Customer survey

Customers answer questions about our product performance, support and data quality

Property Insight customers are pleased with the performance and functionality of TitlePoint and TitlePoint Xpress. Data and image quality ratings are improving when compared to historical levels, and customers applaud the support they receive from Client Services and their Account Manager.

These are among the findings of a customer survey conducted by Property Insight this past summer. Over the course of two months, in-depth interviews were completed with 165 customers representing 104 office locations in 14 states. The findings will help guide

Fast facts about the survey

The survey was conducted in customer offices in the summer of 2010 by two-person interviewing teams.

■ In all, 165 customers representing 104 offices in 14 states were interviewed.

■ Survey results are being used to guide ongoing efforts to improve product performance, customer support, data quality improvement and customer communication initiatives.

■ The survey also highlighted a need to improve starter image delivery, and the performance of Alpha Search in TitlePoint Xpress.

■ The survey validated a need to shift technology priorities to bring TitlePoint's full functionality to Chicagoland counties.

■ We learned that ongoing, on-site training is invaluable, as it improves product performance by helping users leverage the full functionality of the products.

■ We also learned that our customers are generous with their time and are willing to provide straightforward, candid answers to our questions.

Property Insight's business priorities, technology strategy and operations planning for years to come.

"We are pleased with the feedback," said John Walsh, Property Insight President. "The findings represent an improvement over the past and the survey reaffirms that we're focused on the right things."

Still, there is the belief shared by all managers that we spoke with that Property Insight can do better.

"We are re-doubling our efforts in some areas," said John, "and we are impressed that there are new areas for us to focus on, such as improving the ability to locate starter records, and bringing full TitlePoint and plant automation to new markets, like Chicago."

In this issue of Insights, we explore what we've learned in our conversations with customers.

The need for speed

At a time when customers are being pressured to produce orders faster and with fewer resources, speed is paramount. When it comes to software applications, speed isn't the only feature, but it's generally at the top of the list in terms of importance.

Understanding the need for speed has driven the company's plant

Speed is a key indicator of product performance

search technology strategy, which is embodied in TitlePoint and TitlePoint Xpress. Measuring whether Property Insight was keeping up with customer expectations for speed was a key element of the customer survey.

A majority of customers we interviewed rated both products favorably for speed in searching, filtering search results and printing. It was gratifying to the applications development team that their efforts were noted. But some customers still had issues with performance, particularly with retrieving images and with printing, which means the quest for speed must continue.

"Performance can improve. In fact, it has to improve with every new product release," said Ron Free, Property Insight Executive Vice President.

"Emphasizing performance also motivates us to continually evaluate new technology."

Don Livezey, who directs the Product Management Office, agrees: "We represent a small cog in our customer's overall process, but when they use us we need to be quick. So our mission is to continue to improve the performance, and not degrade it with new functionality," he said.

Hitting the right buttons

Software applications should complement, not compete with the way you work. A well-designed software application is a reflection how well your title plant provider understands your workflow and your business.

Property Insight collects input on product enhancements and fixes through a number of customer touch-points: TitlePoint and TitlePoint Xpress users provide feedback through product managers, account managers, Client Services and the Help Desk. Product functionality even pops up in executive discussions. Every conversation is documented and recorded in a database from which enhancements, changes and fixes are prioritized and scheduled. In turn, the products are updated three to four times each year.

One interesting finding from the survey: One in four users report that they do not receive notice of new releases. This doesn't surprise Jim Violette, who manages technology development for Property Insight.

"New product releases do not require a software download; they automatically appear in the product," said Jim. "And every release is thoroughly tested, so new versions should not adversely affect software

performance. Not all customers will notice changes we make unless there is a workflow change."

Customers were asked to rate the various types of searches each product can perform, as well as each product's overall functionality. One revealing and gratifying finding: More than eight in ten users say that TitlePoint and TitlePoint Xpress "… complement the way they process orders."

Still, things could be better, believes Lisa Roessler, TitlePoint Product Manager.

"It was apparent from a number of interviews that customers don't understand TitlePoint's full capabilities," she said. "We have to work harder and smarter to help customers get the most out of the product."

The survey also reinforced the need to improve some specific functions in the product.

"We knew prior to the survey that the Alpha Index was an issue for TitlePoint Xpress users," said Nikki Bell, Southeast Regional Vice President. "In that respect, the things we believe are pain-points for customers were validated, and a solution is at hand."

Quality is fundamental

Not long after Property Insight was launched in 2002, Property Insight commissioned IBM to conduct a survey of customers to identify technology needs. But customers had more than technology on their minds… data quality was, as Nikki calls it, a "pain point."

Improving data quality became a priority and was manifest in strategic initiatives like the Data Discrepancy Program, where customers were incentivized to report plant and image errors to regional plant operations.

Since the 2002 study and thanks to programs like the Data Discrepancy Program, data quality, as rated by Property Insight customers, has improved.

In the 2010 survey, overall scores for data and image quality were very good. Most customers rated it as "good to excellent" and one in three customers say they believe data quality is improving. Still, errors persist; half of those interviewed report periodically finding errors in plant postings.

Participation in the Data Discrepancy Program is growing: 43% of

Survey covers data quality and customer service

TitlePoint users and 54% of TitlePoint Xpress users say they participate. Of those, a majority gave the program high marks for its effectiveness.

"Since the program started, we have seen a steady increase in customer participation," said Erik Bauer, who manages the National Discrepancy Program. "We see it as a core element of our data and image quality improvement program, so we're stepping up efforts to make it easier for customers to participate and submit discrepancies. We're also increasing our capacity to handle what we expect will be more volume," he added.

Will Property Insight ever perfect data quality? "Unlikely, due to the sheer volume of records we process every month," said Ron Free. "But we'll never stop trying."

More communication wanted

Customer service and consistent, two-way communication are core business values at Property Insight, so the survey also explored how well customers believe they are being supported.

Ratings for the quality of support provided by Help Desk and Technical Support, account managers and management were all favorable. Scores for problem-solving, responding to inquiries and training were similarly high. If anything, customers report they want more.

"We're making a greater effort to visit customers on site," reported Josh Pelleymounter, National Support/QA Manager, a daunting task given that customer locations span many states.

"The survey points out that customers value that time we spend with them," continued Josh. "We always manage to improve how the software performs and we leave them understanding more about how to use product features and capabilities."

With respect to communication, the survey pointed that Property Insight has to work harder to deliver a consistent message. An unexpectedly high proportion of customers reported not receiving newsletters, like this one. In the months to come, we will be taking steps to make Insights available to more customers via more channels.

We thrive on feedback

Reflecting on what he learned from the survey, Andrew Wells, TitlePoint Xpress Product Manager, offered the following: "It's amazing learning what we have accomplished and how important every department is to the customer."

Nikki Bell added: "I was surprised at how honest and detailed customers were. They gave us their undivided attention and very detailed feedback."

In fact, every manager we interviewed expressed a profound appreciation for how generous customers were with their time as they participated in the survey.

"We're listening and we're making changes," said Andrew. "Where our products are today reflects your (customers) feedback."

"You (customers) are the reason we are here," echoed Deb Horn, Vice President of Sales. "Your needs, goals and professional accomplishments are what drive us. We're here to help you achieve those in the best way possible."

Ron Free summed up Property Insight's commitment to ongoing dialog and feedback with the following comment: "By doing surveys like this we are showing that we care. We may not always have the perfect answer for the customer – but we have an answer."

In Your Own Words

"[Need] more site visits for training on enhancement/changes, understanding how data is entered in the system so we know how to search." - TitlePoint user in Central California

"Continue to improve services, try to implement suggestions. If you cannot implement suggestions then follow up with explanation why. Continued communication is important." - TitlePoint user in Southern California

"Continue to improve the product. The better the product, the better our relationship will be." - TitlePoint user in Southern California

"[What I like best about TitlePoint Xpress is] it's a one stop shop. In other programs like [product name], you have to go into a different system to pull copies." - TitlePoint Xpress user in Florida

"We could benefit from additional training. I wasn't able to absorb everything all at once. There's a lot to become familiar with." - TitlePoint user in the Midwest

Thank you for your interest