moderately satisfied.” Consistent with this, the majority of the respondents—46.2%—selected “Moderately satisfied” as their response, while only 15.1% selected very or extremely satisfied.

- OBFS staff had a higher satisfaction level with the current level of transparency in OBFS (mean =2.8), followed by non-BMGs (mean=2.7), with BMGs having the lowest mean rating (mean = 2.5).

Satisfaction with specific aspects relating to transparency. Respondents were asked to rate specific aspects related to transparency including receipt of information from OBFS, response speed and consistency, performance in tracking and measuring customer satisfaction, accessibility of OBFS staff, transaction steps and processes, information and clarity of OBFS policies, commitment of OBFS to transparency, and the extent to which transparency will help customers. The points below summarize the ratings on these items:

- All respondents considered together provided moderately positive ratings to items asking about the ease of being able to get in touch with OBFS staff when needed and the speed and consistency with which OBFS responds to customers. On 5-point scales ranging from 1 (least positive rating) to 5 (most positive rating), ratings ranged from 3.1 to 3.3.
 - Ratings for OBFS staff ranged from 3.4 to 3.6 on these items; for non-BMGs from 3.1 to 3.4, and for BMGs from 2.7 to 3.0.
- All respondents considered together provided moderate to high positive ratings on items asking about the ease of getting information from OBFS, and the ease of getting a status from OBFS about transactions or inquiries. On 5-point scales ranging from 1 (least positive rating) to 5 (most positive rating), ratings ranged from 3.3 to 3.5.
 - Ratings for OBFS staff ranged from 3.6 to 3.9 on these items; for both BMGs and non-BMGs mean ratings were 3.4 for both items.
- And, all respondents considered together also provided moderate to high positive ratings on items asking about ease of finding information on OBFS policies and ease of understanding the information (mean rating = 3.4 for both items).
 - Ratings for OBFS staff and non-BMGs were not very different (range 3.3 to 3.6), and means for BMGs were not much lower with mean ratings of 3.4 on both items.
- A sizeable number of respondents were not aware that OBFS tracks & measure customer service interactions, as only 280 respondents selected a substantive response to this item. Considering those who did select a substantive response, the average rating indicated that OBFS performed less than moderately well in tracking & measuring customer service interactions (mean = 2.7). About 74% of these respondents indicated that OBFS does not share these results with customers.
- Ratings were somewhat lower on items specifically asking about transparency.
 - All respondents considered together generally agreed that transparency would help OBFS customers (mean = 3.9; 70.4% of respondents indicate it will help a lot or a great deal). There was not much difference in the mean rating for this item between OBFS staff (mean = 3.9) and BMGs (mean = 4.0), while the mean rating for non-BMGs was 3.7.
 - All respondents considered together also think that the software tools used by OBFS to aid in transaction processing are moderately useful (mean = 3.2); although OBFS staff think they are more useful than do BMGs and non-BMGs (mean = 3.5 for staff versus 3.1 for BMGs and non-BMGs).
 - However, ratings are lower when respondents are asked how well OBFS trains customers on how to use the software tools (mean = 2.9), with BMGs and non-BMGs providing lower ratings than OBFS staff (mean = 3.2 for staff versus 2.8 for BMGs and non-BMGs).
 - Several questions asked respondents about the extent to which transparency is prevalent within OBFS. This included questions about the extent to which OBFS has defined specific goals related to transparency, the number of OBFS operation areas in which transparency exists, the extent to

which transparency is a part of the OBFS work culture, and the extent to which transparency is emphasized in the training OBFS provides to its customers. On these items, all respondents considered together provide ratings that are moderately positive or slightly lower (range = 2.8 to 3.0).

- OBFS staff ratings on these items tend to be higher (range of ratings = 3.2 to 3.3) than among non-BMGs (range of ratings = 2.6 to 2.9) or among BMGs (range of ratings = 2.5 to 2.8). Thus while OBFS staff ratings on these items are moderately positive, customer ratings tend to be less positive.