



## Safelite's Three-Step Strategy toward Service

BY TOM FEENEY, PRESIDENT & CEO  
SAFELITE AUTOGLASS®

Consider the last time you needed automotive repair or vehicle glass replacement... for the average driver, it's not a service needed frequently, but when it is, chances are that you dread it.

Will I be overcharged? Will the body shop sell me on something I don't need?

The fact is that the automotive repair industry has a pretty bad reputation. And consumers really know very little about their needs to make an informed decision.

Rather than viewing this as a challenge, senior leaders at Safelite AutoGlass®, the nation's largest provider of vehicle glass repair and replacement services, saw it as an opportunity to differentiate the brand based on a commitment to customer delight.

***Here's how we made it happen....***

### **Step #1: Change the Conversation**

Safelite AutoGlass had long used the Customer Service Index (CSI) measurement, and results were strong—often around 98 percent approval ratings.

In 2005, senior leaders began to research a better, more insightful solution than the telephone system that had been in use. That year, “The Ultimate Question” by Fred Reichheld was published, introducing the “Net Promoter Score” (NPS) method, co-developed by Bain and Satmetrix.

This kicked off a revolution at Safelite.

The NPS methodology is based on the fundamental perspective that every company's customers can be divided into three categories: Promoters, Passives, and Detractors, by asking one simple question: “How likely is it that you would recommend Safelite AutoGlass to a friend or colleague?” Tracking these groups gives a clear measure of your company's performance through the customers' eyes.

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Customers respond on a 0-to-10 point rating scale and are categorized as follows:

- **Promoters** (score 9-10)  
are loyal enthusiasts who will keep buying and refer others, fueling growth.
- **Passives** (score 7-8)  
are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who are vulnerable to competitive offerings.
- **Detractors** (score 0-6)  
are unhappy customers who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word-of-mouth.

To calculate your company's NPS, take the percentage of customers who are Promoters and subtract the percentage who are Detractors.

The idea of converting to NPS was intriguing to Safelite leaders for several reasons. First, the underpinnings of the ultimate question lie in referrals. Safelite's services cannot be sold to someone who does not have a specific need for vehicle glass repair or replacement, and the likelihood of a customer needing the service often is infrequent. Therefore, the business thrives on referrals.

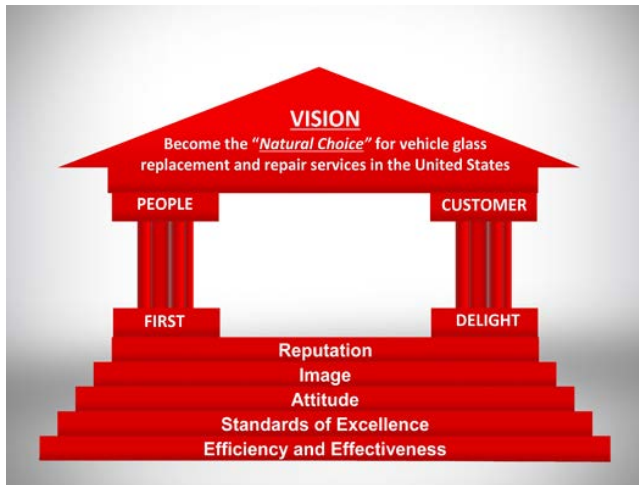
Second, switching to NPS allowed the company to start with a clean slate internally. The mentality had been that customer service was great... how could you really beat 98 percent CSI? Why bother changing?

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Safelite AutoGlass CEO & President Tom Feeny is proud of the Safelite image with their reputation for exceptional service.

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Safelite AutoGlass has a well-structured approach to achieving its vision of becoming the “Natural Choice” in their industry.

Finally, it allowed us to view customer service in a different light. Satisfaction was no longer acceptable. We had to delight customers in order to earn a “promoter.”

Safelite AutoGlass began testing NPS in 2006 and implemented it company-wide in 2007. Results were a shock to the company, which was used to the 98 percent CSI score. In 2007, NPS was in the mid-70s. While certainly not a terrible score, company leaders were concerned about the disparity. Embracing the Net Promoter Score would require a serious internal effort.

### Step #2: Invest in Talent

That internal effort translated to the need for a cultural transformation... beginning from top management to each and every employee.

There are countless studies linking customer service with employee engagement. But, how do you achieve that engagement? For us, it was implementing an integrated people strategy, led by the human resources department.

To ensure Safelite’s employees are able to deliver on our goal of customer delight, we developed a list of six core competencies, which clearly defines the company we want to be and the behaviors that will get us there.

Safelite’s Core Competencies include:

- **Live Our Values:** Do what’s right.
- **Think People First:** Recognize that having great people is the ultimate competitive advantage.
- **Have Passion for Creating Customer Delight:** Deliver optimal experience internally and externally.
- **Understand the Business (And Your Role in It):** Learn and apply position expertise and industry knowledge.
- **Be Innovative:** Think differently for better business results.
- **Drive for Extraordinary Results:** Show personal desire, energy and focus to succeed against high standards.

From there, we invested in training for 1,000+ of Safelite’s leaders. Consider this: Organizations are shadows of their leaders. Employees take their behavioral cues from what they see from leaders. If leaders yell and scream, they’ll take that cue. If leaders don’t care, they won’t either. When standing in the afternoon sunlight, a leader’s shadow looms much taller – leaders must carefully manage the shadow they cast on their staff. Therefore, Safelite’s training focused on leadership styles.

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Next, we rolled our philosophies out across the organization through our “People Pledge”:

- **You'll experience great leadership.** At Safelite, we strive for great leadership. You'll be treated with respect. You'll often be asked for your opinions and involved in decisions that affect your work. You'll understand the big picture and your role in it. You'll receive coaching and guidance to help you reach your full potential and you'll be recognized for your hard work in delivering extraordinary results.
- **We focus on you first.** Concentrating on our people is a key part of our business strategy. You'll have the tools, information, and resources to position you for success, along with support and opportunity for a rewarding and fulfilling career. At Safelite, we're powered by our people... you make the difference. When you succeed, we all succeed.
- **We hire top talent.** Having great people is what sets us apart from the rest. You'll work with smart people every day who will inspire you to be at your best. By bringing your ideas and applying your skills, you'll have endless opportunities to grow both personally and professionally.
- **You'll work in a caring culture.** We've got a strong set of values and a big heart... for our people, our customers, our environment, and the communities in which we live and work. We strive for a culture that will inspire you to achieve, not because you have to, but because you want to.



Investing in our people in this manner has helped us improve employee engagement, which is measured routinely throughout the year. As expected, NPS has increased in alignment with engagement.

### **Step #3: Realize Change is Constant**

Safelite AutoGlass has achieved phenomenal results in customer service and employee engagement; yet the journey is not over. Even though we've reached NPS and engagement scores, we continue to strive to find ways to enhance the customer experience.

In 2011, Safelite AutoGlass showed its commitment to becoming more customer centric by creating a new position dedicated to this objective. Renee Cacchillo, vice president of service delivery, focuses on delivering Safelite's vision and business goals by driving performance in the areas of customer service and labor management, partnering closely with many

business units to establish Safelite as a world-class service organization.

Under her direction, we are making many new strides ahead. In late 2012, Safelite AutoGlass added the Customer Effort Score to the Service Recovery survey to better understand what it's like to be in the customer shoes. Are we easy to work with or not so easy? This new question sounds simple, but it helps us understand if future customer programs really add value and if they are appreciated by our customers.

We are also focused on learning more from the data customers provide to Safelite and are developing analytical models that tell us what makes a measurable difference in the customer's experience and what drives that result. Is quality priority #1? Speed of service? Friendliness? Reliability? The more we learn

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from the information the customer has already provided us, the better Safelite and the customer experience will be.

After reflecting on the last five years, it's clear that for our frontline staff to put customers first, we have to put our people first by combining our focus on employee engagement and leadership development with a new definition of (and support for) customer delight.

### About the Author

In his 20-plus years with the company, Tom Feeney has been instrumental in establishing Safelite AutoGlass® as a national company and a well-known brand. Since joining Safelite® Group in 1988,

Feeney has held many positions within the organization and became president and CEO of Safelite® Group on July 1, 2008. He immediately introduced a new vision for Safelite supported by two core principles: People First and Customer Delight. His commitment to the company, its people and its customers had led to a 200 percent growth in profit since he became president. Tom blogs about customer service strategies at <http://blogsafelite.com>. ■



**Excellence in Customer Service is the way of life at Safelite AutoGlass.**

# Customer Commitment

SAFELITE AUTOGLASS ENSURES IT PUTS THE CUSTOMER FIRST AND ALWAYS

## The Five Bs of Customer Service

Among the training CSRs receive is an easy-to-remember system for remembering how to delight clients. We call it "The Five Bs":

1. Be Sure
2. Be Helpful
3. Be Sympathetic
4. Be Honest
5. Be Appreciative

## The Five Ts of Customer Service

Among the training technicians receive is an easy-to-remember system for remembering how to delight clients. We call it "The Five Ts":

1. **Time:** Call customers in advance to notify them of arrival time.
2. **Touch:** Shake hands, make eye contact and engage the customer.
3. **Technical excellence:** Doing it right the first time, every time.
4. **Talk:** Tell the customer what we're going to do and do it.
5. **Thanks:** Show appreciation for choosing Safelite®.



## Safelite's Customer Pledge

1. Your vehicle will receive a safe, high-quality installation by a certified technician.
2. We will fully protect your vehicle while performing the work.
3. Broken glass will be vacuumed from your vehicle.
4. We will clean your vehicle's exterior glass.
5. Our national warranty covers you no matter where you travel.

## Recent Awards

Just a few of Safelite's recent awards for customer service include:

- 2010 American Business Award's Best Contact Center – Executive Services Department
- 2011 Stevie – Best Use of Technology for Customer Service
- 2011 ICMI Global Call Center of the Year Awards Runner-up
- 2011 1to1 Media Customer Service Champion
- 2011 & 2012 Best in Biz: Customer Friendly Company, Silver Medalist
- 2011 International Service Excellence Award
- 2012 Stevie Silver Award for Sales & Customer Service: Customer Service Leader of the Year
- 2012 American Business Award Bronze-Level Award: Customer Service Team of the Year
- 2012 Customer Experience Excellence Award