

Customer satisfaction levels hit new high

Strong ratings from the finance and insurance sector boosted CSISG to 71.1 points in 2014

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SINGAPORE'S overall customer satisfaction levels hit a new high in 2014, even as the private education, tourism and food and beverage sectors recorded sharp falls.

The Institute of Service Excellence at the Singapore Management University (ISES) on Thursday said the overall satisfaction levels rose 0.6 per cent to 71.1 points in 2014, on the back of strong ratings from the finance and insurance sector.

It is the fourth consecutive year the Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) has shown an improvement, which

was mainly attributable to two measured sectors in the fourth quarter of 2014 – finance and insurance and healthcare.

In the fourth quarter of 2014, the finance and insurance sector rose 4.7 per cent to 72.4 points.

Within this sector, the life insurance sub-sector led with the largest year-on-year improvement, rising 11.4 per cent to 73.6 points.

Jeremy Soo, head of consumer banking group (Singapore) of DBS Bank, said: "In 2014, we have both expanded and further integrated our physical and electronic distribution channels to enable customers to transact seamlessly across multiple touch-points. We will continue to increase the number of access

points for our customers and improve the quality of their interaction with us."

DBS was one of the lenders included in the CSISG. It recorded a 5.4 per cent increase in customer satisfaction levels to 75.8 points last year.

The overall results were also buoyed by the healthcare sector. Its index climbed 1.6 per cent to 71 points year-on-year in Q4, lifted by ratings in polyclinics and specialised healthcare. The two sub-sectors scored 68.9 points (up 4.6 per cent) and 72.2 points (up 2.8 per cent), respectively.

ISES director Caroline Lim said: "The continued improvement is a positive indicator for Singapore's service competitiveness on a world stage. Similar

studies of customer satisfaction in other countries show that we are not far behind economies with traditionally strong service cultures, such as the United States and South Korea."

The CSISG, an annual benchmark of customer satisfaction, covers nine key economic sectors in Singapore. The index has a quarterly measure-and-release cycle, covering up to three industry sectors each time.

Of the nine sectors, five registered significantly lower year-on-year scores.

Private education recorded the sharpest decline with a score of 65.8 points in 2014, down 8.9 per cent. This was followed by tourism, food and beverage, retail and transport and logistics.

Two others – the info-communications and public education sectors – registered similar performances in 2014 compared with the year-ago period.

On a national level, tourist satisfaction fell in all four quarters of 2014.

"In each sub-sector where tourist responses were captured in the CSISG study, tourist ratings were a contributor, if not the primary driver, of poorer CSISG performance. 2014 marked the lowest tourist score at the national level since 2009," said Ms Lim, who added that external environmental factors such as the increasing appeal of neighbouring destinations and changing tourist profiles may have contributed to the fall.