Royal Yachting Association

ONGOING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY YACHTMASTER/COASTAL SKIPPER

FULL YEAR 2008

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1 Introduction

This report outlines the overall summary results of an ongoing customer satisfaction survey carried out for RYA by The Leadership Factor in relation to the Yachtmaster/Coastal Skipper certificate. This overall summary covers the results recorded during the interviewing period between January 2008 and December 2008. The original survey was preceded by exploratory research involving depth interviews with a varied selection of RYA's customers (Jan-Feb 2004). Having identified what matters most to customers, The Leadership Factor in conjunction with RYA designed a questionnaire covering the 13 criteria of most importance to Yachtmaster/Coastal Skipper customers.

A total of 600 interviews were conducted during this period of interviewing.

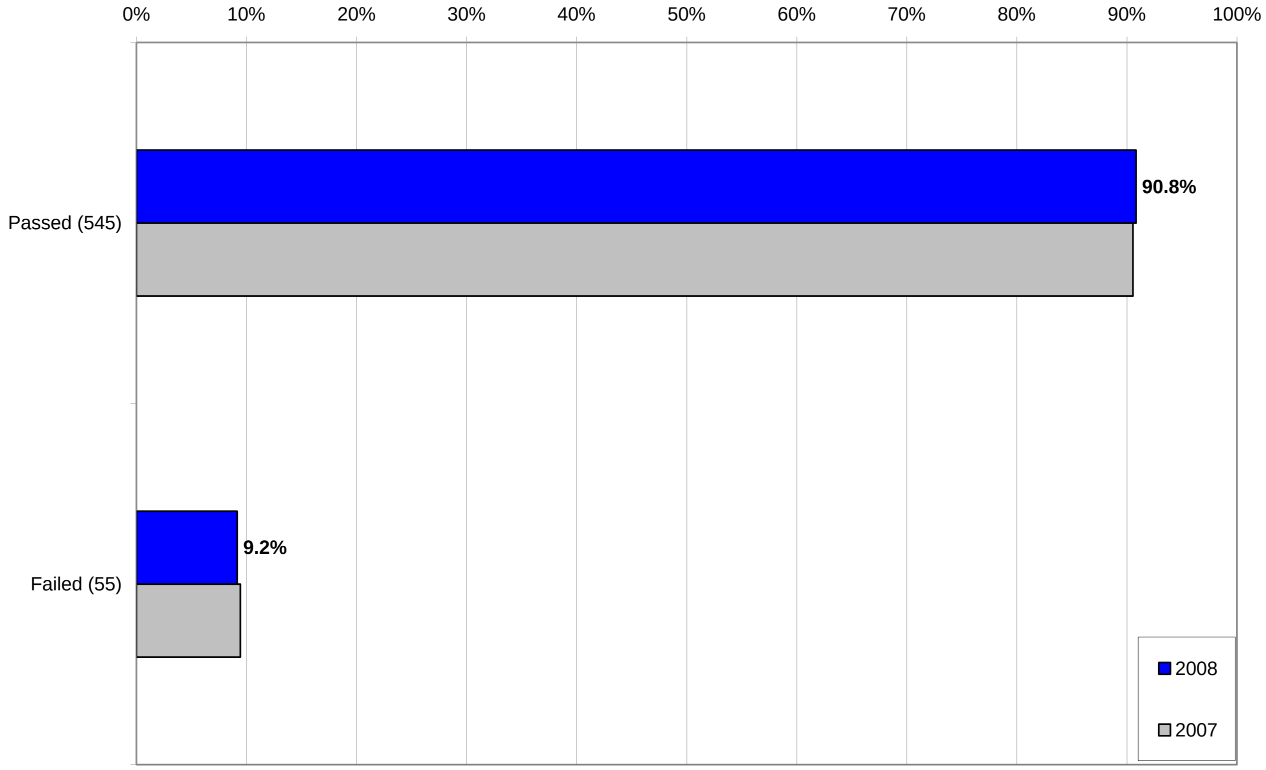
1.1 Sampling – who was involved in the survey?

Each month 50 interviewers were completed and the overall sample of 600 customers provides a good, reliable guide to the satisfaction of RYA's YMCS customers since the sample:

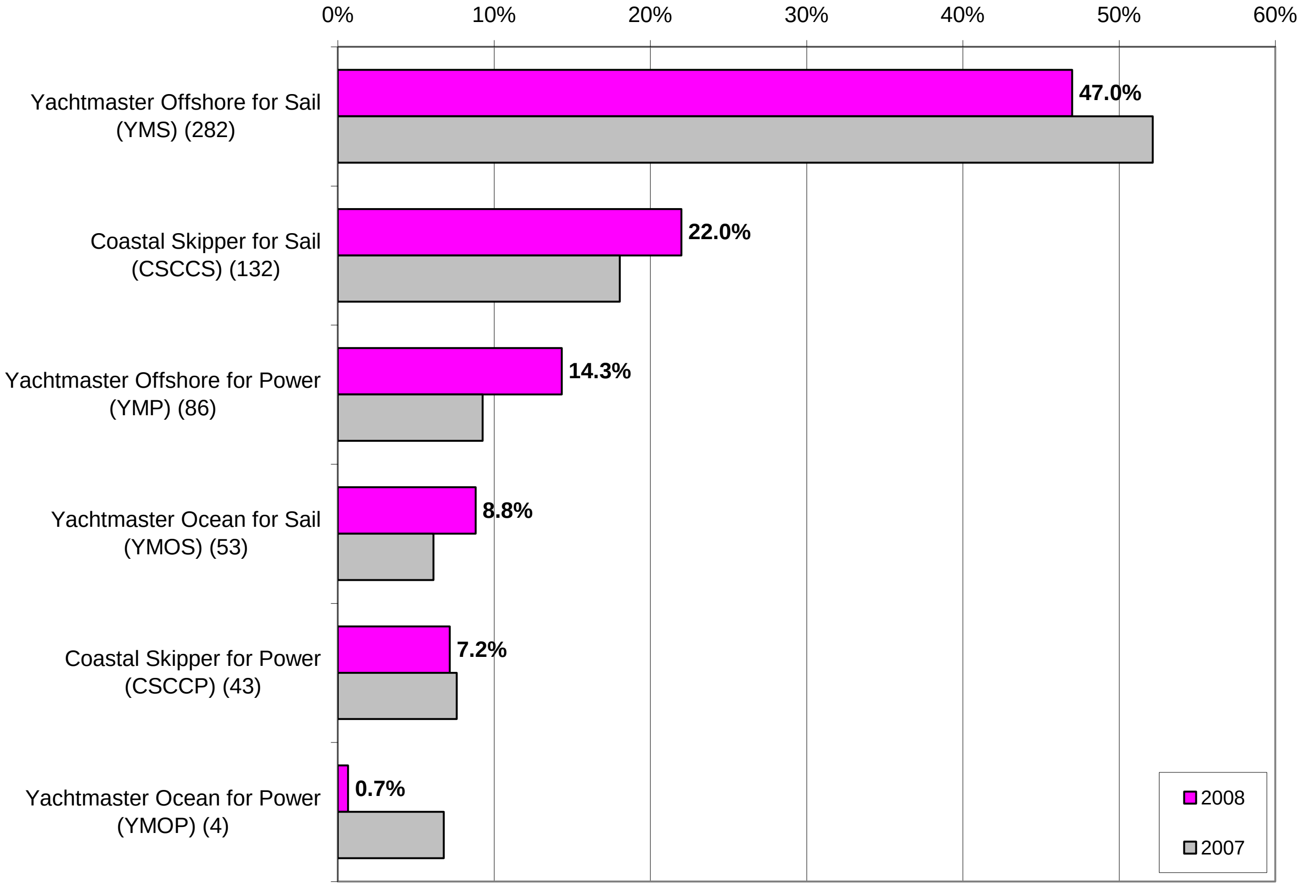
- Was randomly selected by The Leadership Factor
- Is sufficiently large to provide an accurate result. The statistical reliability of the results is shown in Section 4.1.

The following charts provide an overall analysis of the sample.

Passed/Failed



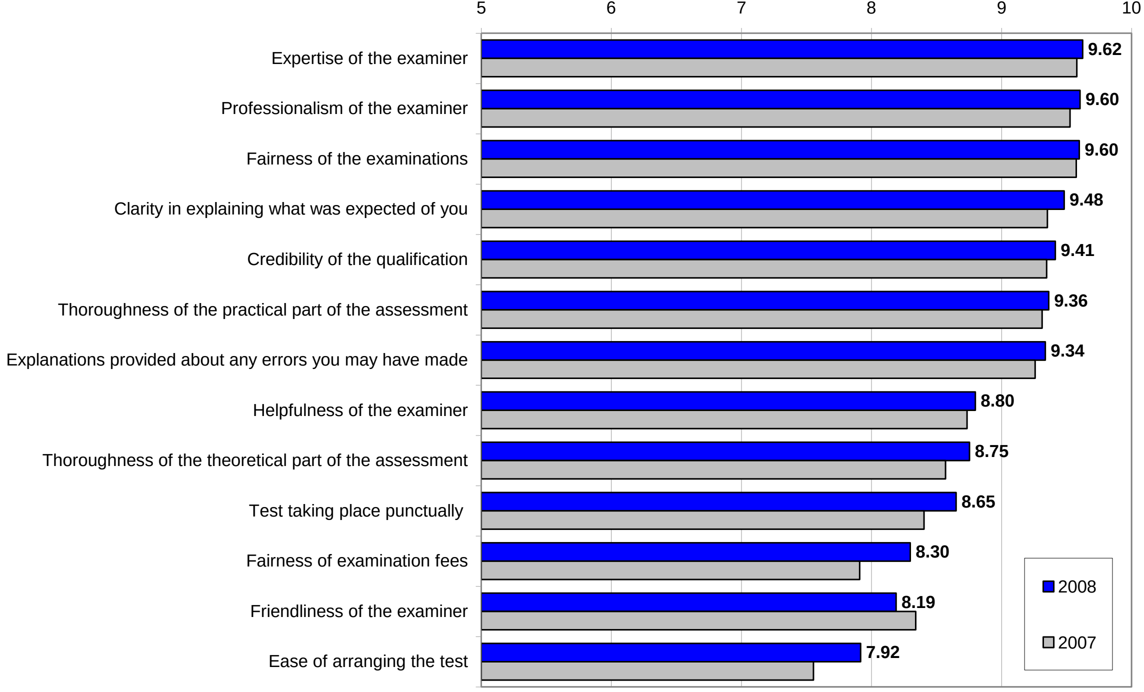
Type of examination



2 Customer requirements

2.1 Importance

Using the 13 main customer requirements identified by the exploratory research, customers were asked to indicate the importance to them of each one by giving it a score out of ten where ten signifies ‘extremely important’ and one signifies ‘not at all important’. The chart below shows the customer requirements in order of priority, along with the 2007 results.



Stated importance

The importance ratings have remained fairly consistent this year compared to the 2007 scores and the majority of the requirements have recorded a slight increase in average importance.

‘Expertise of the examiner’ remains the most important requirement to customers, closely followed by ‘professionalism of the examiner’ and ‘fairness of the examinations’, all scoring above 9.60.

The only decrease in average importance is for ‘friendliness of the examiner’, which has fallen by 0.15.

Of the requirements that have increased slightly this year, the most notable increase can be seen for the requirement ‘fairness of the examination fees’ which has increased by 0.39 to a score of 8.30.

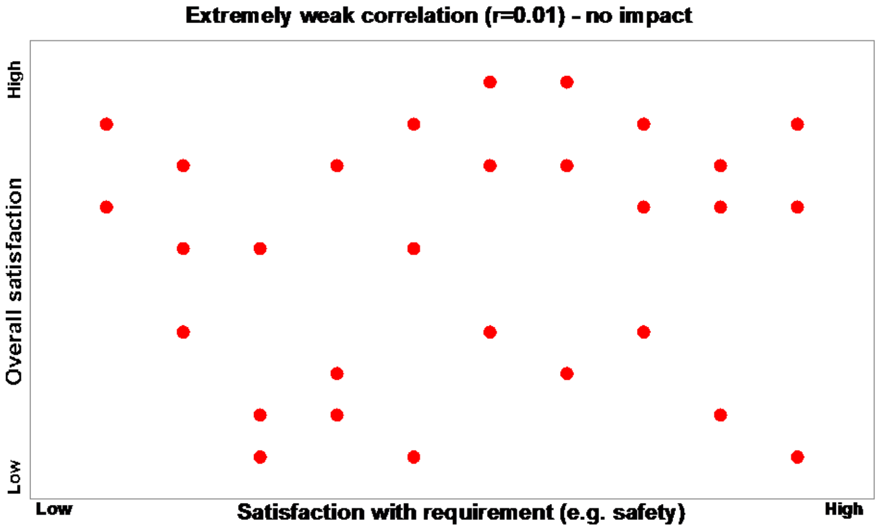
In total, seven requirements have a mean importance score above 9.00, indicating they are of high priority to customers.

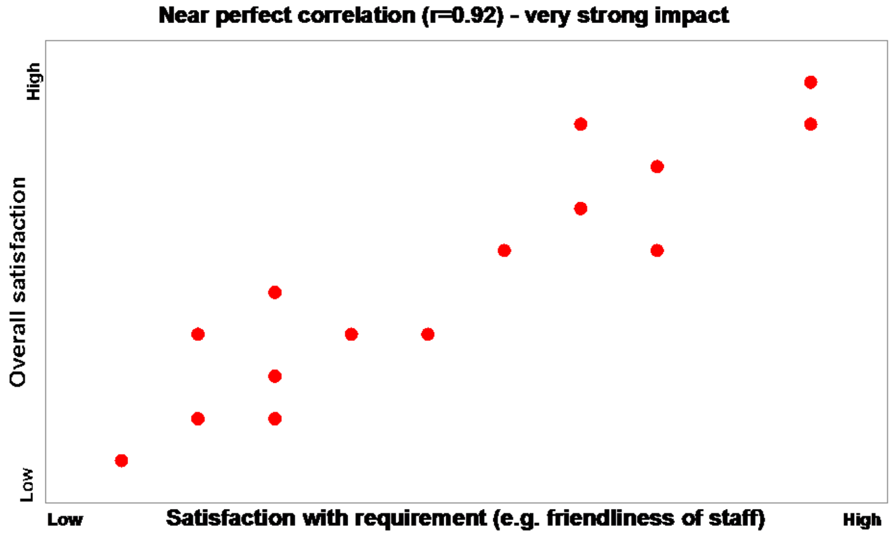
2.2 Impact

Customers' view of the importance of requirements does not always reveal the true differentiating attributes, since certain requirements may be regarded as 'givens', whereas others may have a greater impact on their satisfaction judgement than they consciously realise. For example, 'safety' is typically very important but is an attribute on which all suppliers would be expected to achieve high standards and unless there is a failure it will not be a reason for choosing a particular supplier. On the other hand, 'friendliness of staff' might well be what makes the difference between one supplier and another, although it may not initially seem important to customers when asked to judge the relative importance of a list of requirements.

To identify the strongest differentiators in terms of creating satisfaction, we correlate overall satisfaction with satisfaction for each attribute. Such a correlation produces a coefficient in the range –1.00 to +1.00, where –1.00 represents a perfect inverse relationship and +1.00 a perfect positive relationship. A score of 0.00 indicates that there is no relationship at all between the two variables. From customers' satisfaction data we would expect to see only positive correlations between 0.00 and +1.00.

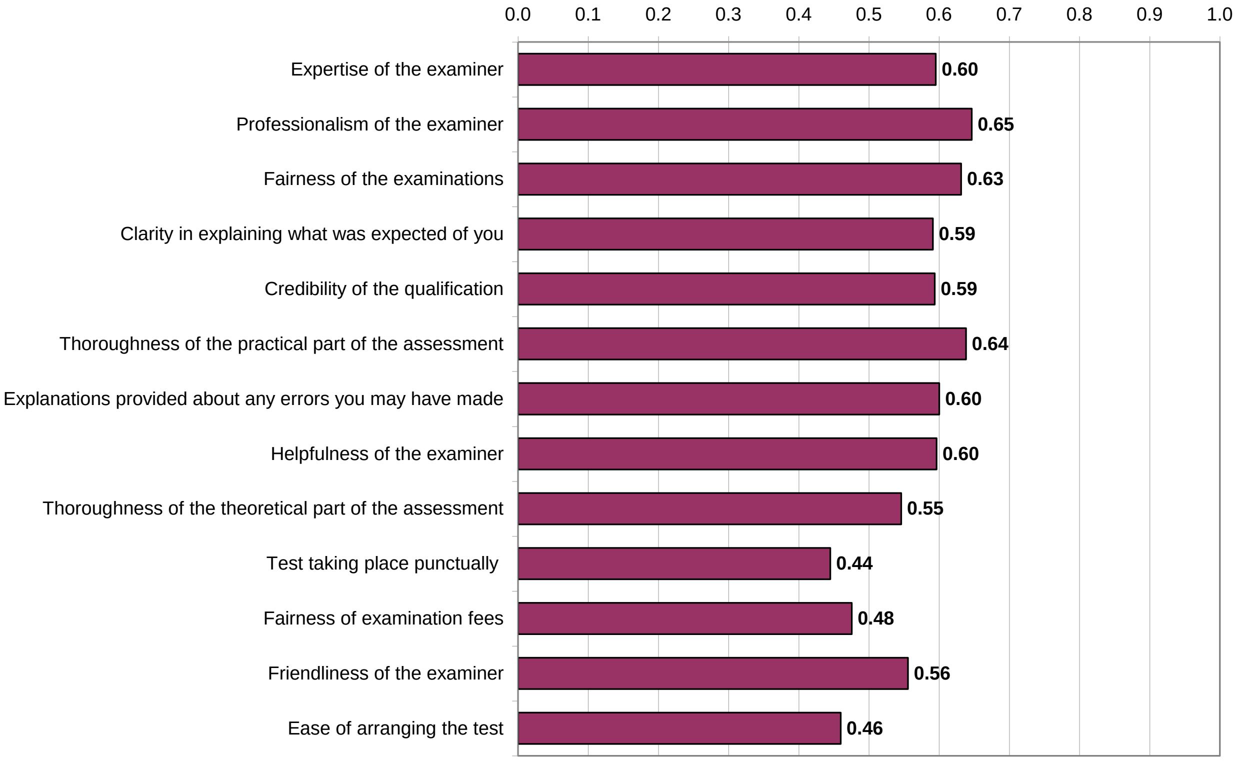
The following two hypothetical charts illustrate how correlation works:





The impact coefficients for RYA are shown in the chart below:

Impact correlations



Most of the attributes have a medium to strong impact on overall satisfaction. The requirements with the largest bearing, with impact correlations of at least 0.60 are:

- Professionalism of the examiner (0.65)
- Thoroughness of the practical part of the assessment (0.64)
- Fairness of the examinations (0.63)
- Explanations provided about any errors you may have made (0.60)
- Helpfulness of the examiner (0.60)
- Expertise of the examiner (0.60)

2.3 Drivers of Satisfaction

By combining the importance and impact scores into one matrix, it is possible to define four broad categories of customer requirements:

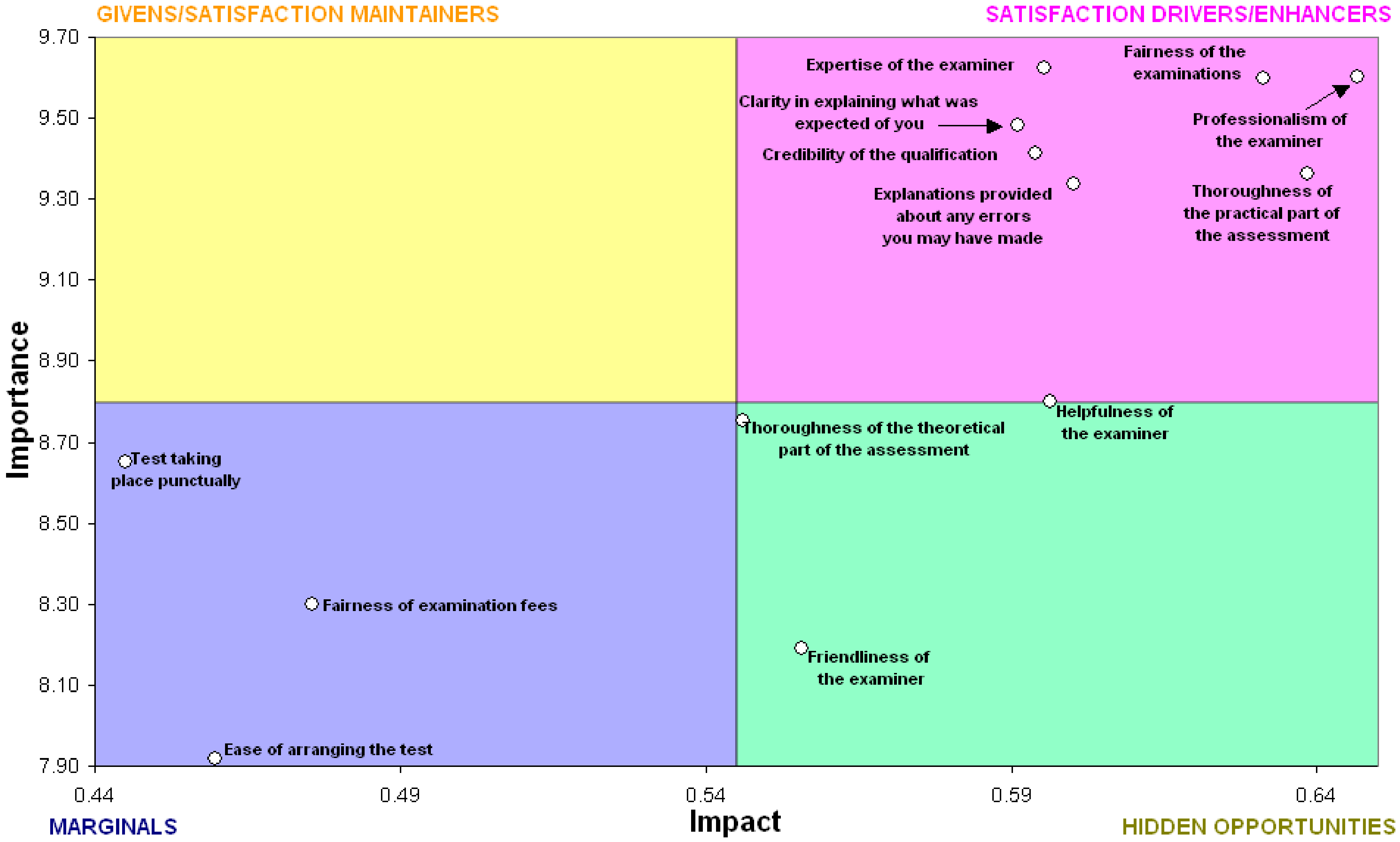
(1) **Givens**– items with high importance but low impact. Strong performance in these areas will often be taken for granted, and whilst performance beyond acceptable minimum standards will not necessarily result in an increase in customer satisfaction, poor performance will have a strong adverse effect on customer satisfaction.

(2) **Satisfaction Drivers**– requirements with very high scores for both importance and impact. These are the strongest drivers of satisfaction and should be prominent in plans for improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

(3) **Hidden Opportunities** – factors with low importance, but high impact. Whilst customers do not rate these factors high in importance, performance in these areas will have a strong impact on overall customer satisfaction; a good customer experience will have a strong positive effect on overall satisfaction, whilst a bad one will have a lasting negative effect. Provided minimum standards have been achieved on Givens, and a strong emphasis has been placed on Satisfaction Drivers there is potential for improving customer satisfaction by investing in Hidden Opportunities.

(4) **Marginals** – requirements with both low importance and low impact. Such requirements cannot be dismissed as unimportant, since all of the requirements included on the questionnaire were rated as important by customers during the exploratory phase of the research. As far as customer satisfaction improvement is concerned, Marginal requirements will usually offer the least opportunity for a return on investment.

There is a clear focus on the explanations provided to candidates. This has a strong influence on their overall satisfaction. Inadequate explanations will bring scores down but good ones will raise scores. This is likely to have an effect on the perceptions about fairness, helpfulness and professionalism as well.

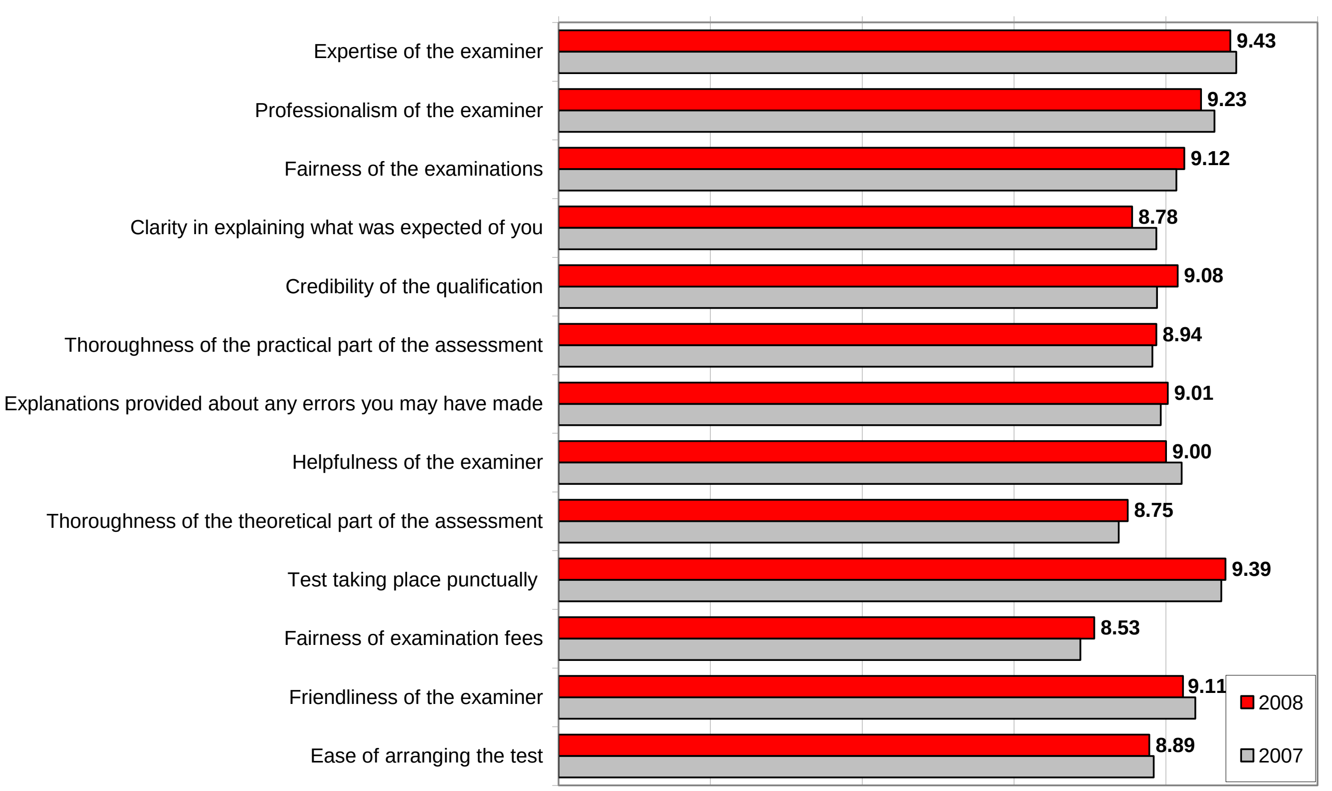

GIVENS/SATISFACTION MAINTAINERS
SATISFACTION DRIVERS/ENHANCERS
Importance
9.70
9.50
9.30
9.10
8.90
8.70
8.50
8.30
8.10
7.90
Expertise of the examiner
Fairness of the examinations
Clarity in explaining what was expected of you
Professionalism of the examiner
Credibility of the qualification
Explanations provided about any errors you may have made
Thoroughness of the practical part of the assessment
Helpfulness of the examiner
Thoroughness of the theoretical part of the assessment
Test taking place punctually
Fairness of examination fees
Friendliness of the examiner
Ease of arranging the test
0.44
0.49
0.54
0.59
0.64
Impact
MARGINALS
HIDDEN OPPORTUNITIES

3 Customer satisfaction

Customers were also asked to score their level of satisfaction with RYA's performance on the same 13 criteria giving a mark out of ten, where one signifies 'completely dissatisfied' and ten signifies 'completely satisfied'.

The results are shown in the chart below compared to the 2007 results, with the criteria again listed in order of their importance to customers.

Satisfaction ratings



Similarly to the importance ratings, the satisfaction scores have also remained fairly consistent.

Customers remain most satisfied with the 'expertise of the examiner', with a mean satisfaction score of 9.43. A further 7 requirements have also recorded average satisfaction scores of 9.00 and above indicating a very high level of satisfaction. None of the requirements score below 8.50 for satisfaction, indicating that customers are generally very satisfied with RYA.

As in previous years, customers are least satisfied with the 'fairness of examination fees' recording an average satisfaction score of 8.53. It is not unusual in such surveys for financial aspects to be scored relatively lower than other things.

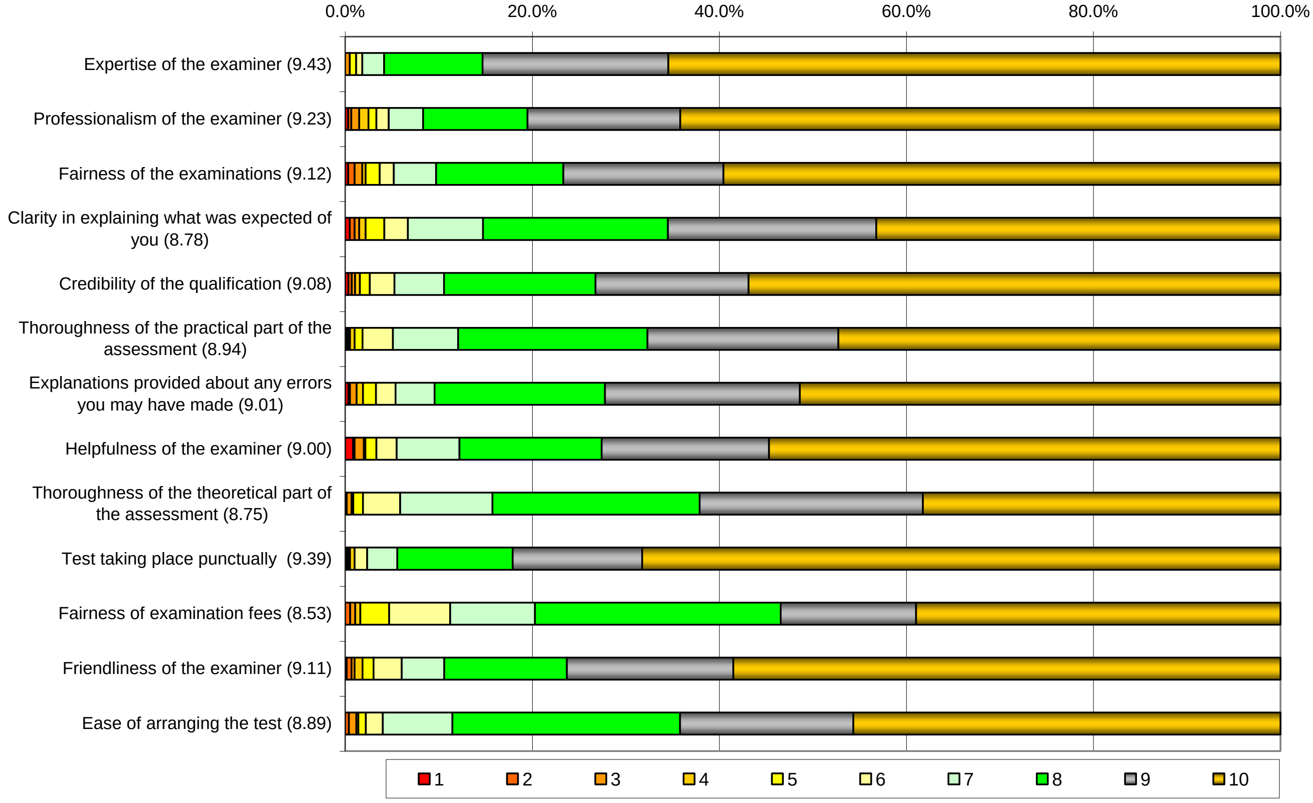
All 13 requirements recorded low standard deviations (below 2.00) indicating a high level of agreement among customers regarding RYA's performance.

Seven requirements have seen an increase in satisfaction since the 2007 survey, the most notable increase being seen for the requirement 'credibility of the qualification' increasing by 0.14 to a mean score of 9.08.

Of the remaining requirements, the most notable decrease in average satisfaction, a decrease of 0.16, can be seen for 'clarity in explaining what was expected of you', which has a mean score of 8.78 this year, compared to 8.94 in 2007.

The following chart shows the spread of satisfaction scores given for each requirement, in order of priority. This indicates that there is a high level of consistency in performance.

Spread of scores



3.1 Satisfaction by segment

The following shows any differences in scores given by customers taking the different Yachtmaster/coastal skipper examinations as well as those who passed or failed the exam.

Examination Type

Generally, those taking the Coastal Skipper for Power (CSCCP) examination are the more satisfied customers, recording 12 of the highest satisfaction scores of the 13 requirements. Those who undertook the Coastal Skipper for Sail (CSCCS) are the least satisfied customers, having given the lowest score for 6 requirements.

Those taking the Coastal Skipper for Power (CSCCP) examination are significantly more satisfied than those taking the Coastal Skipper for Sail (CSCCS) for:

- ☐ Professionalism of the examiner
- ☐ Explanations provided about any errors you may have made
- ☐ Fairness of examination fees
- ☐ Friendliness of the examiner
- ☐ Helpfulness of the examiner

Passed/failed

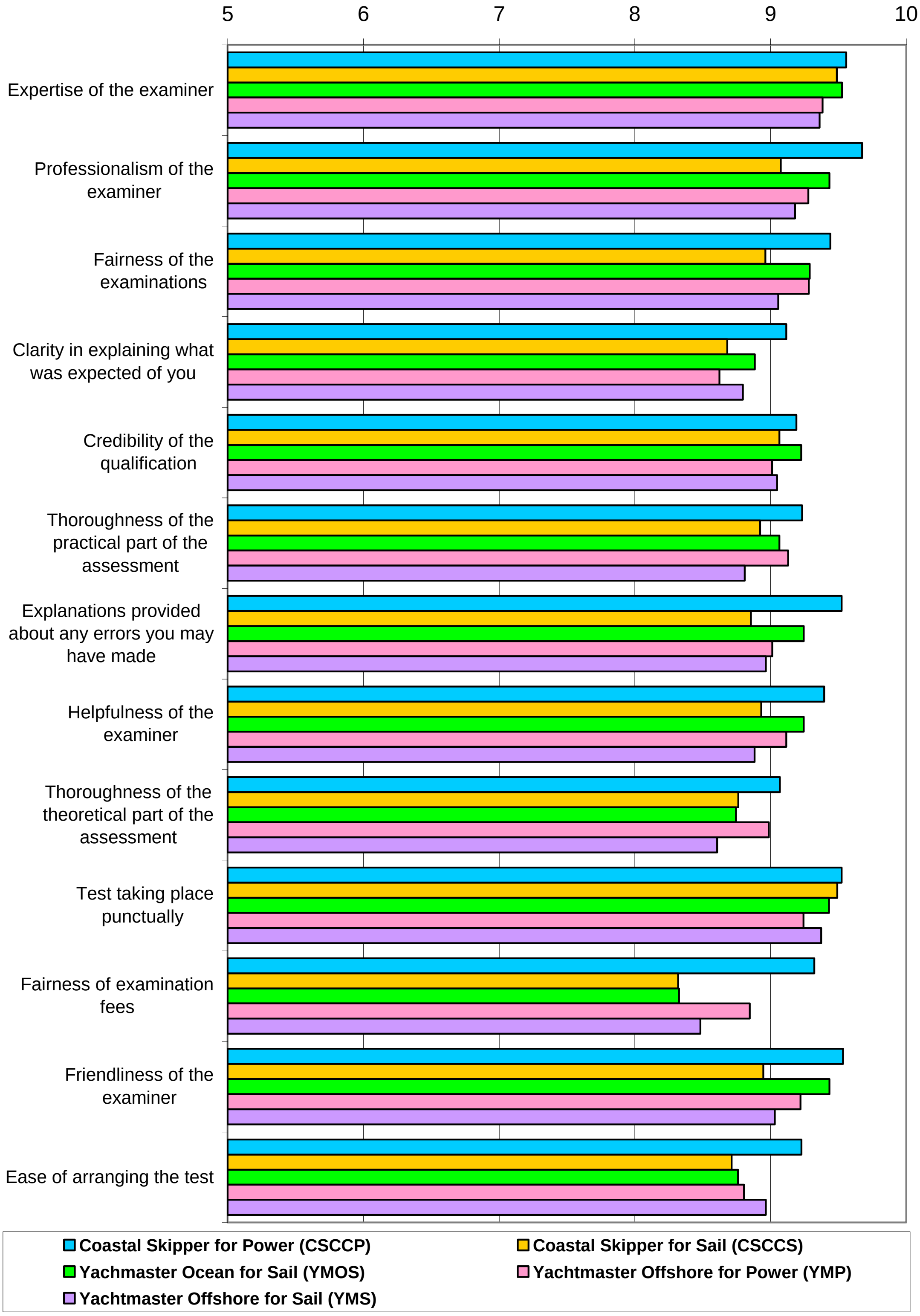
As would be expected, those who passed the assessment are more satisfied with all 13 requirements. There are a number of significant differences in the satisfaction scoring between those who passed the assessment and those who failed.

The most notable differences (with a difference in scoring of at least 1.00) can be seen for the requirements (these were also significant differences in previous surveys):

- ☐ Fairness of the examinations (1.56)
- ☐ Helpfulness of the examiner (1.34)
- ☐ Clarity in explaining what was expected of you (1.34)
- ☐ Friendliness of the examiner (1.27)
- ☐ Explanations provided about any errors you may have made (1.20)
- ☐ Professionalism of the examiner (1.16)

The following chart shows the satisfaction scores given by type of examination taken. The requirements are shown in overall importance order:

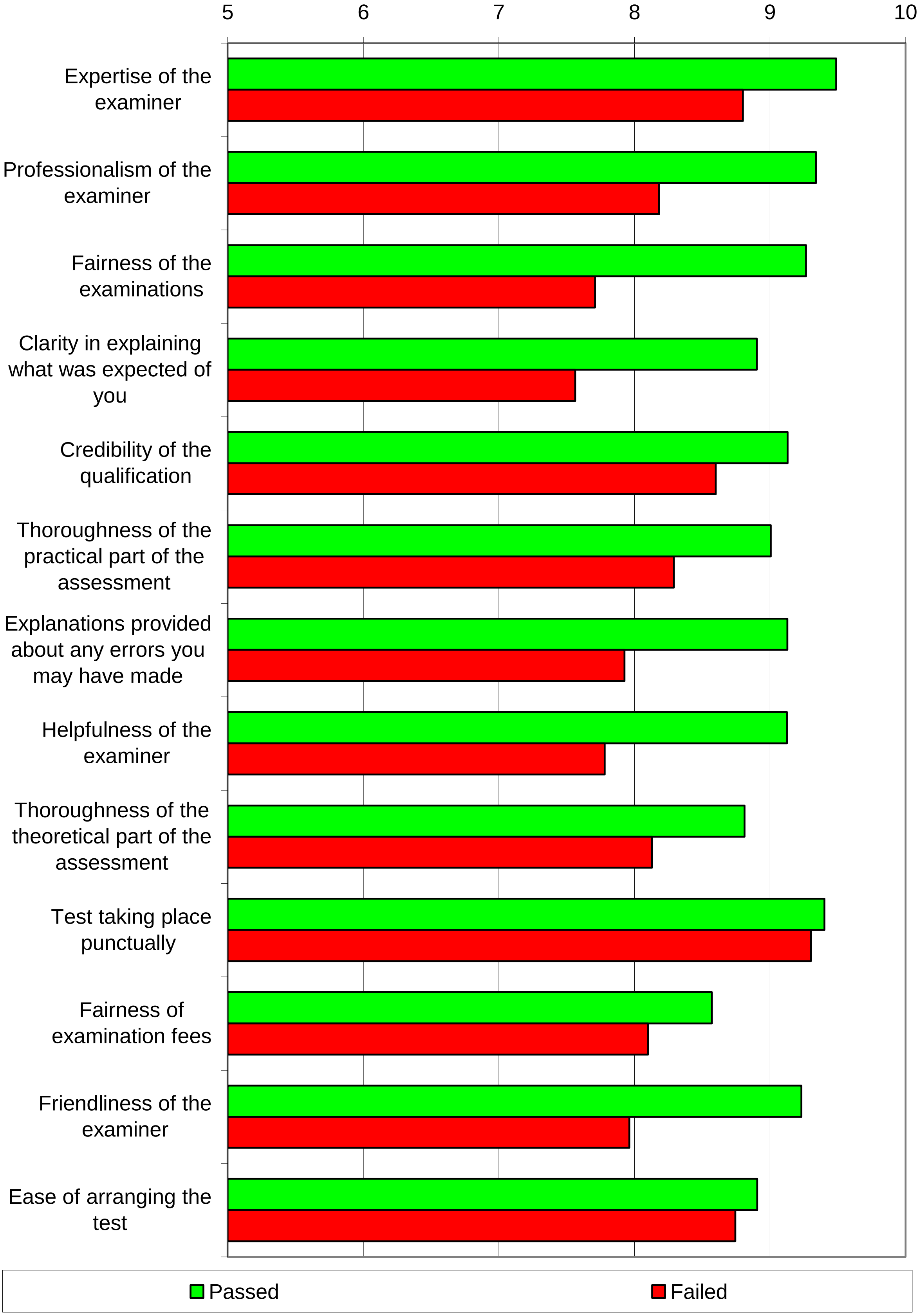
Satisfaction ratings by Examination



*Yachtmaster Ocean for Power (YMOP) is not included in the above chart due to the sample being less than 10.

The following chart shows the satisfaction scores given by those who passed the examination and those who failed. The requirements are shown in overall importance order:

Satisfaction ratings by passed/failed



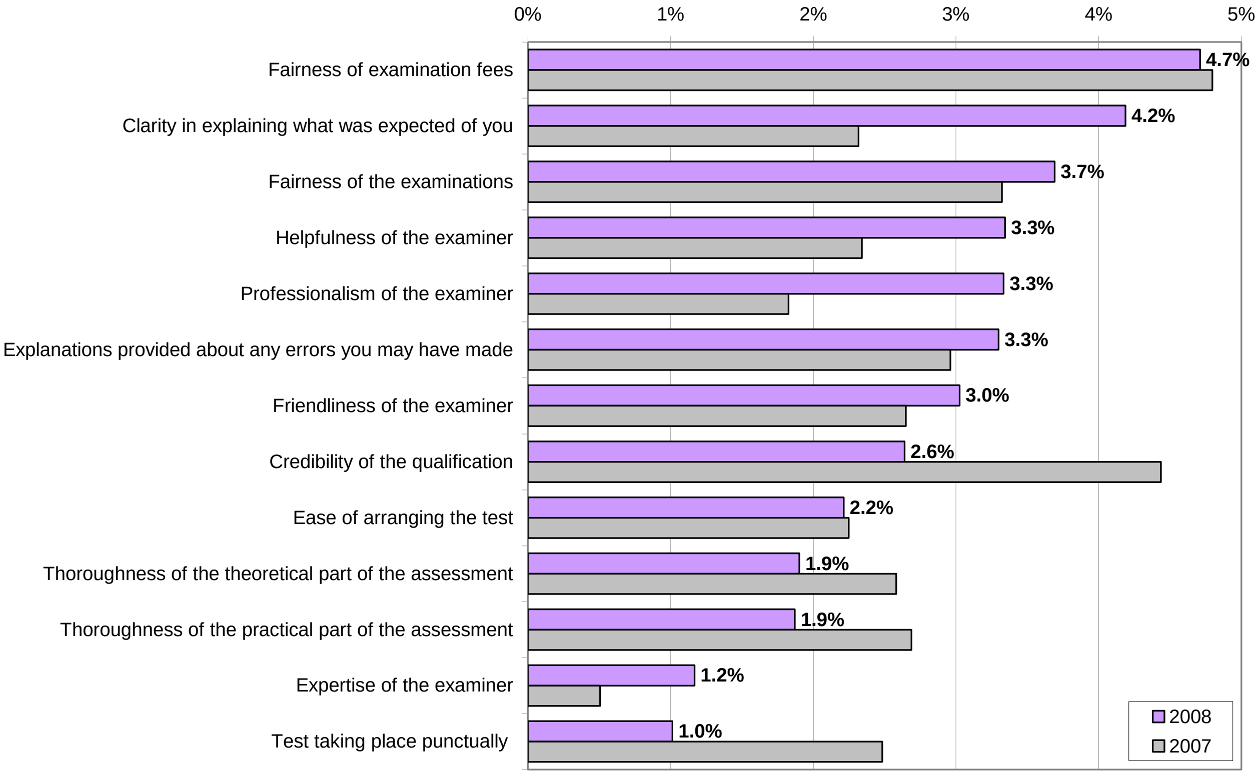
3.2 Reasons for dissatisfaction

In any instance where a satisfaction score of 5 or less was given, the customer was asked to explain the reason for their low level of satisfaction with that requirement.

It is important to note that only low satisfaction scores were probed, not high ones. This is based on the view that it is more important to understand reasons behind low scores, which explains why all the comments in this section are negative.

The chart overleaf shows the proportion of customers scoring 5 or lower for each requirement. This is a particularly important chart since it highlights the main areas where RYA is making some customers very dissatisfied.

Reasons for low satisfaction



The largest percentage of low satisfaction scores below 6 has been recorded for the requirement 'fairness of examination fees'. This requirement also recorded the highest percentage in 2007; encouragingly the percentage has slightly decreased this year from 4.8% in 2007 to 4.7% this year. Problem in relation to 'Clarity in explaining what was expected of you' have increased since 2007.

4 Satisfaction Index™

4.1 Calculating the *Satisfaction Index™*

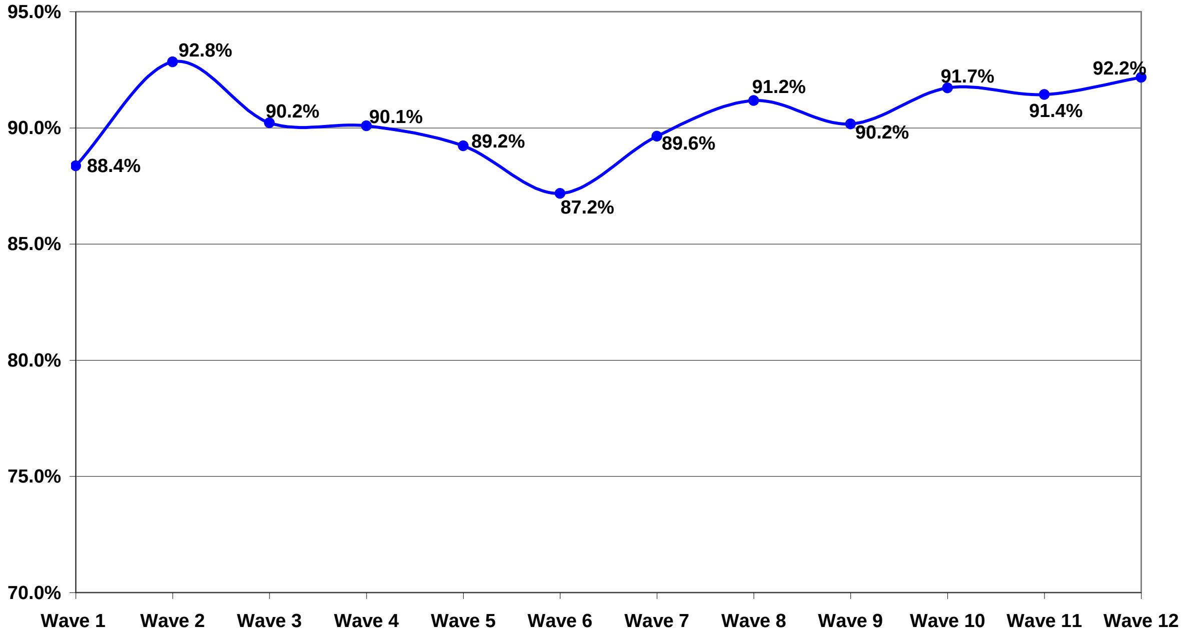
Satisfaction Index™ is an overall measure of an organisation's success in satisfying its customers. Since some customer priorities will be more important to them than others, *Satisfaction Index*™ uses importance scores to weight satisfaction scores. The resulting index is therefore a weighted average score which is expressed as a percentage, a score of 100% representing total customer satisfaction with every aspect of their dealings with your organisation. This results in a totally accurate picture of the organisation's ability to satisfy its customers by 'doing best what matters most to customers'.

RYA YMCS OVERALL		
YEAR	*SATISFACTION INDEX*™	Statistical reliability
2008	90.4%	±0.8%
2007	90.4%	±0.8%
2006	90.6%	±0.8%
2005	89.7%	±0.9%
2004	89.3%	±1.0%

The *Satisfaction Index*™ has seen no change on the 2007 result, remaining at a score of 90.4%.

The following chart shows the change in Satisfaction Index overall for the last twelve months.

Satisfaction Index™ Tracking



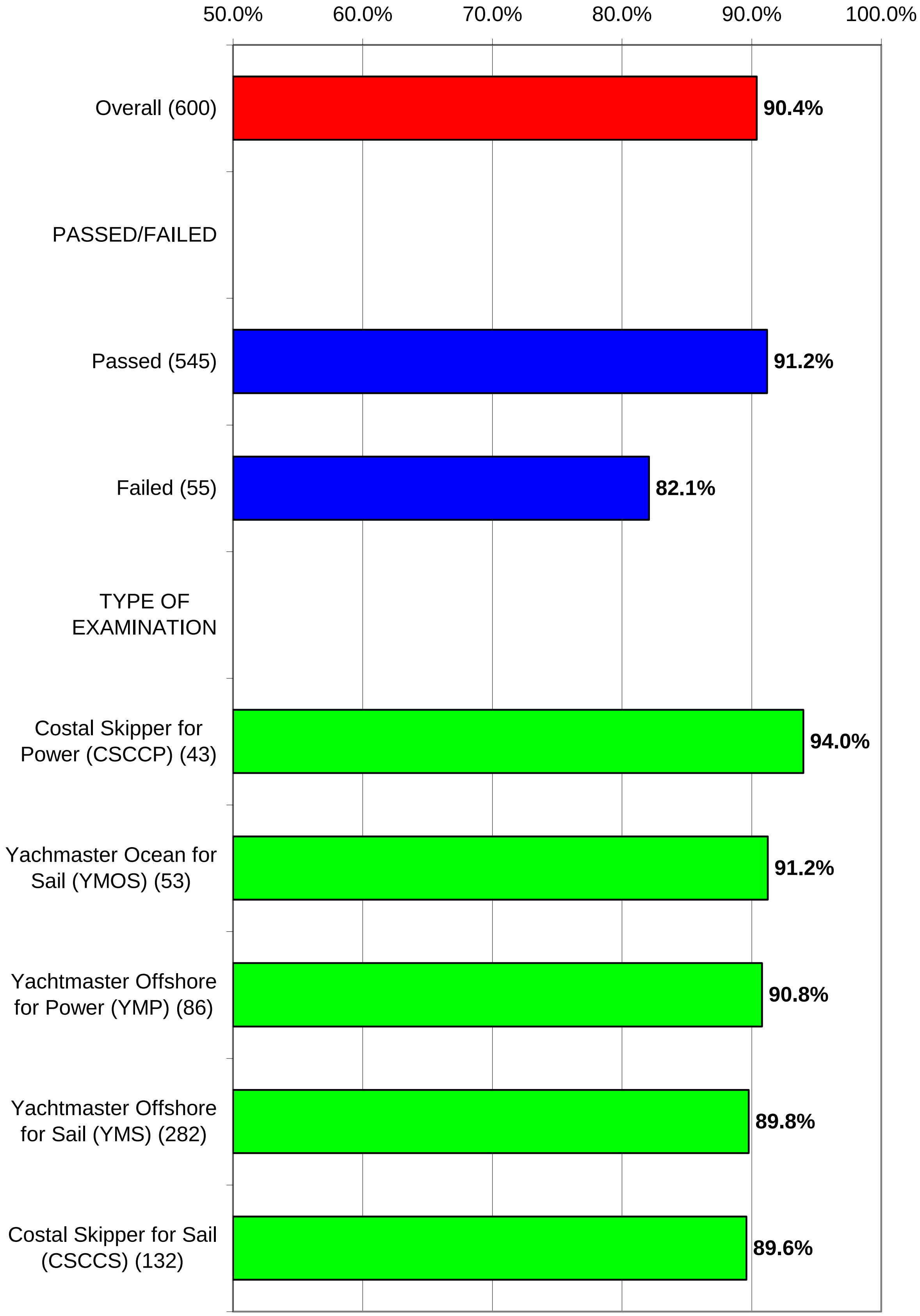
4.2 Sub-group indices and statistical reliability

The table below shows the *Satisfaction Index*™ overall and for each sub-group, together with the statistical reliability of the results and the base size.

SEGMENT	INDEX 2008	RELIABILITY 2008	BASE 2008	INDEX 2007	INDEX 2006	INDEX 2005	INDEX 2004
Overall	**90.4%**	**±0.8%**	**600**	**90.4%**	**90.6%**	**89.7%**	**89.3%**
Passed/Failed							
Passed	91.2%	±0.7%	545	91.3%	91.3%	90.8%	89.8%
Failed	82.1%	±4.2%	55	82.4%	81.3%	77.7%	84.1%
Type of examination							
Coastal Skipper for Power (CSCCP)	94.0%	±2.2%	43	95.5%	92.4%	92.5%	92.7%
Yachtmaster Ocean for Sail (YMOS)	91.2%	±2.0%	53	91.2%	91.0%	91.4%	88.9%
Yachtmaster Offshore for Power (YMP)	90.8%	±2.3%	86	89.6%	89.7%	88.9%	88.8%
Yachtmaster Offshore for Sail (YMS)	89.8%	±1.1%	282	89.3%	89.8%	89.2%	88.7%
Coastal Skipper for Sail (CSCCS)	89.6%	±2.0%	132	91.5%	93.4%	89.5%	89.6%
*Yachtmaster Ocean for Power (YMOP)	-	-	4	91.4%	-	-	-

*Results are not shown for groups with sample sizes below 10, as the small sample size means that these results are not strictly statistically reliable.

Satisfaction Indices by Segment



*Yachtmaster Ocean for Power (YMOP) is not included in the above chart due to the sample being less than 10.

5 Relative performance

5.1 The Satisfaction Benchmark League Table

RYA's *Satisfaction Index*™ for 2008 is 90.4%. According to our databank, based on many customer satisfaction measurement projects, 90.4% represents an above average performance, placing RYA high up in the top quartile of suppliers, as shown in the league table.

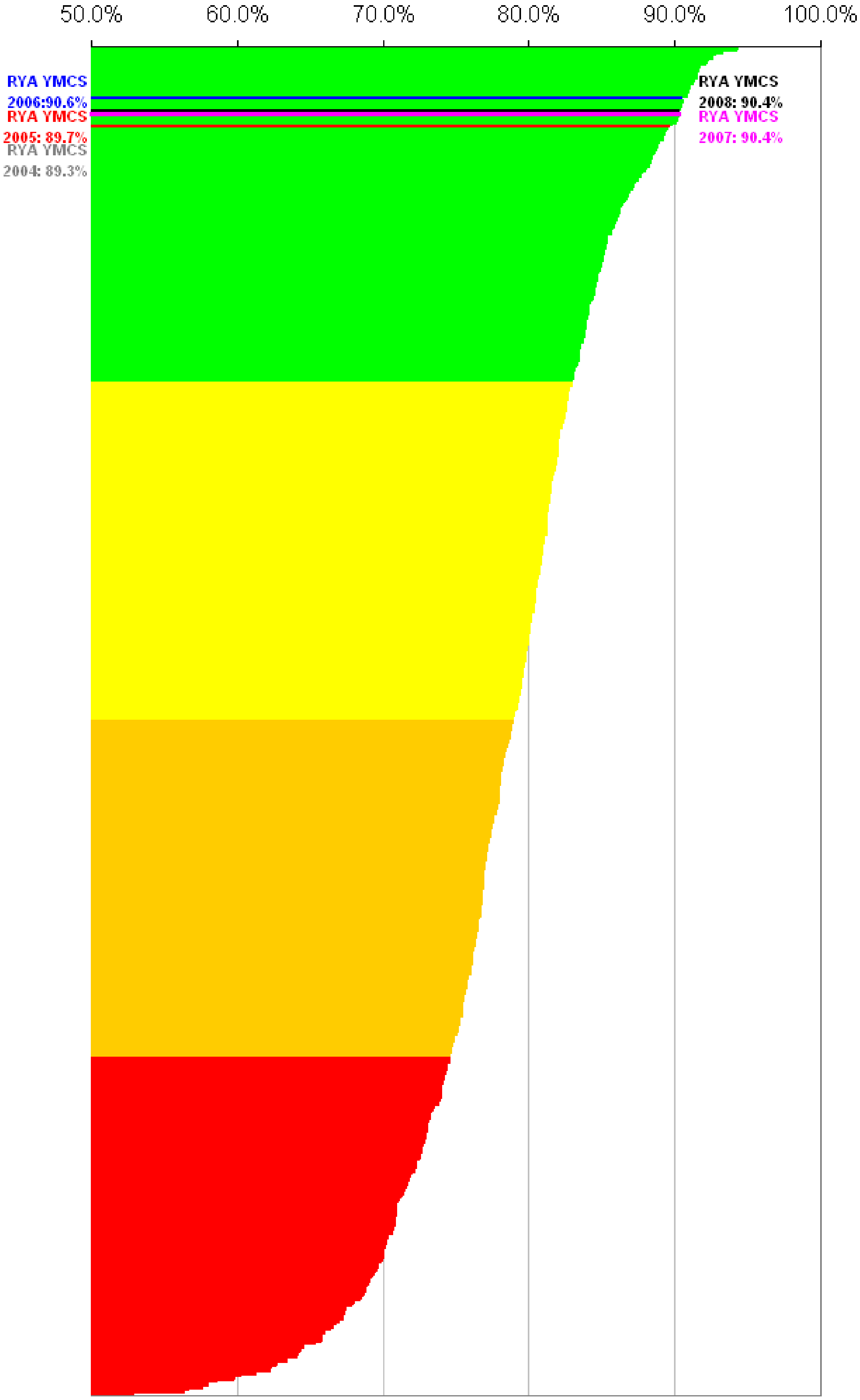
RYA's overall percentile score is 96th, which is the same percentile score recorded in the 2007 survey.

The league table shows RYA's success in satisfying customers compared with other organisations generally. This is the most useful benchmark of customer satisfaction since customers make these judgements by comparing your performance against that of all other organisations that they have used.

Methodologically, the league table provides a comparable benchmark across industries because *Satisfaction Index*™ is a measure of an organisation's success in meeting its customers' requirements. Organisations operating in different sectors do not have to meet the same customer requirements, but to succeed in their markets they do have to meet (or exceed) whatever those customer requirements are. *Satisfaction Index*™ is a measure of an organisation's ability to do that as judged by the customers themselves.

Benchmarking more widely than your own industry is therefore strongly recommended. The league table is anonymous since data on the performance of individual companies is totally confidential.

Satisfaction Index™ League Table



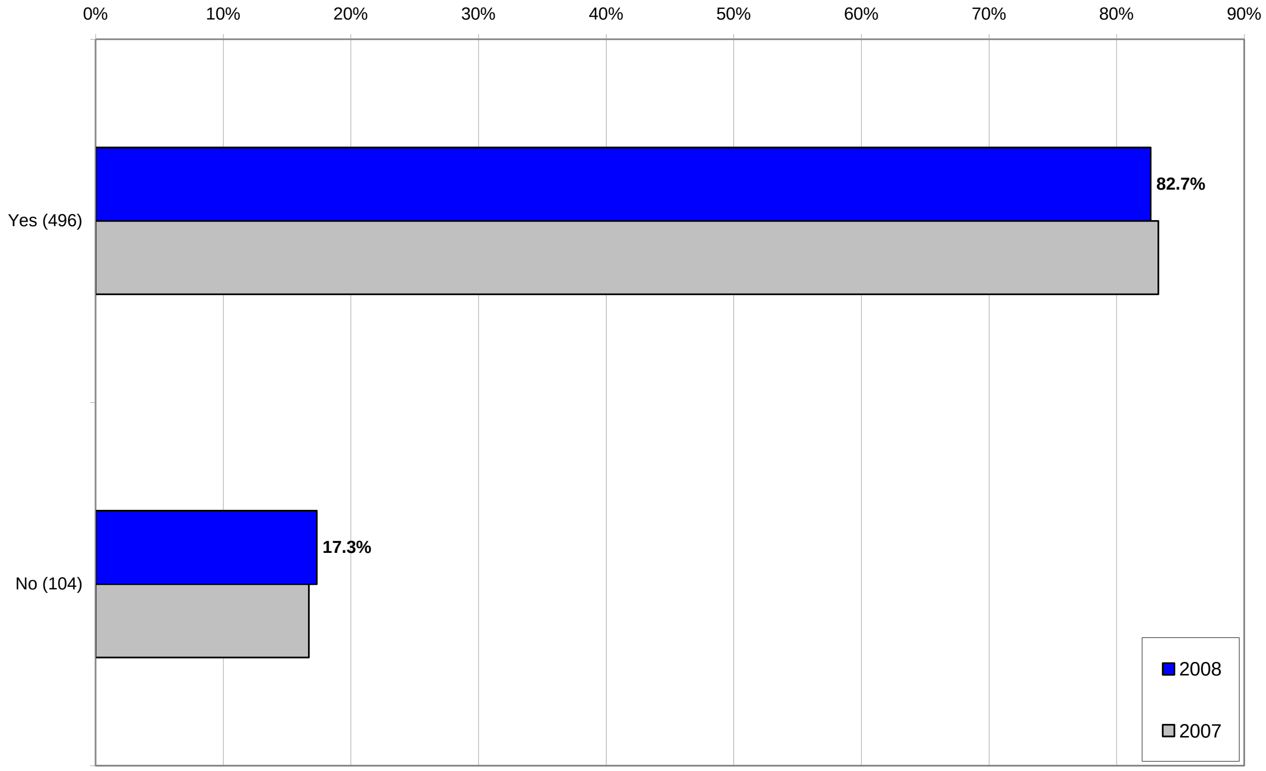
6 Student activity, confidence and other topics

Towards the end of the interview, some additional questions were asked. The questions and their results are shown in this section.

6.1 Did you attend a course with an RYA recognised Centre prior to your examination?

The above question was asked to all RYA customers to establish participation levels in courses prior to the Yachtmaster/Coastal Skipper examination, the following chart tracks the proportion of customers who did.

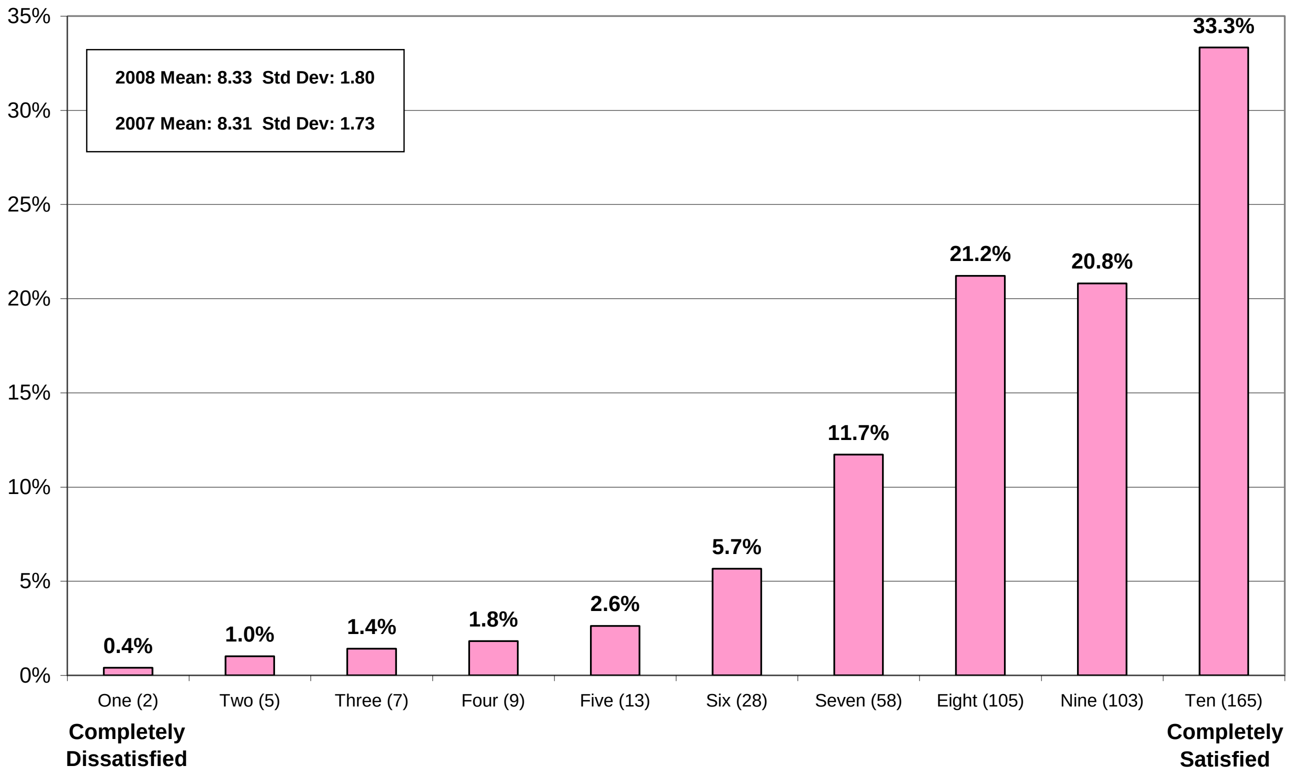
Attended course prior to the examination



Any customers who stated they had participated in a course were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the course, using a scale of one to ten, where ten means ‘completely satisfied’ and one means ‘completely dissatisfied’. The histogram on the following page shows customer responses.

The spread of scores for course satisfaction is shown below with the mean score and standard deviation also shown.

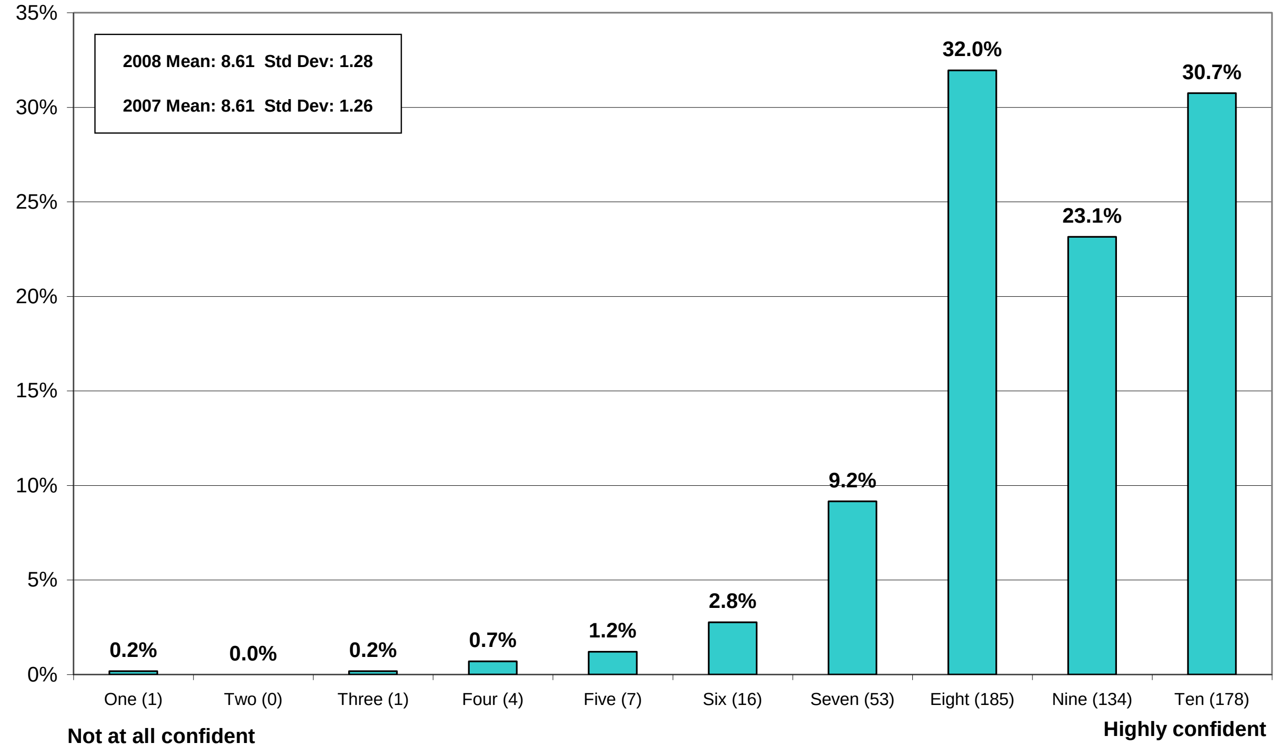
Course Satisfaction



The mean course satisfaction score is slightly higher than the 2007 score of 8.31, with a mean score of 8.33.

6.2 Having been through the RYA training and examination process, how confident are you that you have gained the level of competence you need?

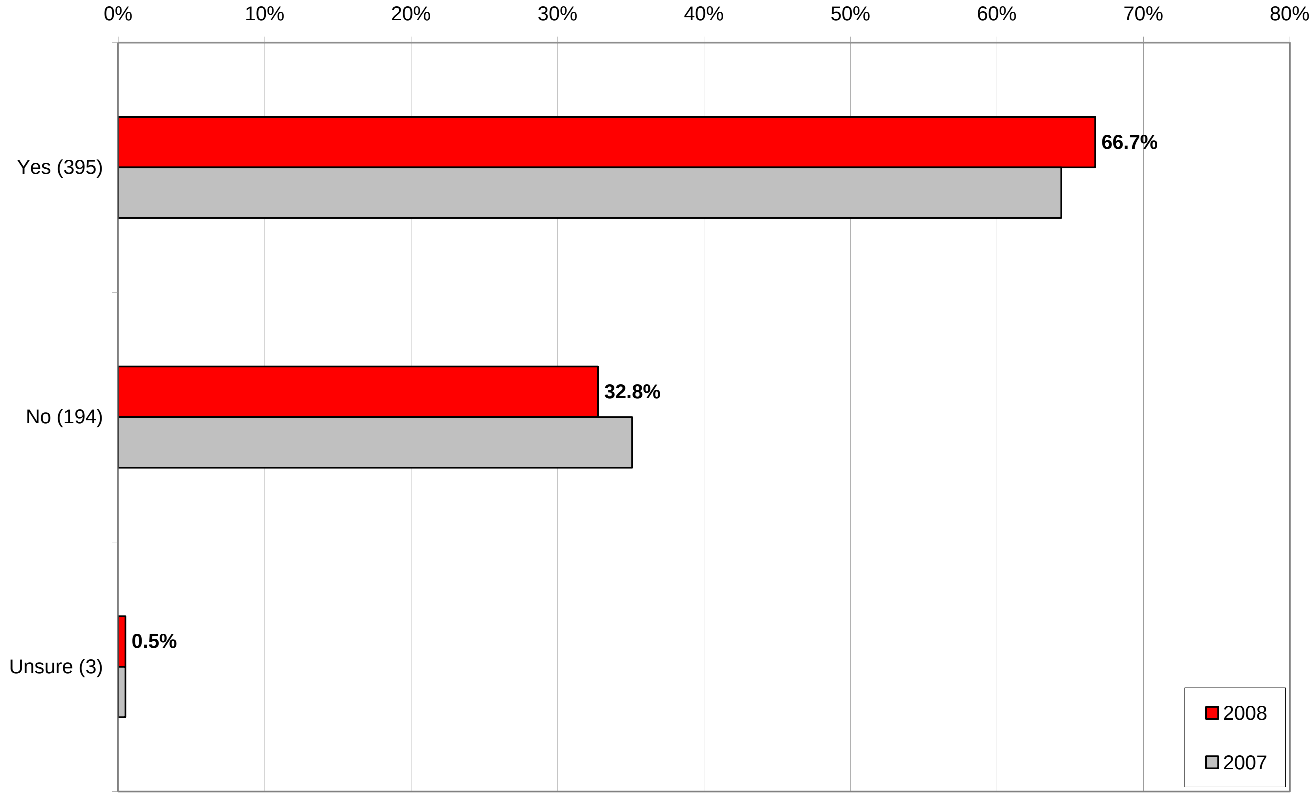
Customers were asked to give a score from 1 to 10, where 1 means ‘not at all confident’ and 10 means ‘highly confident’.



This year the mean score for this question is 8.61, showing no change on the mean score recorded in 2007.

6.3 Do you intend to use this qualification professionally?

Customers were asked to indicate whether they intend to use this qualification professionally, the pie chart below highlights their response.



The 66.7% of customers that intend to use this qualification professionally is a slight increase on the percentage of customers that answered 'yes' in 2007 (64.4%).

7 Priorities for Improvement (PFIs)

In order to suggest where best to focus resources on making the improvements that will contribute most to increasing customer satisfaction, we take a number of factors into account. Detailed in this section, the factors are:

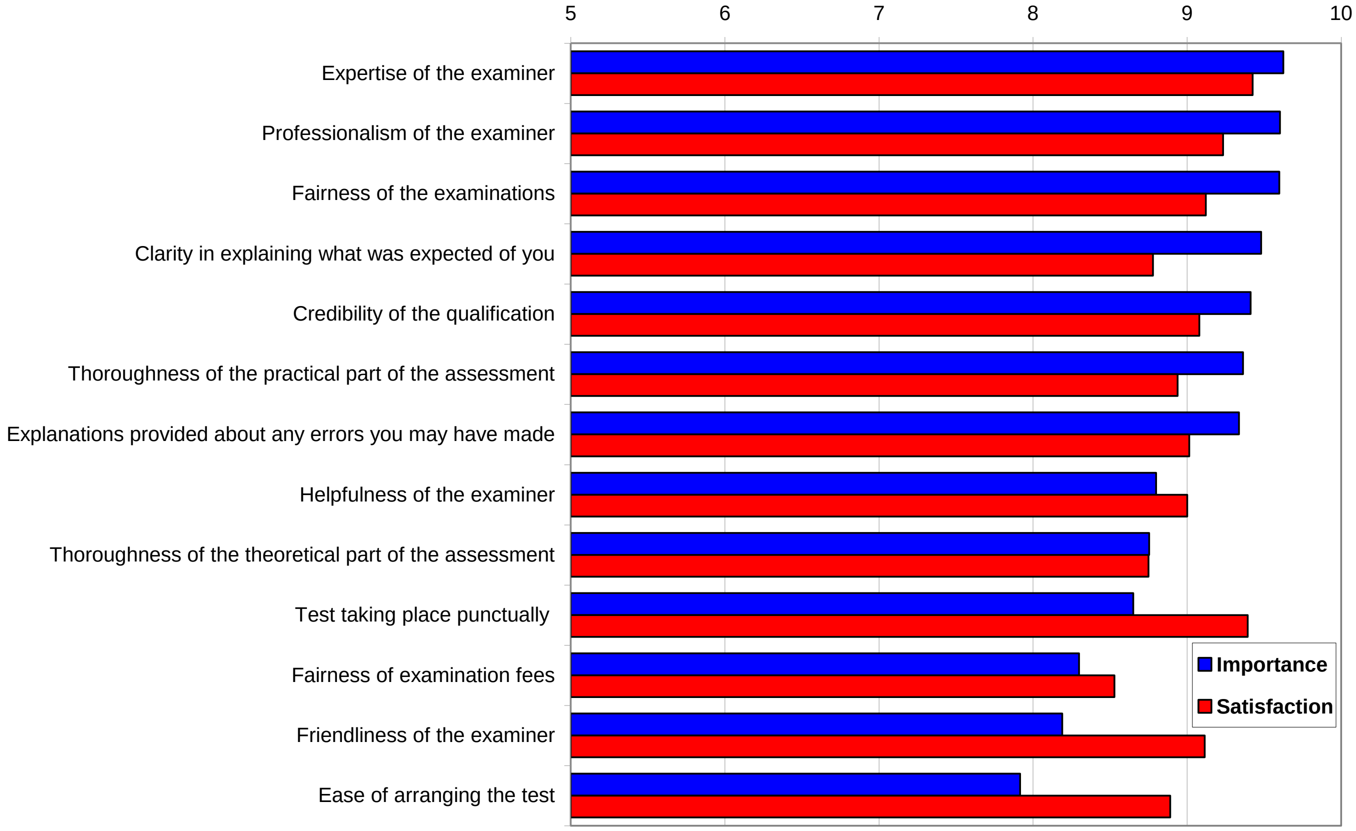
- ☐ Importance ratings
- ☐ Satisfaction scores
- ☐ Satisfaction drivers
- ☐ Causes of dissatisfaction
- ☐ Business impact

7.1 Satisfaction gaps

By comparing customers' requirements (importance ratings) with their perceptions of your organisation (satisfaction ratings) the areas in which you are exceeding, meeting or failing to meet customers' needs is identified.

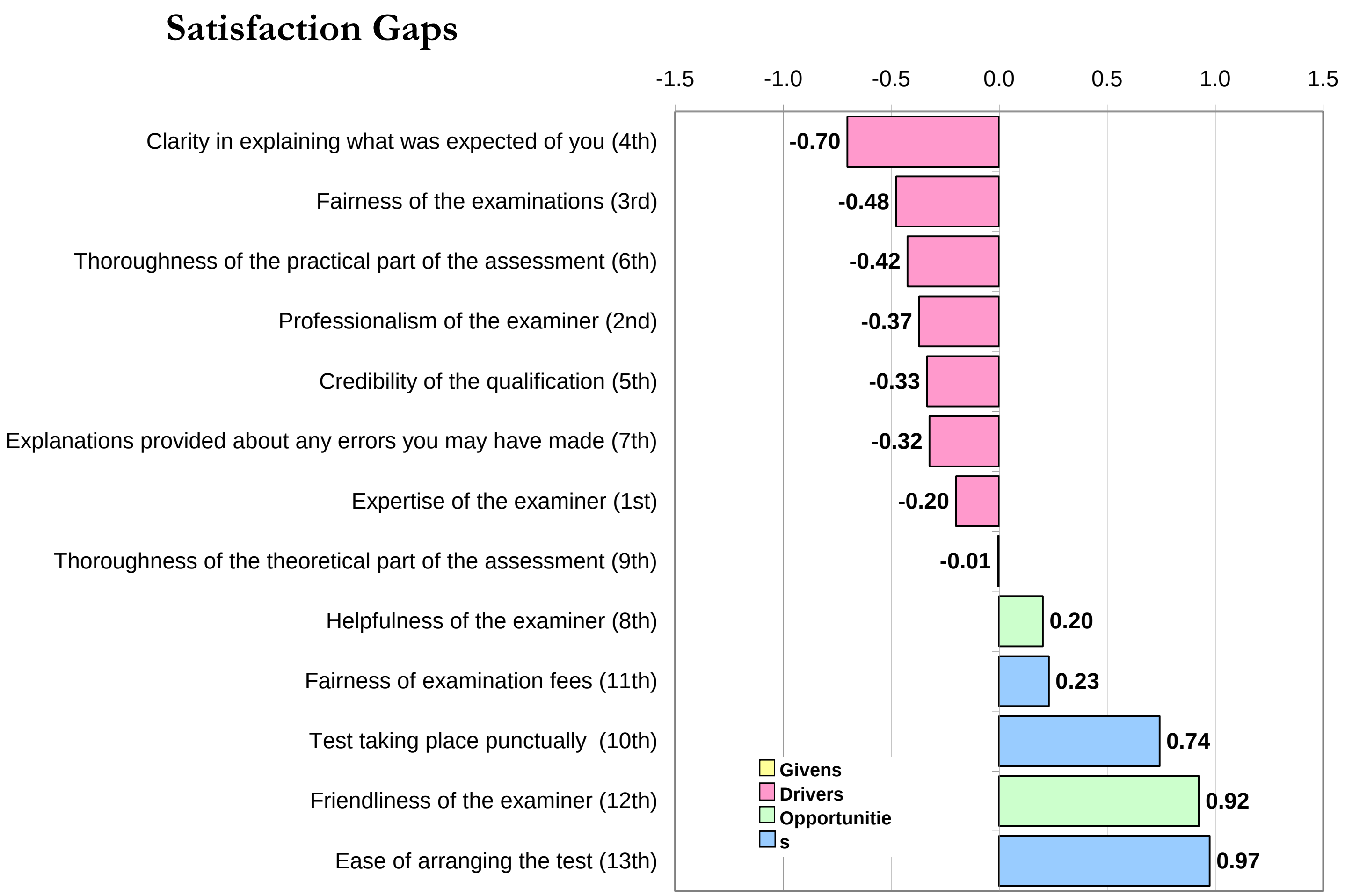
The following chart compares RYA's overall importance and satisfaction scores for each requirement:

Doing best what matters most



7.2 Size of gap

Placing the factors in order by size of gap, as in the following chart, allows greater focus. The stated importance rank of each requirement is shown in brackets.



7.3 Reasons for dissatisfaction

Shown in section 3.2, the main reasons for dissatisfaction are:

☐ Fairness of examination fees
☐ Clarity in explaining what was expected of you

7.4 Satisfaction drivers

As described earlier (in section 2.3), as well as looking at the importance scores that customers have given, it is also important to consider the impact of each factor on customers' satisfaction.

This analysis highlighted the key drivers of satisfaction as:

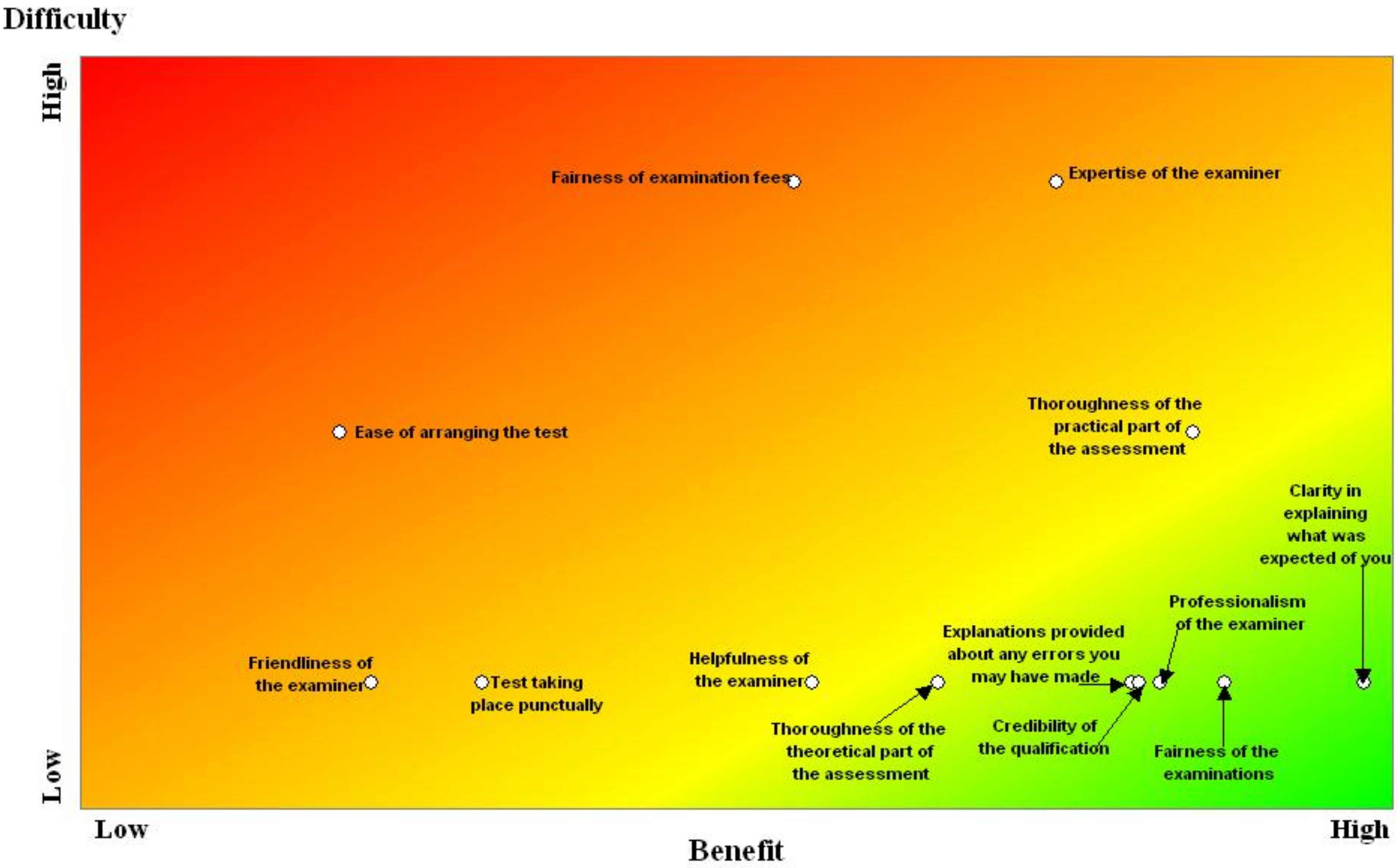
☐ Thoroughness of the practical part of the assessment
☐ Fairness of the examinations
☐ Professionalism of the examiner
☐ Explanations provided about any errors you may have made
☐ Clarity in explaining what was expected of you
☐ Credibility of the qualification
☐ Expertise of the examiner

7.5 Business impact

Some PFIs will be more difficult, more time consuming and more costly to address than others. We are certainly not advocating avoidance of the difficult issues but do believe it important to adopt at least one PFI which can be addressed relatively easily – a quick win. It is very helpful if both customers and employees can see prompt action being taken as a direct result of the survey.

Adopting PFIs which will generate the greatest possible gains in customer satisfaction at the lowest possible cost will have the most positive business impact. The Cost-Benefit Matrix below illustrates where the most cost-effective gains may be made. The customer requirements have been categorised into bands (by RYA management) according to the assumed cost and time involved in making improvements, and this is compared against the benefit of improving each requirement, as determined by the satisfaction gap.

As shown in the matrix, some requirements, particularly those in the green area, should bring high returns due to the high benefit of improving each factor and relatively low cost. However, requirements in the red area bring less benefit and have a high relative cost.


Difficulty
High
Low
Fairness of examination fees
Expertise of the examiner
Ease of arranging the test
Thoroughness of the practical part of the assessment
Clarity in explaining what was expected of you
Professionalism of the examiner
Explanations provided about any errors you may have made
Friendliness of the examiner
Test taking place punctually
Helpfulness of the examiner
Thoroughness of the theoretical part of the assessment
Credibility of the qualification
Fairness of the examinations
Low
High
Benefit

7.6 Priorities for Improvement

The priorities for improvement we recommend are:

- ☐ **Clarity in explaining what was expected of you,** and **Explanations provided about any errors you may have made**
- ☐ **Fairness of the examinations**
- ☐ **Thoroughness of the practical part of the assessment**

Focusing on these areas should result in an even higher index and more satisfied customer..

Appendix 1- Detailed results

The table following shows the mean importance and satisfaction scores, together with the standard deviation. A low standard deviation (below 1.00) indicates a strong consensus of opinion on the importance of a particular factor; a high standard deviation (above 2.00) indicates a wide disparity of views.

Requirement	2006 Importance Scores	2007 Importance Scores	2008 Importance Scores	Standard Deviation	2006 Satisfaction Scores	2007 Satisfaction Scores	2008 Satisfaction Scores	Standard Deviation	2006 Impact	2007 Impact	2008 Impact
Ease of arranging the test	7.84	7.55	7.92	1.94	8.94	8.92	8.89	1.35	0.36	0.44	0.46
Test taking place punctually	8.57	8.40	8.65	1.52	9.35	9.37	9.39	1.13	0.32	0.41	0.44
Friendliness of the examiner	8.17	8.34	8.19	1.80	9.09	9.20	9.11	1.43	0.45	0.48	0.56
Helpfulness of the examiner	8.67	8.74	8.80	1.35	9.11	9.11	9.00	1.54	0.50	0.52	0.60
Professionalism of the examiner	9.56	9.53	9.60	0.71	9.36	9.32	9.23	1.42	0.62	0.57	0.65
Expertise of the examiner	9.59	9.58	9.62	0.70	9.47	9.46	9.43	1.01	0.48	0.52	0.60
Clarity in explaining what was expected of you	9.44	9.35	9.48	0.86	8.89	8.94	8.78	1.54	0.57	0.54	0.59
Thoroughness of the theoretical part of the assessment	8.77	8.57	8.75	1.36	8.67	8.69	8.75	1.34	0.47	0.52	0.55
Thoroughness of the practical part of the assessment	9.35	9.31	9.36	0.95	9.00	8.91	8.94	1.33	0.51	0.64	0.64
Fairness of the examinations	9.56	9.57	9.60	0.77	9.12	9.07	9.12	1.49	0.61	0.62	0.63
Explanations provided about any errors you may have made	9.28	9.26	9.34	1.06	9.03	8.97	9.01	1.42	0.60	0.61	0.60
Credibility of the qualification	9.39	9.35	9.41	1.11	8.96	8.94	9.08	1.42	0.53	0.50	0.59
Fairness of examination fees	8.07	7.91	8.30	1.74	8.59	8.44	8.53	1.57	0.41	0.55	0.48