

Identifying Gaps between Importance and Satisfaction to Identify Extension Clients' Needs¹

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This is the third EDIS document in a series of three on using importance-performance analysis to prioritize Extension resources, and it covers gap analysis as a means to understand a client's perceptions and rank Extension priorities. Gap analysis is one of two ways to analyze IPA data. The other articles in this series can be found at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_series_importance-performance_analysis.

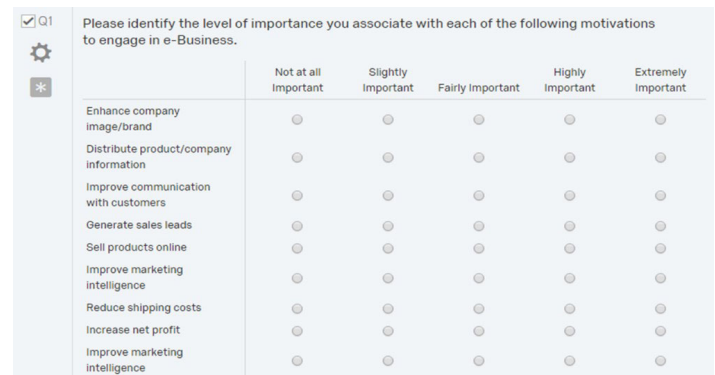
Overview

Importance-performance analysis, or IPA, is used to gauge how people feel about the quality of service they have received and certain characteristics of a place, issue, or program (Martilla & James, 1977; Sinischalchi, Beale, & Fortuna, 2008). Extension professionals can use IPA to make decisions and prioritize resources by identifying the level of importance and satisfaction clients associate with specific attributes of a program or facility. It is important to identify attributes with the highest mean importance scores and the lowest mean satisfaction score, but separate consideration of mean importance or satisfaction scores is not sufficient to make resource allocation or communication decisions (Levenburg & Magal, 2005). To make informed decisions regarding resource allocation or the design of communication messages pertaining to specific issues, we should consider a joint analysis of both importance and satisfaction scores by assessing the gaps.

As described in the first publication in this series (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc250>), *importance* is defined as the perceived value or significance felt by a clientele for an attribute of interest (Sinischalchi et al., 2008). *Performance* is defined as the judgement made by a clientele about the extent to which that attribute of interest is successful (Levenburg & Magal, 2005). Operationally, *satisfaction* with an attribute of interest is used to define performance.

Collecting IPA Data

IPA data may be collected in numerous ways. The goal is to obtain a numerical measure of both satisfaction (i.e. performance) and importance for each attribute of interest.



	Not at all important	Slightly important	Fairly important	Highly important	Extremely important
Enhance company image/brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distribute product/company information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve communication with customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generate sales leads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sell products online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve marketing intelligence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce shipping costs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase net profit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve marketing intelligence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 1. Importance statements for motivations to engage in e-business.

Credits: Adapted from "Applying importance-performance analysis to evaluate e-business strategies among small firms" by N. M. Levenburg and S. R. Magal, 2005, *Journal of Marketing*, 47(10), p. 38.

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