October 2015

St Helier

Mystery Shopping

Report

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Key Findings

The average Customer Service score for the stores audited was 78%. This is marginally up on the score of 77% when compared with the sample in May 2015, 73% in October 2014, and 68% in October 2013. This score still falls a little short of the 80% target, set following the 2013 audit; but continues to be above the UK average of 77%.

For the first time no stores were placed in the lowest 'Poor' performing category and we continue to see an increase in the number of stores placed in the top 'outstanding' category; up from 9% in 2013, 13% in 2014, 16% in May to 21% in October 2015. In May 2015 three stores scored 100% for the first time. It is pleasing to see two different stores score top marks this time.

Apart from Shop First Impressions all of the other Sections measured involve interaction with staff. This emphasises just how important retail staff are in the delivery of the overall customer service experience.

'Product Knowledge' and the 'Member of Staff' section scores were outstanding; scoring above the 90% benchmark. The poorest performing area continues to fall within Selling Skills and in particular 'Additional Products' where the opportunity to 'up-sell' is being missed; this time the score dropping to below 20%.

The average scores for cafés has fallen back to Oct 2013 levels of 75% brought down a little by staff missing opportunities to offer 'Additional Food Purchases'. The average Café score is generally in line with the overall Town Centre experience.

The results suggest that customer service is improving and having a positive effect on the experience shoppers are receiving. This reflects well on the efforts stores are making to improve including investment in the Retail Ambassador programme which commenced in 2014.

Introduction

In October 2013 the Economic Development Department commissioned a local mystery shopping firm to undertake an audit of fifty five Town Centre stores to measure the Customer Service experience.

Additional audits were undertaken in October 2014, May 2015 and October 2015. The results allow the retail sector to:

1. Measure the Town Centre 'customer experience'
2. Monitor changes in performance over time
3. Identify areas of excellence
4. Identify areas requiring improvement

Reference to the 'period' in this report refers to the time from the first audit in October 2013 to the current one in October 2015.

Methodology

- This audit was commissioned by Jersey Business and carried out over the last two weeks in October 2015.
- A sample of sixty two Town Centre stores were audited in Oct 2015: 54 retailers and 8 cafes.
- With the exception of two stores the sample included the same stores as the 2013 and 2014 audits. In May 2015 a further 7 stores were included and they were also included in the Oct 2015 sample.
- The sample was selected to ensure a good geographical spread across the Town Centre and broken down into groups:
  - Small store (1-5 staff) - 35
  - Medium store (5-10 staff) - 22
  - Large store (>10 staff) - 5
- 8 of the sample were UK stores or franchises and 54 were local businesses.
- Half of the audit was carried out on a Saturday and the rest spread evenly from Monday to Friday.
- The audit was undertaken by 13 professional assessors using the same marking and appraisal system as for the previous audits.

Service Areas Reviewed

The audit reviewed three specific Areas; each split into Sections as shown below.

1. General Approach
    - First impressions
    - Acknowledgement
2. Service
    - Café (for selected)
    - The Member of Staff
    - The Check Out Process
3. Sales Opportunity
    - Establishing Needs
    - Product Knowledge
    - Customer Ordering
    - Selling Skills

Within each Section specific Topics were tested and these are show in the graphs displayed on the following pages.

Understanding the Scores

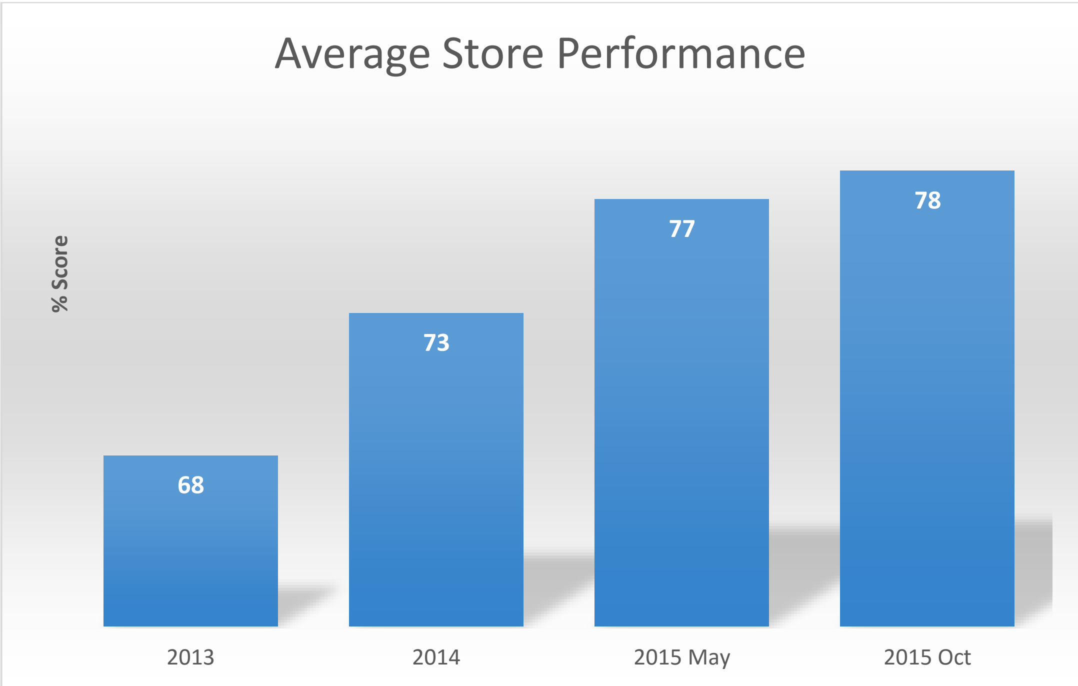
The audits are scored out of 100%. 100% would indicate outstanding customer service with all the areas covered successfully. 0% would indicate failure on every point measured.

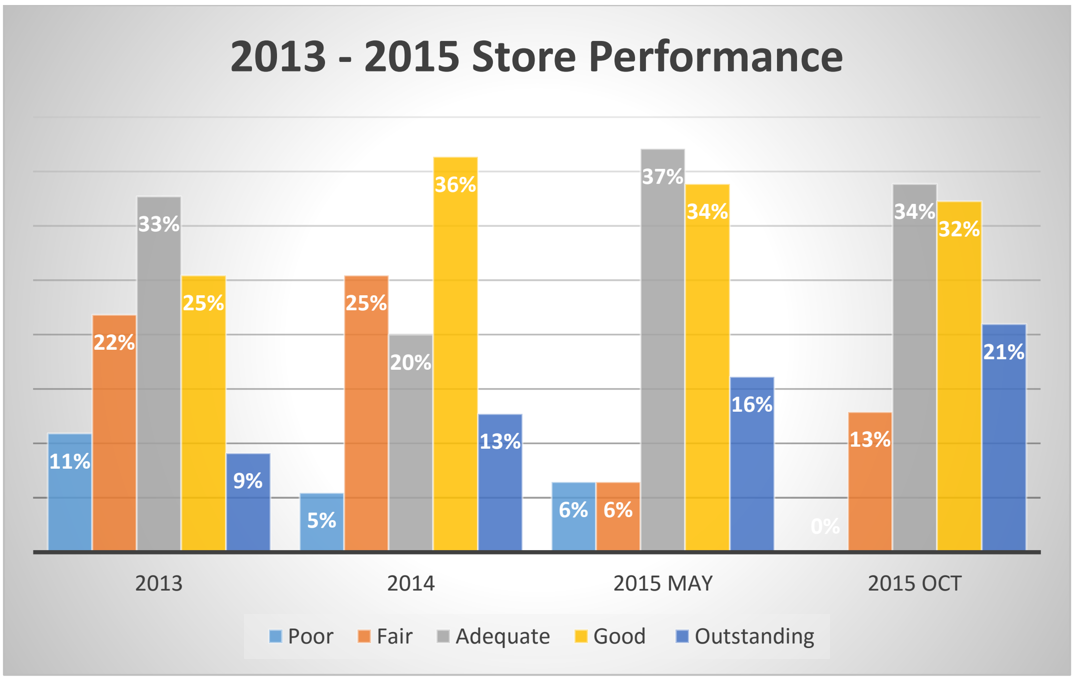
Score	Performance
0 – 40%	Poor
41 – 60%	Fair
61 – 80%	Adequate
81- 90%	Good
>90%	Outstanding

A target of above 80% was suggested as the benchmark for Jersey retailing following the 2013 audit.

October 2015 Performance

The average score was 78%; up 1% from May 2015, and up from 73% in 2014, and from 68% in 2013. This is a positive trend demonstrating improved levels of overall customer service performance.

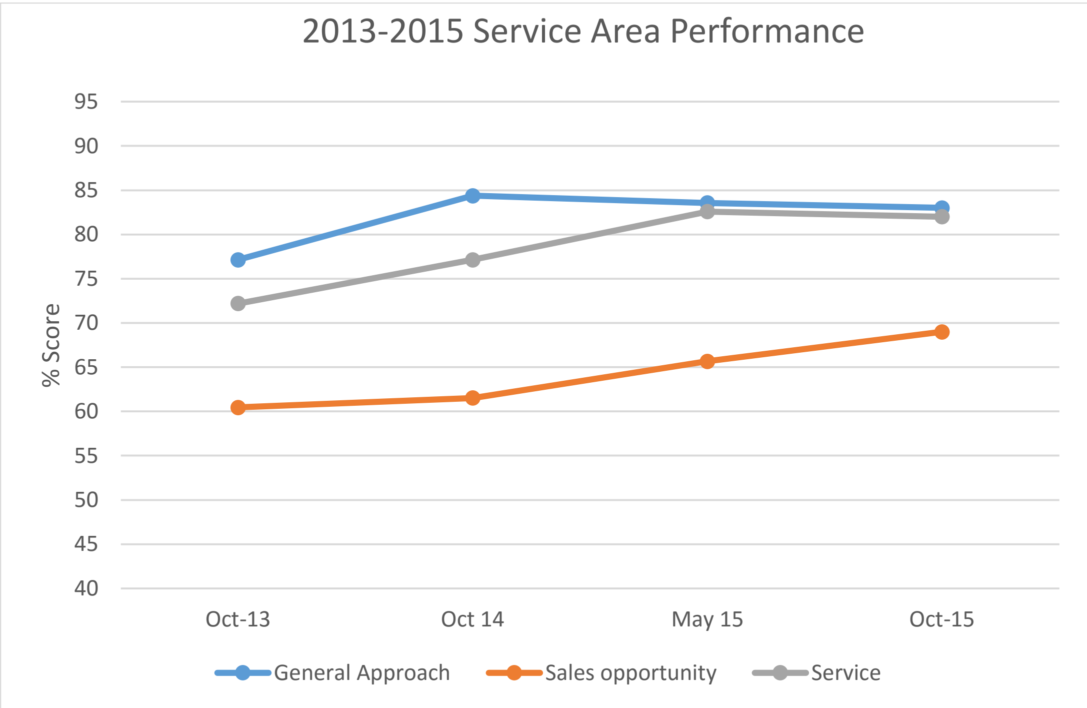




The results show that the range of scores from the poorest to the best performing stores is narrowing. It is especially encouraging that for the first time no stores were placed in the lowest ‘poor’ performing category. Particularly notable Oct 2015 results:

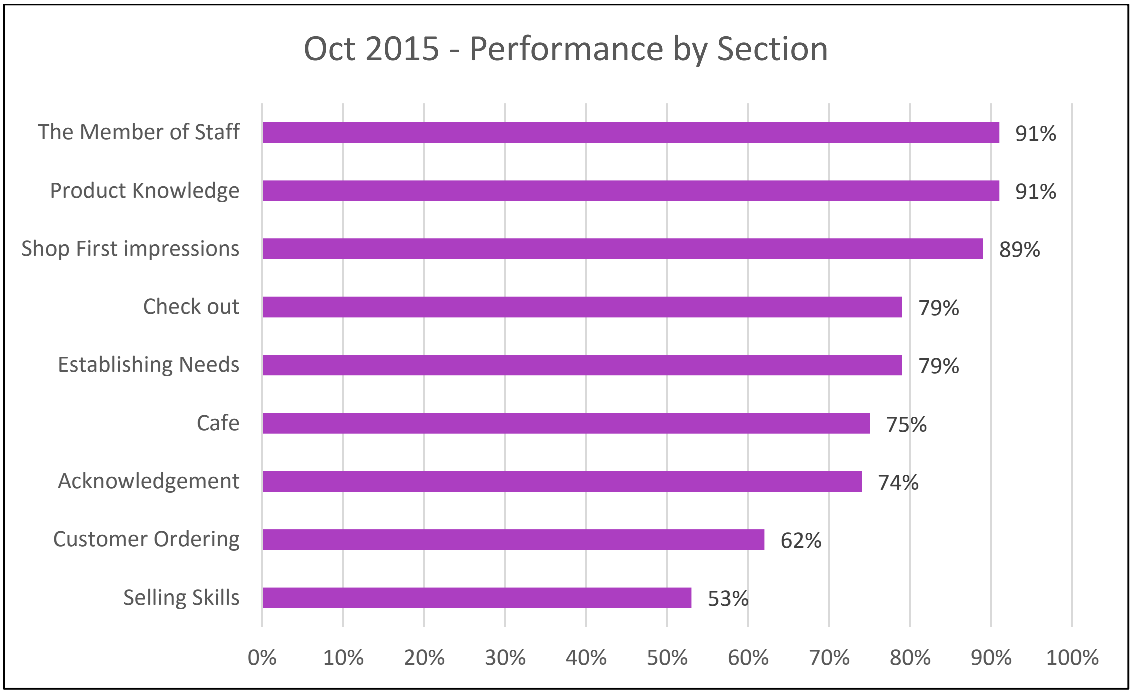
- 47% of stores were classified as ‘fair’ or ‘adequate’.
- 53% of stores were classified as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’.
- The number of ‘outstanding’ performing stores continues to grow from 9% of the sample in 2013 to 21% of the sample in Oct 2015.
- The number of ‘poor’ performing stores has fallen from 11% of the sample in 2013 to 0% in Oct 2015.

Performance by Area



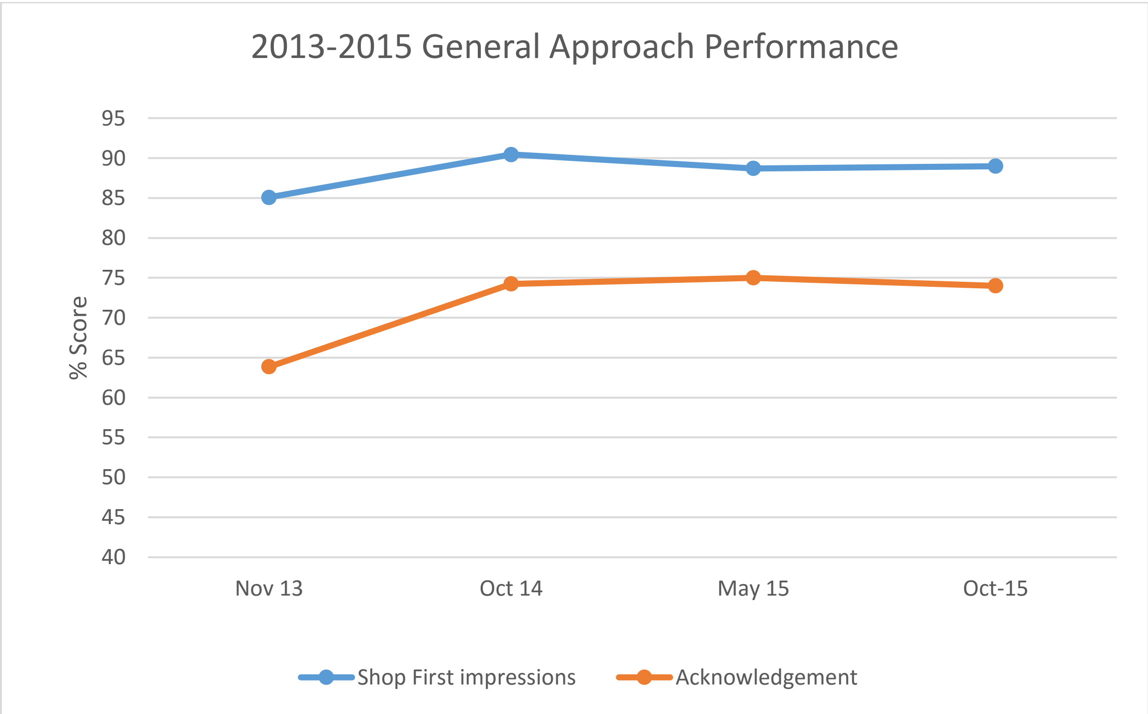
- Of the three Areas measured, Sales Opportunity at 69% continues to underperform General Approach at 83% and Service at 82%. This is still an area of weakness but a 9% improvement since 2013 suggests stores are continuing to improve with regard to the selling process.

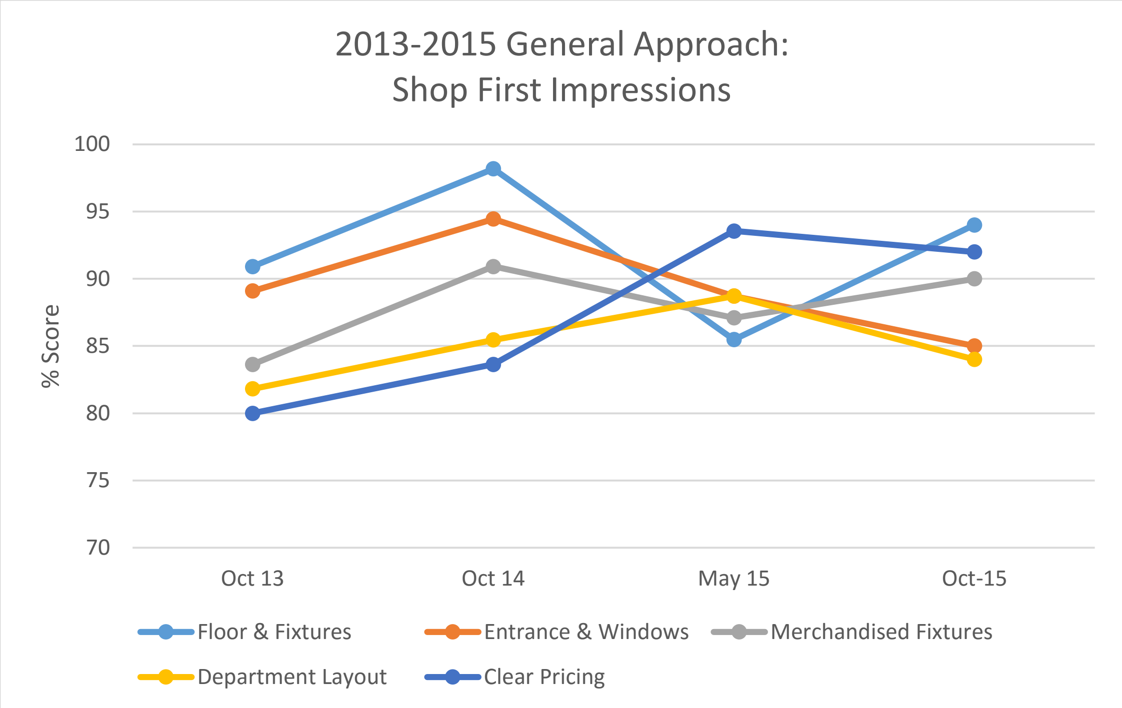
Performance by Section



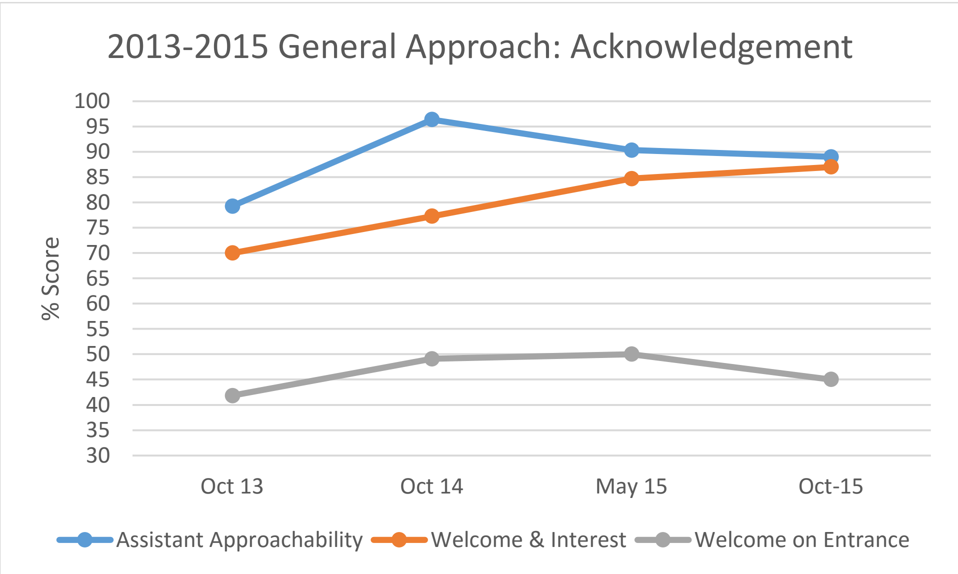
General Approach Performance

General Approach covers Shop First Impressions and Acknowledgement. It is encouraging to see that this remains a strong part of the St Helier shopping experience with the average score maintained at 83%.





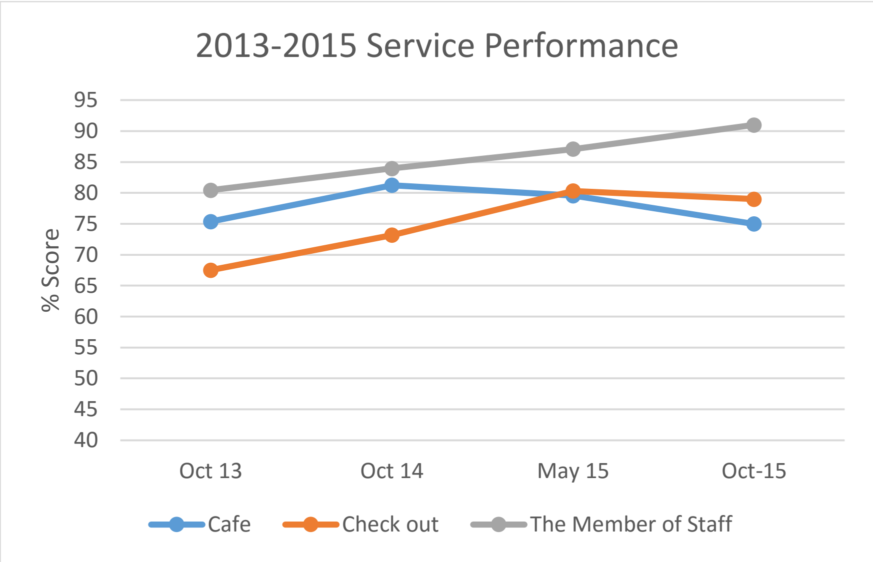
- Floor & Fixtures and Merchandised Fixtures showed improvement on May 2015 results
- Overall Shop First Impressions continues to perform strongly with an average score of 89%.
- All of the Topics with First Impressions are rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'

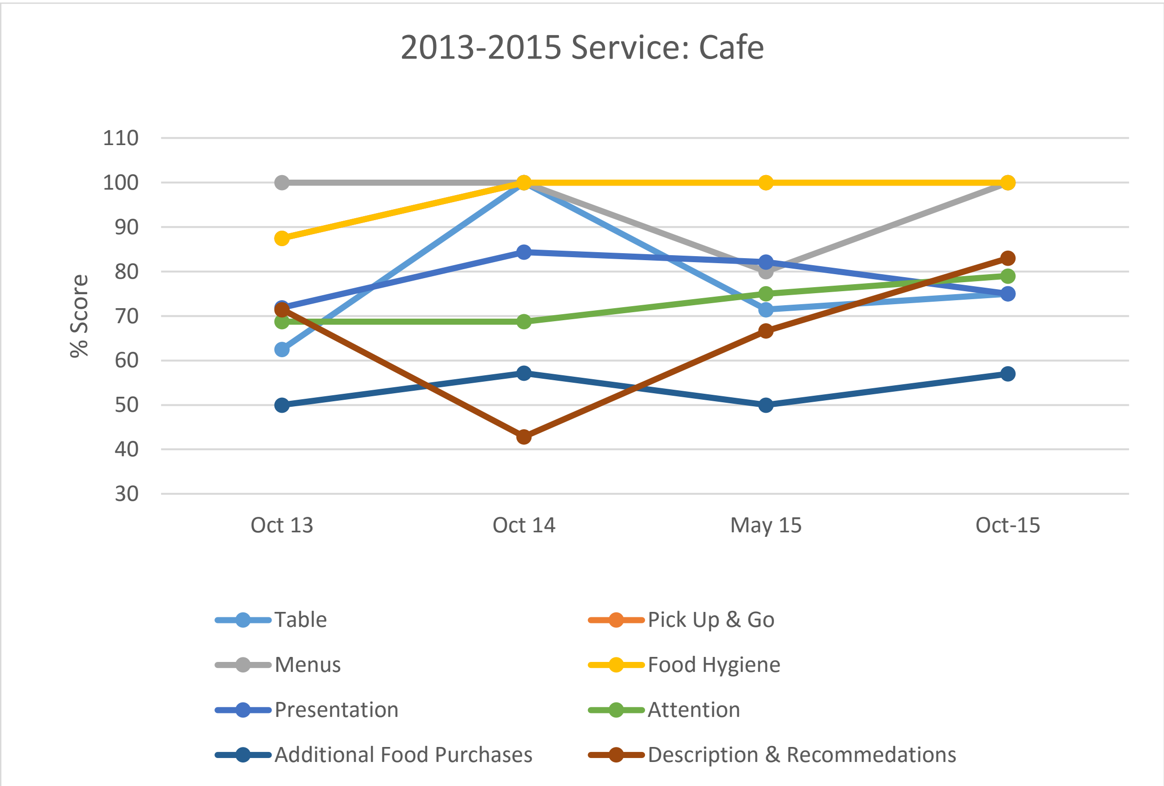


- The acknowledgment shoppers receive is an important factor in delivering excellent customer service and can be a key differentiator for 'bricks & mortar' stores.
- Acknowledgement scores an 'Adequate' 74% but is affected by the continued poor performance of Welcome on Entrance with a score of only 45%.

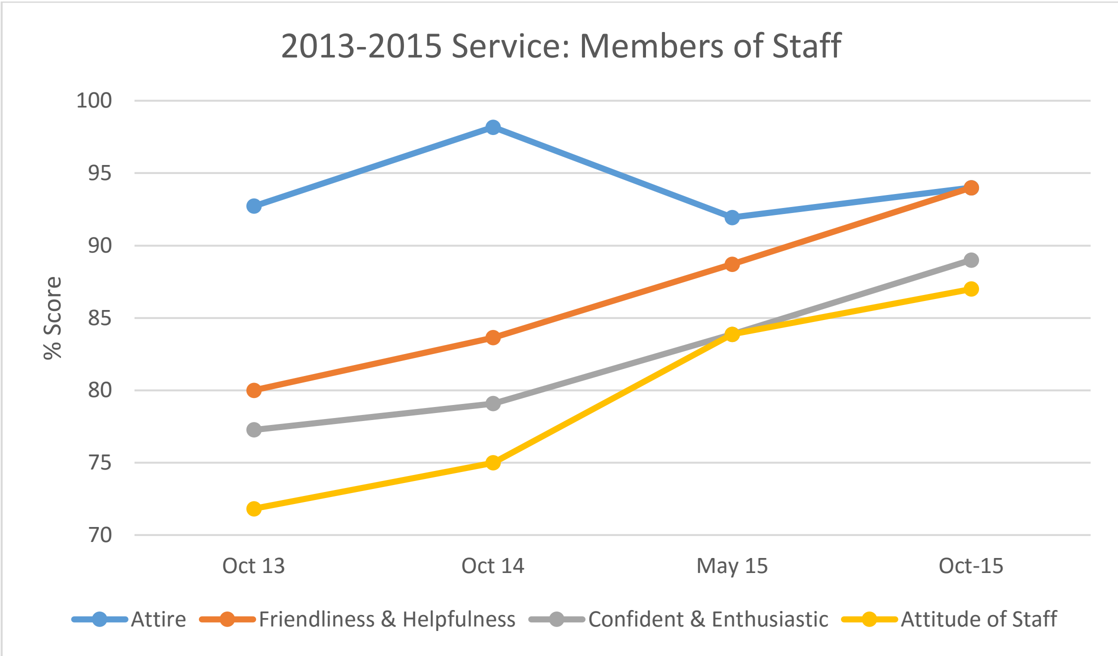
Service Performance

This Area covers the Member of Staff, Café scores, and the Check Out process.

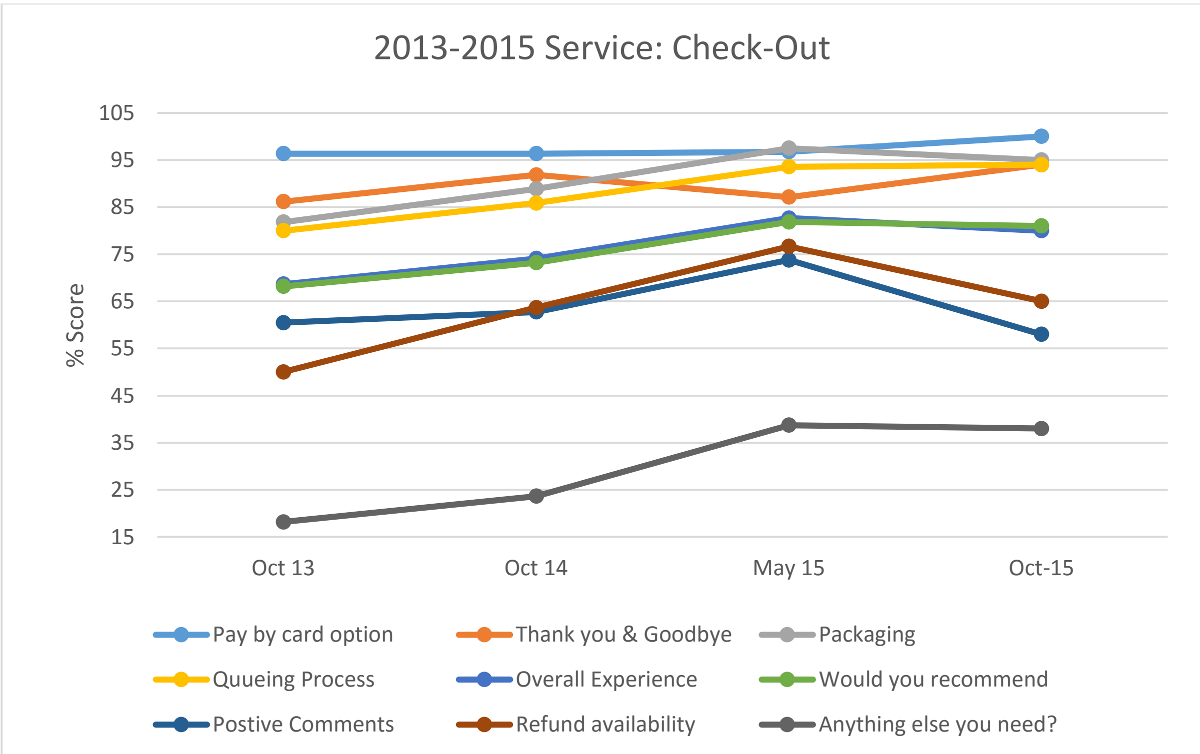




- Average scores for cafés has fallen back to Oct 2013 levels of 75% brought down by staff missing possible Additional Food Purchases.
- The average Café score is in line with the overall Town Centre experience.



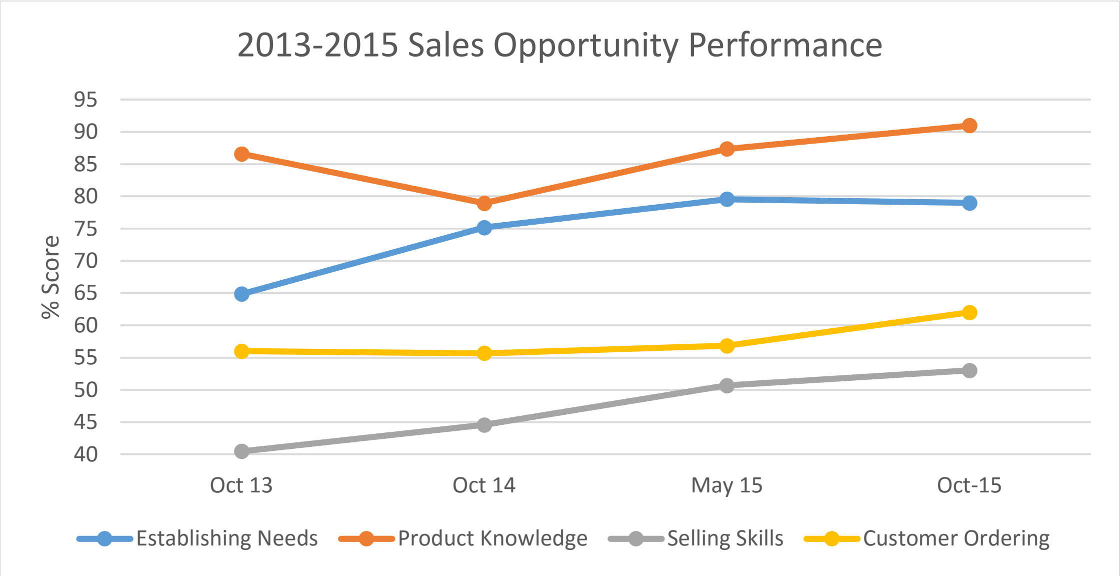
- Continued improvement over the period for the Member of Staff scores, now at 91%, is extremely encouraging demonstrating very high levels of staff attitude and helpfulness.
- At 91%, Member of Staff score, has continued to improve of the period and is the joint equal highest of all the Sections measured. This is testament to the continued investment in people by the retail sector.



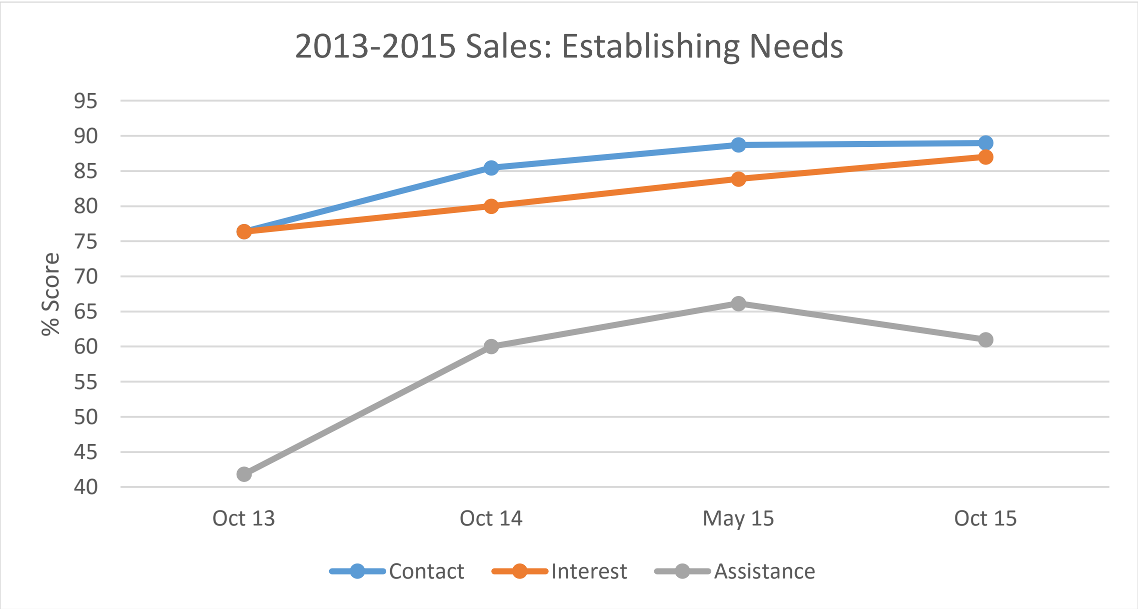
- Staff are still not offering further help by asking ‘Is there anything else you need?’ which, although more common than in 2013, still scores very poorly.
- Overall experience of the check-out process has increased by 11% over the period reflecting improvements in all aspect of the process.

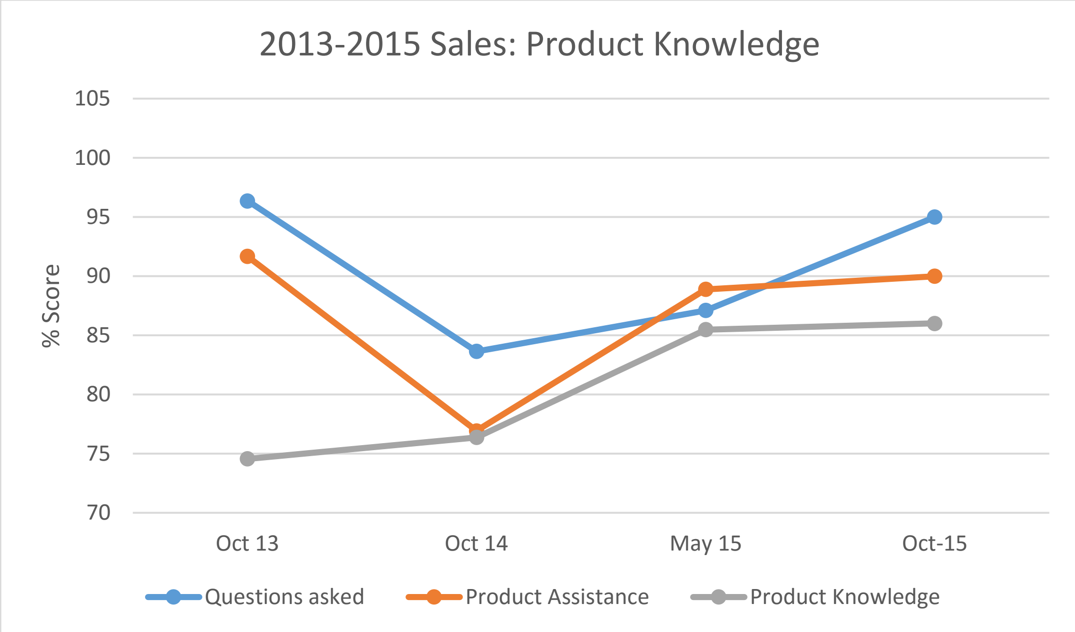
Sales Opportunity Performance

The Sales Opportunity covers Establishing Needs, Product Knowledge, Selling Skills, and Customer Ordering.

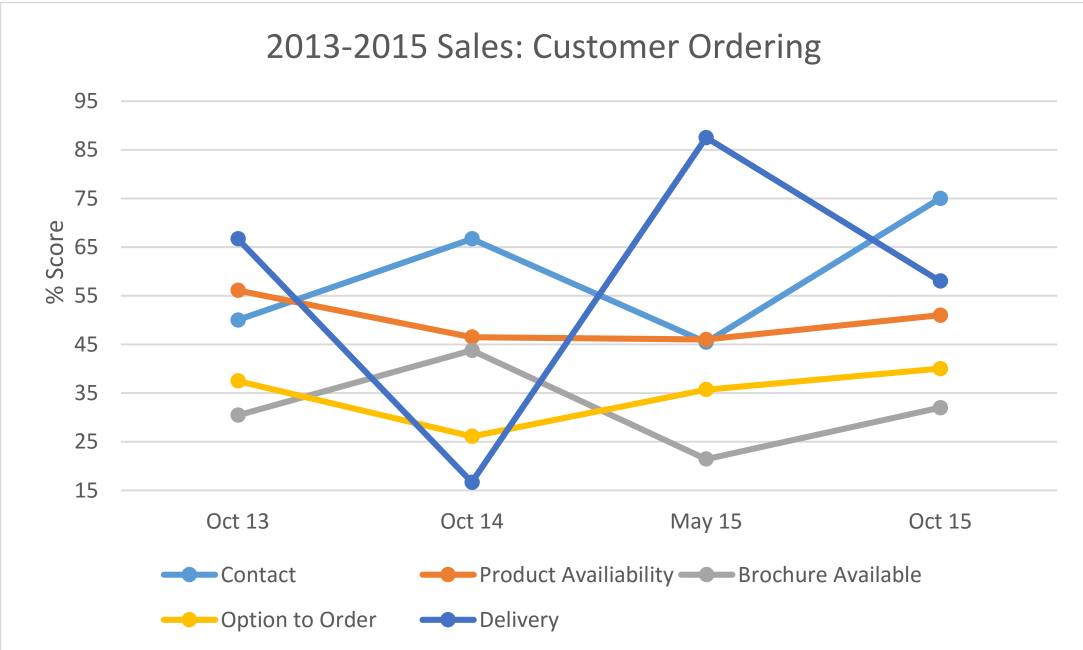


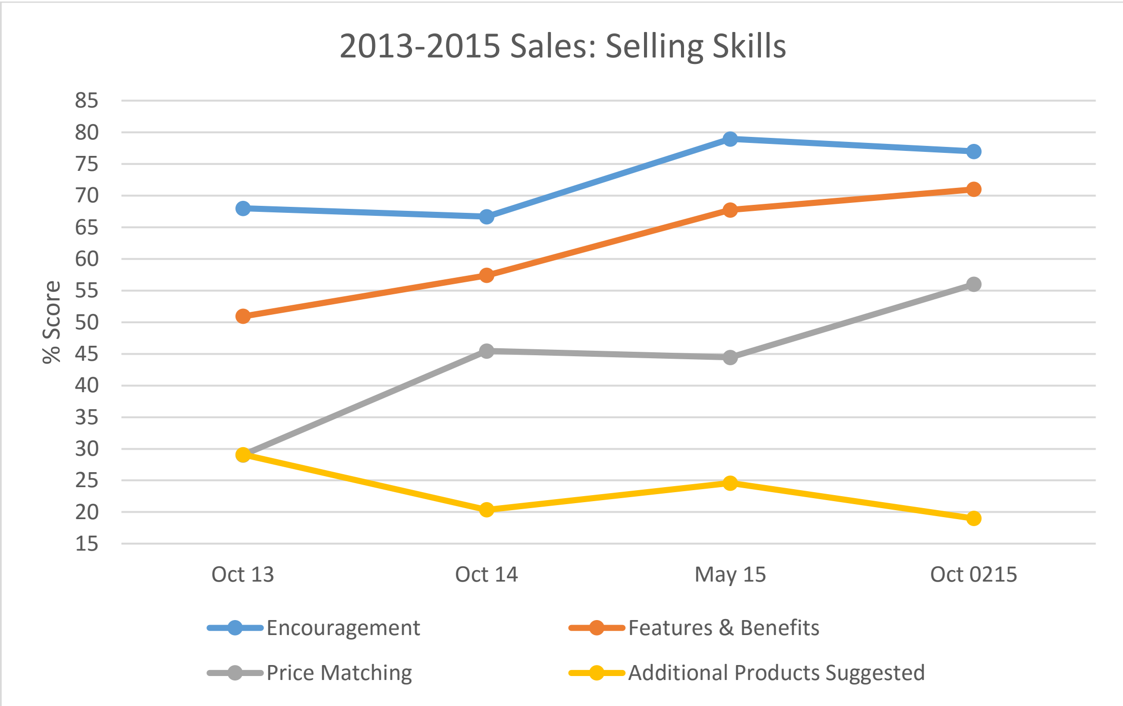
- At an average score of 69% the Sales Opportunity is the weakest performing Service Area reviewed but an improvement of 9% over the period is encouraging.





- The Product Knowledge score of 91% demonstrates an 'outstanding' result and is the equal top score (along with Member of Staff) in all of the Sections measured.



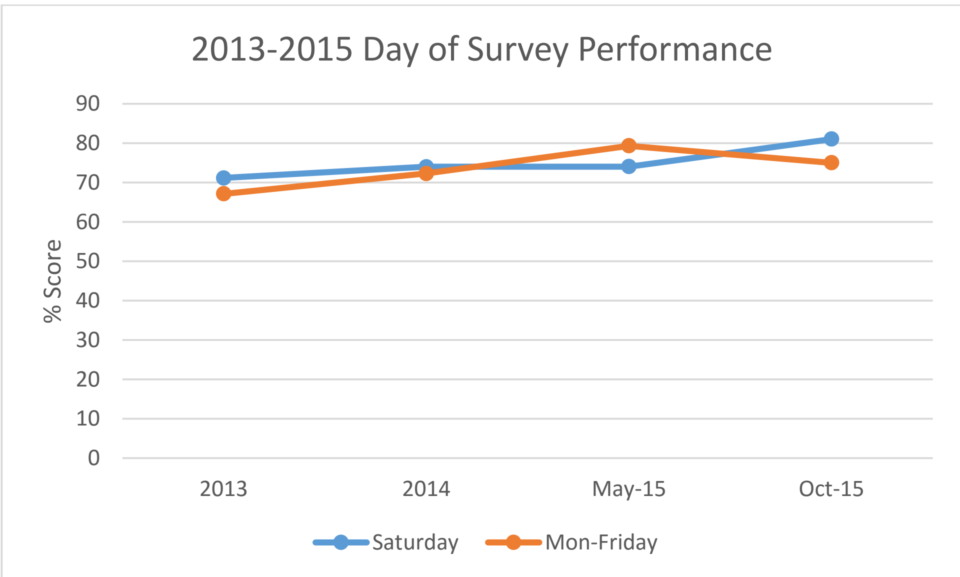


- Selling Skills at 53% is an area that continues to perform at the lowest level.
- The Additional Products Suggest score of 19% is ‘poor’ and has declined by 11% over the period and shows that opportunities to up-sell and cross sell are being missed.

Targeted Performance Results

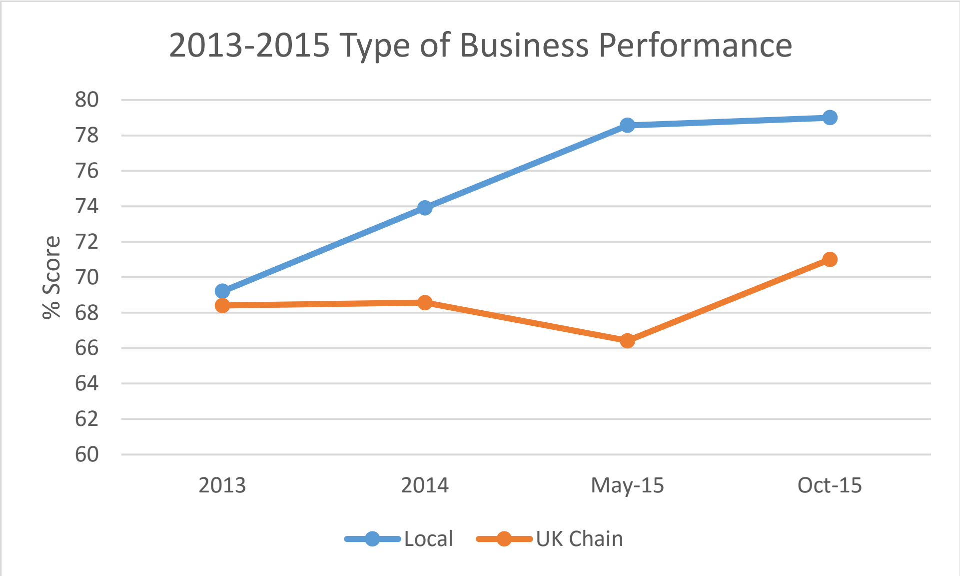
Saturday v Weekday

The closeness of the scores over the period, currently a 6% difference, demonstrates that the customer service experience on Saturday is generally similar to a week day.



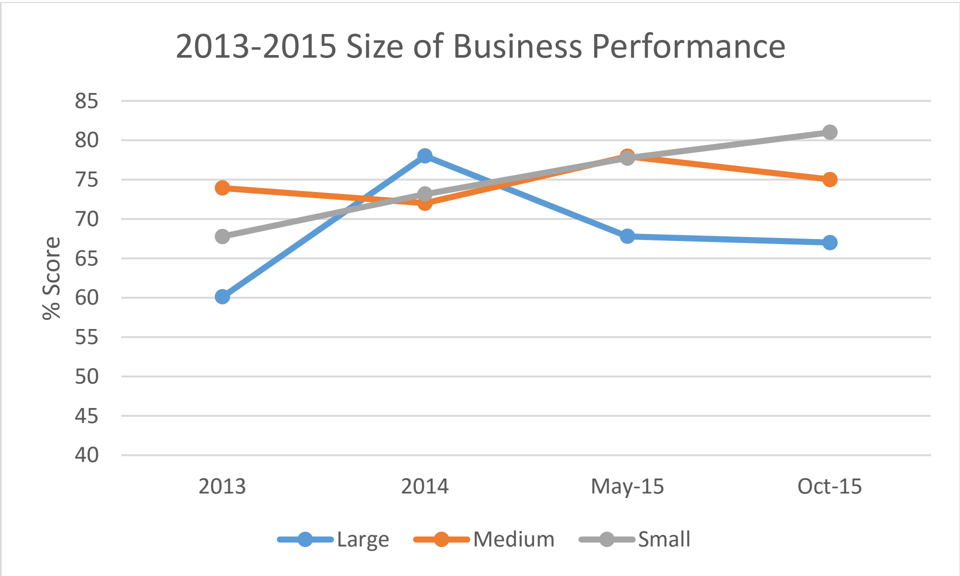
UK v Local

Scores for Local stores continues to outperform UK Chain stores, currently by 8%, even though UK stores have increased their performance by 3% over the period of the audits.



Size of Business

It is interesting to note the 81% Customer Service score for Small stores, improving 13% over the period. The results suggest that Small stores are working hardest to engage with shoppers.



Summary

Although the overall October 2015 results show a 1% increase on May 2015, the improvement in the top and bottom scores demonstrates a major improvement of the poorest performing stores and also of those preforming at the highest level.

Most notably the average score of 78% shows a 10% increase on the first survey in 2013; which indicates a significant improvement in Customer Service performance over this period.

The results of the audit will be used to assist key stakeholders, such as the Retail Development Group, to encourage continued Customer Service improvements in the retail sector. The results will help to focus efforts on areas that are required to improve the overall customer service experience.

Jersey Business will continue to work with individual retailers to implement improvements in their performance and productivity.