Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor du Canada

Toward Citizen-Centred Service Delivery

A How-to Guide for the Service Improvement Initiative

TOGETHER
improving citizen satisfaction,

…a new focus and measure of success

Canada

Treasury Board of Canada
Secretariat

Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor
du Canada

Toward Citizen-Centred Service Delivery

A How-to Guide *for the* Service Improvement Initiative

MARCH 2001

Canada

Toward Citizen-Centred Service Delivery:

A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR THE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

Service and Innovation Sector
Innovation and Quality Services Division
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Table of Contents

Preface

Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada

Results for Canadians presents an agenda to guide Canada's public service managers. A "citizen focus" and a commitment to "citizen-centred service delivery" are central to this management agenda. To meet this commitment, the Government of Canada plans two major initiatives. The first initiative is Service Canada, which will help citizens find government services easily and in both official languages. The goal is to help citizens get the services they are entitled to, in a way that is fast, convenient, seamless and connected. The second initiative is the Service Improvement Initiative, which focuses on the performance of Government of Canada services. The Service Improvement Initiative aims to achieve a significant and quantifiable improvement in client satisfaction with services over the next five years. A related initiative is Government-On-Line, which is a key enabler to improve both access and service performance.

Purpose of this Guide

This guidebook is a fundamental tool in the implementation of the Service Improvement Initiative, for use by program managers responsible for service delivery in federal departments and agencies as well as by individuals especially those responsible for departmental and agency service quality initiatives.

Here you will find a detailed and holistic method for planning and implementing service improvement, based on the client's perspective. It includes step-by-step descriptions of suggested activities, with associated tools in the appendices.

This is a document in progress, and will be further developed and refined as it is used in the lead departments and agencies of the Service Improvement Initiative.

Overview of the Service Improvement Initiative

In the fall of 1998, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) created the Assistant Deputy Minister Advisory Committee on Service and Innovation (ACSI) to help develop the citizen-centred service strategy for the Government of Canada that would respond to citizen needs and priorities for service improvement. A series of working groups were established to undertake its work, including the Service Improvement Planning and Implementation (SIPI) Subcommittee. Using research into public sector good practices, the Subcommittee developed the SIPI methodology, for the continuous improvement of Government of Canada service quality, which this guide explains in detail.

The essence of the Service Improvement Initiative is that the continuous and measurable improvement of client satisfaction is the most reliable indicator of improvement in service quality and service performance: it is what quality and continuous improvement should now mean, and how they should be primarily, though not exclusively, measured. Leading-edge service organizations in the public sector, like their private sector counterparts, now use a results-based approach to the continuous improvement of client satisfaction, integrated with the annual business planning cycle.

The policy framework approved by the Treasury Board for the Service Improvement Initiative provides that, when fully implemented, departments and agencies that have significant direct service delivery activities with Canadians shall:

- adopt a comprehensive continuous improvement planning and implementation approach to service improvement and client satisfaction;
- establish documented baseline measures of citizen satisfaction for key services to the public, using the metrics of the Common Measurements Tool developed by the award-winning Citizen-Centred Service Network;
- prepare and implement annual service improvement plans based on clients' priorities for service improvement;
- establish a minimum 10% improvement target for improved client satisfaction over the five years of the Initiative for each key service to the public;
- adopt and publish core service standards for each service channel;
- incorporate results-based service improvement accountability for managers as part of existing performance management systems, commencing with Deputy Ministers;
- report within the existing annual RPP/DPR planning and reporting process on:
  - service standards for all key public services;
  - performance against service standards;
  - annual improvements in client satisfaction;
  - progress toward five-year satisfaction targets.

The Service Improvement Initiative will be implemented through a phased-in approach. A small number of "mission critical" departments—those whose service performance will have the greatest immediate impact on Canadians—will be identified and will serve as "lead departments" for the initiative, moving at a faster pace and showing the way for others. In Phase One (2000-2001), all departments with key services to the public are asked to identify and report on service standards for key public services and establish client satisfaction baseline measures. In addition to these basic steps, the lead departments will also set initial targets for service improvement; develop service improvement plans based on client priorities; take action on these priorities; and report on performance against service standards.

In Phase Two, all departments with key services to the public will begin to implement the steps undertaken by the lead departments in the first phase, while the lead departments will begin to report client satisfaction measures against the baseline established in Phase One. In the third phase, both lead and other departments will have reached the same level and will be reporting annually on progress toward the minimum 10% improvement objective over five years.

Citizens First

In 1998, the Canadian Centre for Management Development's Citizen-Centred Service Network, composed of 220 senior service delivery officials from the three orders of government in Canada, produced the *Citizens First* national survey which documented Canadians' expectations, satisfaction and priorities for service improvement.

The *Citizens First* national survey reported that citizens rate a range of federal public services at 6.0 out of 10—about the same as a range of private sector services but slightly behind a range of provincial (6.2 out of 10) and municipal services (6.4 out of 10).

Canadians expect stellar performance from their public service. Indeed, an astounding 95% expect the quality of public service to be as high or higher than that provided by the private sector, according to the 1998 *Citizens First* survey. That comes despite the public's recognition that public servants have a tougher job to do than the private sector, balancing the public interest with the needs of individual citizens.

To serve Canadians better, governments need to understand Canadians' service needs better. That is the crux of this Service Improvement Initiative—better understanding leading to better service leading to greater satisfaction, while making services easier to find and access.

Findings of the *Citizens First* research helps in that understanding:

- Five factors explain over 70% of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in using a government service: timeliness; fairness; courtesy; competence and outcome. These can be considered the five main drivers of citizen satisfaction for most services.
- When all five factors are done well, ratings of 80% or better are achieved. But when just one driver is inadequate, ratings drop by 20 percentage points. Do poorly on two or more drivers, and the ratings drop into the basement.
- The most important driver is timeliness: 60% of the time, when citizens are not satisfied, it is because we take too long.
- One in four times when citizens try to find a service, they have trouble locating the right access point.
- When Canadians access the right organization, 60% are then disappointed by being shunted to voice mail, passed off to several different people who don't know the answer (and don't promise to find it and call back), or other impediments.
- Sixteen per cent of requests need more than one organization to solve their request (for example, a federal passport requires a provincial birth certificate).
- Canadians' priorities for service improvements include improved telephone service, one-stop service, reduced red tape, and more mail and electronic service delivery.
- The federal government services Canadians most want to see improved are Employment Insurance, Canada Employment Centres, the justice system, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Canada Post, and Canada Pension/Old Age Security.

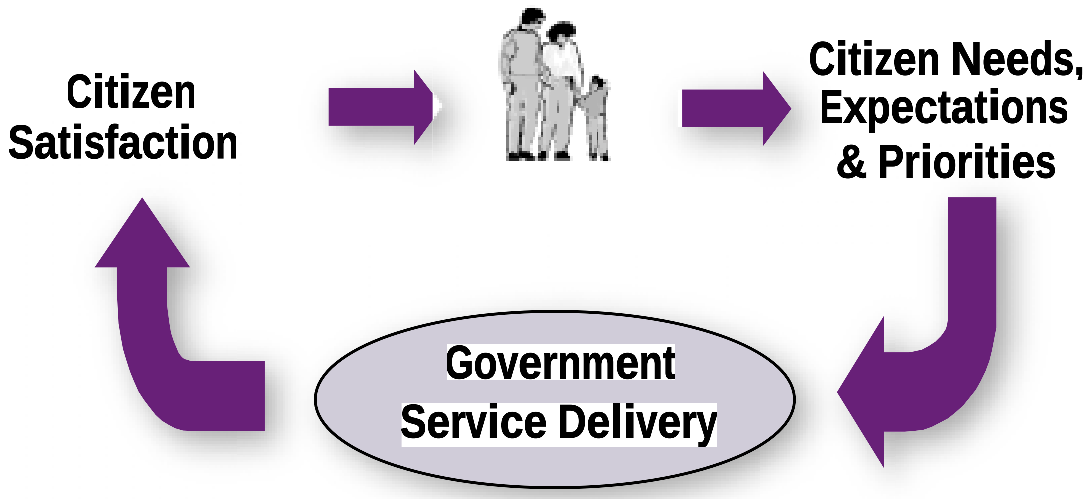
The Five Key Drivers of Service Quality—*Citizens First* Survey, 1998[1]

Driver	Survey Measure
Timeliness	How satisfied were you with the time it took to get the service?
Knowledge, competence	Staff were knowledgeable and competent
Courtesy, comfort	Staff were courteous and made me feel comfortable
Fair treatment	I was treated fairly
Outcome	In the end, did you get what you needed?

1 Chart taken from the *Citizens First* report, 1998. Prepared by Erin Research Inc. and published by the Canadian Centre for Management Development, p. 31.

The Outside-In Approach

Over the past decade, government has been gradually moving from an "inside-out" approach—basing service on what the organization saw as important—to an "outside-in" approach. The Service Improvement Initiative continues and accelerates this transition to an outside-in approach. It bases service delivery on citizens' needs and expectations.



Citizens and Clients: A Note on Terminology

The primary focus of this guide is the improvement of client satisfaction with the delivery of government services. Yet this objective takes its place within a broader commitment of the Government of Canada to citizen-centred service delivery. It may be helpful to say something briefly here about the relationship between these two terms, citizen and client.[2] By "clients", we mean the direct users or recipients of government services. But the clients of government services are not "just" clients, as they would be in the private sector. They are usually also taxpayers and citizens, bearers of rights and duties in a framework of democratic community. While clients of the Government of Canada are usually citizens of Canada, they may also be potential citizens of Canada, or citizens of another country, with a business, professional or personal interest in Canada.

Government service delivery should be citizen-centred for at least three reasons. First, it should be conceived and executed from the outside-in—not inside-out—with the needs, perspectives and satisfaction of citizens foremost in mind. Second, many of the clients of government are "involuntary clients," whose service relationship with government derives from their obligations as citizens, or from the rights of other citizens. Third, those who deliver government services should always bear in mind that the quality of government service delivery can and should contribute to strengthen democratic citizenship, and the bonds of confidence and trust between citizens, and between citizens and their democratic governments.

2 A longer discussion of this important question may be found in *A Strong Foundation: Report of the Task Force on Public Service Values and Ethics*, 1996. This document can be obtained from the Canadian Centre for Management Development.

Those who deliver government services may have to balance the distinct interests and needs of different groups or categories of clients and citizens, within the broader framework of the public interest. They may also have to balance the interests of immediate clients with those of the citizens of Canada as a whole. For this reason, this guide will sometimes refer to “client satisfaction,” and sometimes to “client and citizen satisfaction.” This may help to remind the reader both that the satisfaction of immediate clients needs to go hand in hand with the confidence of all citizens in the institutions of government, and that clients are also citizens themselves, whose pride and belief in citizenship can be strengthened or weakened by the service experience. That is both the challenge and the glory of service delivery in the public sector.

GETTING STARTED

In 1992, the Vancouver International Airport Authority (YVR) developed a vision of itself for the future—what it would look like in 2010. As it embarked on a program of capital improvements, YVR initiated a parallel program of service improvement. One aspect of this initiative is the Customer Satisfaction Tracking Program that monitors, measures and benchmarks service performance. Passengers—the primary clients of YVR—are surveyed on a quarterly basis about their overall satisfaction with the airport services and facilities, and with specific services offered at YVR—from customs and immigration to parking to washrooms. As well, these clients are asked to identify their priorities for improvement. Service improvements are then based on this client feedback. With the use of a consistent survey tool over time, the organization has been able to benchmark its progress. The result of this client-centred approach to service improvement: client satisfaction has risen from 68 to 84 percent between 1994 and 1997.*

Overview of the Service Improvement Planning and Implementation Methodology— Four Questions and Nine Steps to Success

The Service Improvement Initiative applies to departments and agencies with significant direct service activities with Canadians. This guide outlines a series of interconnected steps to take you on the path to increased client satisfaction (Figure 1). There are four key questions to answer, or groupings of steps. After each question, you should pause and re-evaluate progress before proceeding.

1. **Where are we now?** It all begins with understanding where the organization is now in terms of who are its clients and their current level of satisfaction. This involves two separate elements. First, an assessment to identify the key public services delivered by the organization and who the actual clients are (step 1). Second, the organization will determine the current levels of client satisfaction and expectations—as well as the client priorities for improvement for each of these key public services (step 2).

2. **Where do our clients want us to be?** In this stage, the organization establishes where its clients want the organization to be in the future. This starts with ensuring the mission statement of the organization includes a service vision (step 3). The organization must then decide how to improve Canadians' satisfaction with the delivery of key public services. Priorities must be developed (step 4) and standards and targets set (step 5).

3. **How will we get there?** In step 6, the organization determines how it will achieve this future state—in short, how it will get there. This involves the creation of a service improvement plan.

* Adapted from D.M. Blythe and D.B. Marson, 1999. "Measuring Customer Satisfaction at the Vancouver International Airport Authority" in *Good Practices in Citizen-Centred Service.* Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, pp. 17-22.

CLIENT FEEDBACK

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK AND INVOLVEMENT

Where are we now?

Step 1

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT
Identifying the internal and external client(s), product(s), service(s), partners, and stakeholders

Step 2

ASSESS CURRENT STATE
Establishing a client feedback strategy; identifying current levels of client and employee satisfaction, expectations and priorities

Where do our clients want us to be?

Step 3

DESIRED FUTURE STATE
Ensuring the mission statement includes a service vision

Step 4

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Identifying client priorities for service improvement

Step 5

SET STANDARDS AND TARGETS
Setting client satisfaction improvement targets;
setting client driven service standards

How will we get there?

Step 6

DESIGN IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Developing action plans to achieve targets;
defining a schedule;
allocating resources and responsibilities

How do we make it happen?

Step 7

IMPLEMENTATION
Implementing the improvement plan

Step 8

MONITOR
Monitoring and measuring progress;
ensuring accountability for results

Step 9

RECOGNITION
Establishing, monitoring and maintaining an employee recognition program

4. **How do we make it happen?** In the final stage, the organization looks at how it will make the improvements happen. The plan must be implemented (step 7) and monitored (step 8). Feedback must be sought from both clients and employees, with those findings assessed and used to reshape and improve the implementation plan. Finally, the organization should establish a staff recognition program that ensures the hard work that goes into improved service delivery is rewarded (step 9).

Together, these nine steps provide a path to higher client satisfaction. We'll look at each step, in turn, in the next nine sections, showcasing how public service organizations can improve client service and satisfaction.

Targeting Exercise—Identifying which Programs and Services to Include in the Service Improvement Initiative

An initial task to begin the Service Improvement Initiative will be to identify the key services for inclusion in the Service Improvement Initiative. Each department or agency embarking on service improvement will need to establish its priorities for applying the Service Improvement Planning and Implementation (SIPI) methodology. The following criteria are among those for use to identify programs and services included in the Initiative:

- they reach a significant number or group of Canadians;
- they are related to the top priorities identified by the *Citizens First* survey; and/or
- involve direct interaction with Canadians at large, with business, or with significant groups or communities of Canadians.

Each organization should develop its own service improvement plan that is consistent with the government-wide Initiative and goes beyond it to meet the organization's particular needs. In addition, this Service Improvement Initiative should be progressively integrated into the planning and reporting activities of each organization, and reflected in the annual Report on Plans and Priorities and Departmental Performance Report, which are both submitted to Parliament.

Leadership

Much has been written on leadership. Two notions are critical to the success of all change efforts. First, leaders must play a central role in setting the direction for the organization to ensure effective service improvement. Second, they must maintain sustained leadership throughout the initiative. Leadership is a cornerstone on which the service improvement process is based.

Leaders are responsible for overseeing implementation of the initiative. Specific steps leaders will take along the road to more satisfied citizens and clients may include:

1. Tailoring the government-wide, citizen-centred service delivery to the local level. That not only involves adapting it to the specific needs of individual work units, but also making the program's implementation seamless from "Clerk to clerk"—from the Clerk of the Privy Council to the clerk in the local field office.
2. Establishing a Service Improvement Team to begin planning.
3. Helping to identify key client groups and spearheading the feedback process by consulting with clients, citizens and staff.
4. Establishing base-line measures of satisfaction with the delivery of service.

5. Overseeing the establishment of a service improvement plan, including targets for improvement and systems to measure achievement using the Common Measurements Tool, so that satisfaction levels can be systematically improved.
6. Establishing service standards based upon client priorities and systems for measurement.
7. Establishing accountability systems.
8. Leading implementation of the Service Improvement Plan, the follow-up and the celebration of success.

Throughout, communication will be essential. In a 1999 best seller, *Powerful Conversations*, Phil Harkins notes that leaders achieve goals through daily conversation, not memos. They must seek out, inspire and develop the allegiance of the organization's passionate champions—people whom others respect, and who can act as role models and catalysts for change.

They bring these champions on side through conversations that have three stages: expression of the leader's need for assistance and an honest declaration of his or her agenda; probing for the colleague's needs and how those can be accommodated; and finally, the development of, and agreement on, a common course.

It isn't enough to have a great strategy. People have to want to follow it. To achieve that, you have to make connections—both intellectual and personal—that bring the beliefs of staff in line with the outside-in approach the organization has settled upon. They must see an advantage in coming on board—recognize how it allows them to achieve their own goals.

That requires inspiration. That requires communication. That requires leadership.

Assessment Grid—Understanding Current Service Improvement Activities and Building a Service Improvement Work Plan

Before undertaking the Service Improvement Planning and Implementation (SIPI) methodology in this Guide, it is recommended that you assess the current mechanisms (feedback strategy, service standards, improvement plans etc.) you already have in place for service improvement. This will help you develop your work plan for implementing the Service Improvement Initiative by assessing which service improvement activities you currently have and can build upon. The Assessment Grid (Appendix A) can be used to review the service improvement activities and mechanisms at the organizational/program level against each step of the SIPI methodology.

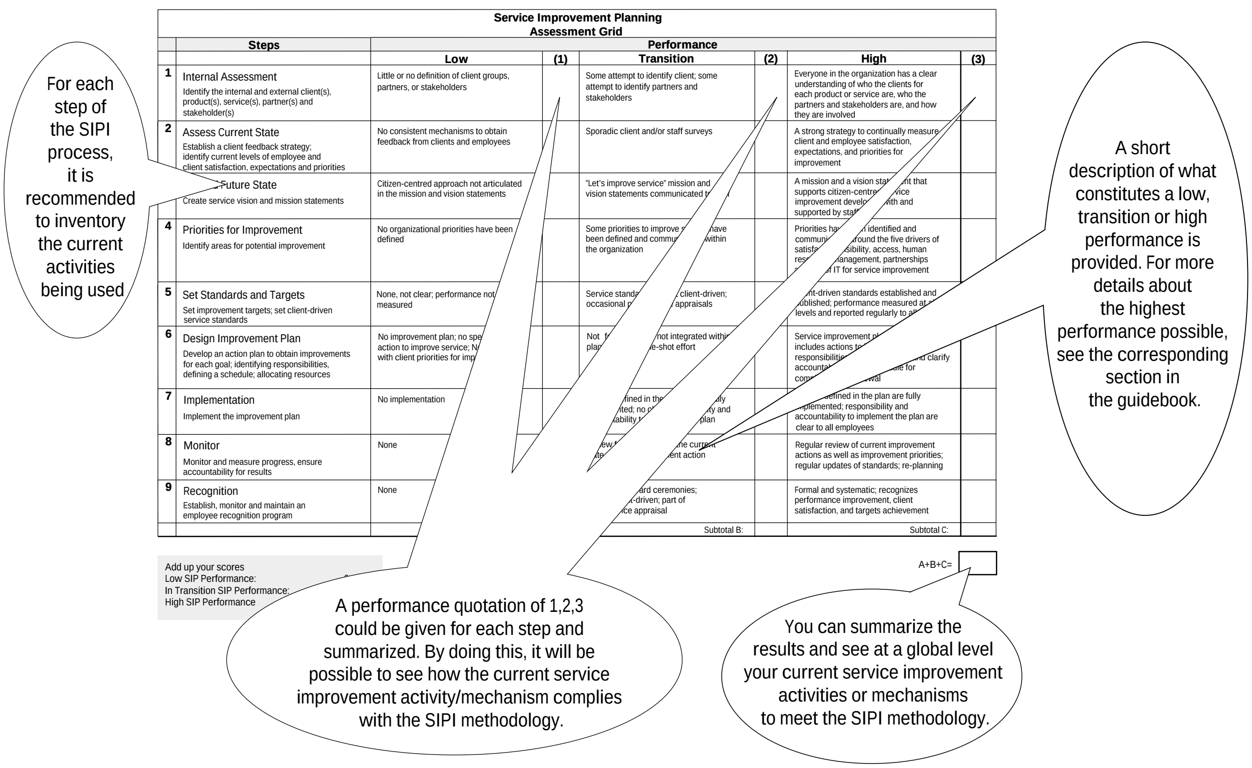
By using this Assessment Grid, you will find where your current activities and/or mechanisms are strong and which ones require adjustment. This will allow you to build on former initiatives and focus on where progress must be made in order to make your service improvement activities really citizen-centred.

There are many ways to use this Assessment Grid. But however it is used, the first thing to do is to review the grid components and ensure that everyone in your Service Improvement Team understands it and has the same definition for each step of the SIPI methodology.

One option is that your Service Improvement Team passes through the grid within a work session with representatives of different areas of the organization, such as Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Measurement, Human Resources, Client Services and, most importantly, program deliverers. Another option is to conduct some interviews with key representatives of the organization and conduct a closing meeting in order to consolidate the information collected for each step and complete the grid. This exercise is an opportunity to identify good practices and past experiences to build upon, and internal resources and expertise that can contribute to the implementation of SIPI.

For each step of the SIPI methodology, the grid identifies three levels of performance: low, in transition, and high. A short definition of what constitutes each level of performance is provided below. Users of this grid should also refer to the appropriate section of this guide to obtain more details about what the expected outputs are for each of these steps. A quotation system will allow you to give a rating to the organization/program service improvement activity or mechanism and to use it as a starting point to assess the progress in the SIPI methodology.

The Assessment Review Grid at a Glance



By reviewing the current service improvement activities, you could, for example, learn that your current client feedback strategy doesn't allow identification of client priorities for improvement and that all that is required is a simple revision of the questionnaire you use. You could also learn that in one region or unit of your department, a considerable amount of work has been undertaken in order to set citizen-centred service standards. As a result, it may be possible to build upon this work for other parts of your organization.

In summary, using this Assessment Grid is a good way to:

- diagnose the current situation;
- identify the level of effort required to implement the Service Improvement Initiative;
- obtain the information required to brief your management team about the impact of implementing the SIPI methodology;
- create a realistic implementation plan; and,
- follow implementation progress.

Checklist for Getting Started

At the end of each chapter, a checklist of actions and responsibilities is included. After reading this section, you should:

- ❑ Be familiar with *Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada*. This document is available at the following address: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca
- ❑ Read the Policy Framework for Service Improvement in the Government of Canada. This document explains in detail the Service Improvement Initiative and is located on the Service Improvement Initiative Web site: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/
- ❑ Read the latest *Citizens First* research report, and consider the implications for your work. Links to the research reports are available through the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Service and Innovation Web site: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/
- ❑ Put in place a Service Improvement Team to begin the initiative. Members of this team will vary by department but you should look to include: managers of the programs that will be included in the Service Improvement Initiative; the service quality unit of the department or agency (if applicable), members of your corporate services team, including members of your evaluation unit (as they bring experience and understanding of social science research methods), and the unit responsible for reporting to Parliament (as these documents will be the main vehicle to report the results of your work).
- ❑ Discuss the findings with your employees and Service Improvement Team members.
- ❑ Develop a personal leadership strategy to help initiate and sustain the Initiative.

Where Are We Now?

STEP 1

Internal Assessment

It is surprising how little we know about our clients and how much we assume. Fifty years ago, most Canadians lived in small enough communities that many public servants knew their clients by name and were familiar with their family, habits and preferences. We have lost that intimacy.

The public service is not alone in that. A book on private sector client satisfaction describes the case of a bank that put stiff penalty fees on an inactive account which happened to belong to a 10-year-old girl. The girl became upset and closed her account, as did her father and aunt, two of the bank's largest depositors. The bank didn't know (or didn't care) that young children don't want service fees on their accounts. The bank didn't know about the family connection, and didn't know—but did eventually care—that by offending one customer they offended the whole family.

In the public sector a bad service experience can diminish pride in citizenship or a citizen's confidence and trust in the capacity of government. For this reason government service delivery should be citizen-centred. In the private sector, client needs, priorities, and expectations are identified by a variety of factors, from purchase trends to customer surveys and feedback to new product and service line development. Obviously, government can apply some of the same tools to understand citizen needs, priorities and service perceptions.

Clients and Client Groups

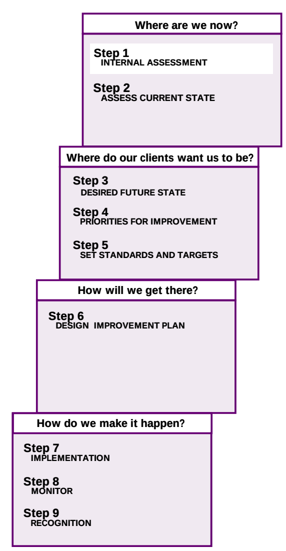
The first step in improving client satisfaction is to identify the clients of the organization, and the key public services to which the SIPI methodology should be applied.

This will answer the following questions:

- What is our business?
- What products and services do we provide?
- Who are our internal clients?
- Who are our external clients?
- Who are our partners?

Clients are not homogeneous. It is important to understand the patterns and diversity so that you can supply each client with the service they require. That will allow you to avoid being "captured" by the needs of one vocal or visible group and the notion that by answering their demands you are satisfying all clients.

In identifying clients and client groups, one eye-opening method that is used in both the private and public sector by innovative managers and employees is to "staple" yourself to



a purchase order or similar request for various services and to follow it through your system. That will allow you—for each product and service—to see who is involved in the process: external and internal clients, partners and various stakeholders.

Identifying Clients

Here are some other suggestions for identifying clients:

1. Determine what information your organization already has about your clients.
2. Confirm this information is thorough using multiple sources. Have the Service Improvement Team go through all of your processes, products and services to see who is touched by what you do. Contact other sections of your organization (communications, planning and public consultation people), or similar sections in other government organizations. Talk to stakeholders and search out other information sources.
3. Take the list to front-line staff. Ask them who has been missed.
4. If you have any multiple-contact services that involve other departments, such as between passport and citizenship offices, discuss joint clients together.
5. List the information you still need and identify sources for this information.
6. Set a timetable for the regular re-evaluation of your client identification information.

Identifying Products and Services

It sounds, at first, odd to ask managers to review and list their products and services. But services can be less tangible than clients. An initial list may identify services that are not provided and, in some locations, services provided are not listed.

Here are some questions to consider:

1. What is the role of your work unit? If necessary, define what you do and do not do.
2. Do the products and services correspond to your mandate?
3. Does the current range of services fully cover your mandate?

Identifying Partners and Stakeholders

In a similar way, review and list your stakeholders and partners. Both of these groups are good sources of information on your clients and services, and can contribute to the quality of the service provided. This is especially true of partners who are involved in actual service delivery.

	Minister/Executive	Professional Drivers	Private Drivers	Non-Drivers/Pedestrians	Law Enforcement	General Public
Licensing	S	P	P	S	S	S
Driver Testing	S	P	S	S	S	S
Carrier Permits	P	P	P	P	P	S
Public Information	P	P	P	S	S	S
Safety Legislation	P	P	P	S	S	S
Regulations	S	P	P	S	S	S

Analysis

This assessment step is essential as a basis for your citizen-centred Service Improvement Initiative. But it is also important not to get bogged down in endless research. The above steps should allow the improvement team to identify the products and services and the clients that use them in a simple matrix.[3] On the side, the products and services the organization provides are listed. Across the top, the clients, partners and stakeholders are identified, which include both internal and external clients of government. For each product or service, the clients can be identified with a check, or for a more in-depth analysis, with a 'P' for a primary client (direct users of the product or service) or 'S' for a secondary client (end users of the output or even indirect stakeholders).

Checklist for Step 1

At the end of this step, you will likely have:

- ❑ Identified the key public services to be included in the Service Improvement Initiative and to which the service improvement planning methodology will apply.
- ❑ A description of key internal and external clients of these products and services.
- ❑ A description of your partners and stakeholders, and how they are involved.
- ❑ Made sure these descriptions fit with the legislation and mandate, if applicable, and the prescribed objectives of the program or service.
- ❑ Analysis and documentation of client and stakeholders that includes an understanding of any conflicting roles between citizens' expectations and clients' desired levels of service.

See Appendix A

Service Improvement Assessment Grid

[3] This example is taken from *Listening to Customers: an Introduction* by S.A. Woodhouse, G.J. Connor, and D.B. Marson, 1993. Published by the Service Quality B.C. Secretariat, Province of British Columbia.

Where Are We Now?

STEP 2

Assess the Current State

Having built a better understanding of your clients and services to which the service improvement approach will apply, the next logical step is to begin to learn more about the clients so you can determine the current state of client satisfaction with your organization's services and establish a baseline from which to measure future improvement in citizen/client satisfaction.

To do that, the organization has to design and implement a continuous assessment strategy that includes: mechanisms to diagnose the main drivers of satisfaction (outlined in the Preface) for each key service, client group, partner and stakeholder; tools and methodology to measure and monitor client and staff satisfaction, expectations and priorities for improvement.

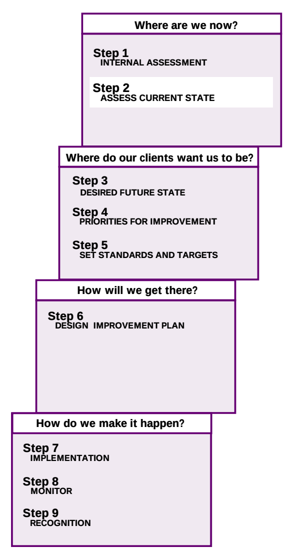
Establishing a Continuous Feedback Strategy

How are we doing, what needs improvement, asking questions, and listening to the answers is an ongoing process. The first time provides baseline data. Repeated at regular intervals, survey data is part of feedback strategy for the organization and linked with the organization's performance framework.

You will need to develop a process and time lines for initial surveys to gauge current client satisfaction, as well as follow up to assess the progress that has been made. Most departments and agencies will likely already have some methods to obtain feedback. They may include:

- postal, telephone, or electronic surveys;
- focus groups
- comment cards;
- complaints procedures;
- open houses and town hall meetings with client groups;
- citizen advisory councils;
- regular meetings with staff for input;
- evaluations, reviews, audits and Auditor-General reports.

While valuable, some of these methods are episodic and can be biased because the people willing to take the time to fill out comment cards or attend meetings may not be representative of the clientele. It may capture the comments of people vocal enough to complain, but not capture the comments of others equally (or even more) dissatisfied, but less vocal. Therefore, the feedback strategy should be balanced with methods that accurately reflect (from a statistical perspective) client satisfaction, such as postal, telephone or electronic surveys.



To Begin

Managers have an array of methods available to understand how well they are doing. The best method is simply to ask clients. Focus groups are an excellent method to do this. They involve gathering a small number of informed clients and asking them open-ended questions about service, quality, expectations and priorities for the future. Themes emerge which can then be used to create a survey designed to get more detailed responses from a larger sample.

Focus groups should be used at the start of the consultation process, but can also be used in the middle to help identify solutions, and at the end for feedback on implementation. The groups provide qualitative data, which is then refined by quantitative data, most notably with the Common Measurements Tool (CMT).

See Appendix B

Client Feedback Strategy

In response to a decline in campground attendance over several consecutive years, in 1985 BC Parks started to monitor visitor satisfaction levels in Provincial Parks to better serve its visitors and increase park use. Initially conducted as a pilot, satisfaction surveys were continued to create and maintain a customer-oriented management philosophy for the organization.

The Visitor Satisfaction Surveys are part of a larger information strategy for the organization. Other elements of the strategy include a citizen survey every five years, comment cards, and focus groups. Attendance and satisfaction improved as efforts were taken to close the gap between expectations and service delivery performance. As well, the organization surveys its staff every three to four years, to determine their satisfaction with their work, business practices, training and other internal services.

The feedback is now so integrated that it is proactive. When faced with a decision about whether or not to install a centralized telephone reservation system for campsites, BC Parks consulted the public, who supported the idea. Once implemented, the organization experienced increased satisfaction levels (along with ideas for improvement).

Input from visitors also leads to creative solutions. When decreased funding led to cutbacks in security and maintenance, satisfaction dropped. BC Parks responded by restoring those services in some parks, while creating a new policy that not all parks would offer the same level of service.

HRDC Income Security Program (ISP) (Ontario Region) recognized the value of consulting stakeholders. Concerned about benefit overpayments after the death of the recipient, they wanted more timely notification of deaths. ISP managers met with a group of stakeholders—funeral service directors—who agreed to notify ISP of deaths, in addition to informing the relatives of how to apply for Canada Pension Plan Survivor Benefits. Project leader Ellen Pasquale reports: “What started as a cost control, program integrity initiative provided an opportunity to demonstrate our compassion for the bereaved and be more efficient at providing survivor benefits.” A career civil servant, Pasquale was pleased when a funeral director said, “You must have been in retail to come up with such a client-centred idea.”

Common Measurements Tool (CMT)

While many tools are used to obtain feedback, the key one for the Service Improvement Initiative is the Common Measurements Tool (CMT). The CMT measures are the methodology authorized by the Treasury Board for use by organizations in the Service Improvement Initiative. The CMT is a measurement tool developed by the public sector to provide consistent quality information and to enable the comparison of results over time and across agencies. For the purposes of the Service Improvement Initiative, client feedback and satisfaction measures must be consistent with the CMT methodology in order to permit consistent measurement and comparison across the public service.

Using a five-point scale, the CMT assesses where service delivery exceeds, meets, or lags behind client expectations. It includes focused questions in the areas of service/product delivery, access and facilities, communication and cost, but also allows room for general comments on these issues. These questions will help the organization to address the experience of clients with services, their expectations, and their priorities for service improvement.

Organizations can add further questions or drop irrelevant ones, as the case may be, provided they maintain consistency of style and measurement. But each user should include a core set of government-wide questions (Appendix C) to provide benchmarks for comparison over time and across agencies. This set of questions is based on the main drivers of service quality identified in the *Citizens First* research, plus general questions on accessibility and overall satisfaction.

The CMT is in fact more than a questionnaire. With its accompanying manual, it is a guide to developing a survey of client satisfaction based on sound methodology. The CMT is discussed further in Appendix C of this report. A manager’s guide for the CMT is available on the CCMD Web site at http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/.

A Note on Methodology

If you do not have internal research expertise, it is useful to have an external expert review your plan. Issues such as validity, representative samples, consistency over time, confidentiality of participants, bias and other technical matters need to be resolved. Guidance on methodology can be obtained from the Service and Innovation Sector of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

Establish Baseline Data

The next step is to implement the feedback strategy by employing the CMT and other tools to obtain baseline data. That will provide a reliable sense of the starting point for the organization and answer the question: “How Are We Doing?”

Environment Canada—Prairie and Northern Region (Human Resources Branch), for example, found a baseline of 51 percent. That was—it’s worth stressing—not a surprising result. Different organizations and types of services will have different baselines and different ceilings on what can likely be achieved. Fire departments tend to attain top service ratings, with satisfaction levels around 80 percent. But other kinds of public services may be doing well at much lower levels of satisfaction. It is, therefore, important to understand the standard satisfaction range for your type of organization or service, and where you currently are located in this range.

There may well be some trepidation about finding out how you are viewed by clients. Yet, it is important to remember that the idea here is to start the process of measuring yourself against yourself so that you can determine priorities for improvement and ultimately implement an improvement plan. That, in turn, will require regular updates on client satisfaction through the continuous feedback process you establish. It is therefore important to establish a core set of questions for internal benchmarking purposes so that the organization can monitor the progress in meeting the objectives of an improvement plan.

Checklist for Step 2

At the end of this step, you should have a feedback strategy developed and reflected in the organizational business planning process, and a performance framework. This strategy must address, at a minimum:

- ❑ How to survey clients, staff and citizens.
- ❑ The instruments and procedures to use.
- ❑ The efforts needed to create (if it does not already exist) a willingness, even eagerness, to use feedback constructively.
- ❑ Questions that address client/citizen expectations, the experience with the service, and priorities for future improvement, as well as the key drivers of client/citizen satisfaction.
- ❑ A method to share the feedback.

See Appendix C

Client Feedback Tools

See Appendix D

Employee Surveys

Where Do Our Clients Want Us To Be?

STEP 3

Desired Future State

The previous steps have answered the question: “Where are we now?” With that determined, it is now time to turn attention to answer the question: “Where do our clients want us to be?” To do this, the feedback obtained will help to articulate the mission and vision—to define the desired future state of the organization and point the organization in the direction it needs to go.

Creating the Mission Statement

It is vital that the citizen-centred service effort flow from an outside-in focus. This begins with the mission statement.

If your organization has a mission statement, examine it to determine whether it is consistent with the outside-in approach. If not, it should be modified to reflect this dynamic. As well, any separate mission statement for the citizen-centred initiative should have an outside-in focus at its core.

You should also take this opportunity to review your organizational values and see whether they are citizen-centred. Is service positioned within the organization as a value?

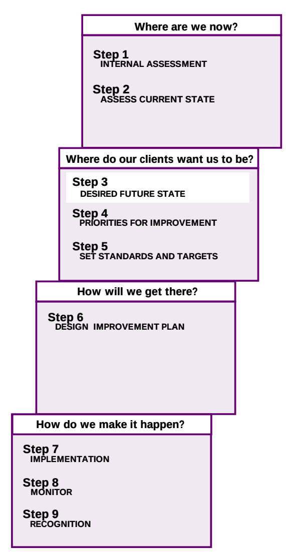
To develop a mission, the following are useful steps:

1. Re-explore the ways your organization can benefit society in general. What are specific impacts you have on clients who approach you with needs? This will relate back to the mandate and the legislation of the organization.

2. Using your assessments and feedback, consider what the various stakeholders want. What is your clients’, the general public’s and your staff’s vision of excellent service? What are their specific needs, expectations and priorities?

3. Create a vision of the impact the perfect organization providing your kind of service would have. Then, based on that vision, build a concept of excellence centred on the client and the citizen, and a vision of what it would be like to achieve that excellence.

4. From those actions, the kernel of your mission should emerge. Don’t try to touch all bases, just the underlying principles. Make sure the mission is short, crisp, and unforgettable—something that hangs in the memory rather than on the wall.



Understanding the citizen’s vision, expectations and preferences is the basis of the whole service improvement process. The organization must demonstrate that citizen input is important to the organization. As well, the organization must share its standards and values with citizens to create realistic expectations and provide guidance to stimulate citizen input about the service provided to them.

In the end, it is still the responsibility of the organization to analyze and understand the information provided by the citizen. The outside-in focus must still be consistent with the department's mandate and legislation.

Checklist for Step 3

At the end of this step, you will have:

- ❑ Vision and mission statements that support citizen-centred service improvement.
- ❑ A clear, articulate understanding of what your organization would like to achieve.
- ❑ The updated vision for service improvement in the annual Report on Plans and Priorities based on a citizen-centred approach.
- ❑ An inspiring vision of the future organization.

Where Do Our Clients Want Us To Be?

STEP 4

Setting Priorities for Improvement

Armed with client feedback information, it is now time to prepare for action by outlining priorities. These priorities should be defined by the client feedback, but remain consistent with the mission and mandate.

A strategy must be set around the priorities, the purpose of the initiative, its values and its goals, as well as the timelines for program design, implementation and evaluation. The strategy will flow from the government-wide Service Improvement Initiative and the specific results in your own review.

Identifying the Key Drivers of Client Satisfaction for Your Service and Potential Areas for Improvement

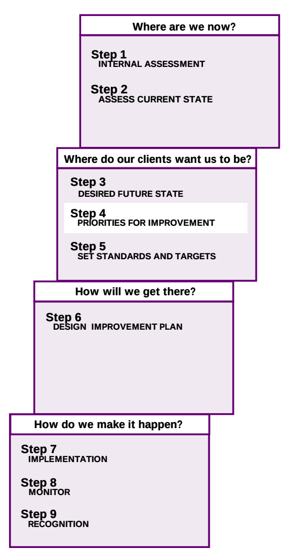
The process will vary by organization and findings, but a good starting point is to focus on the five key drivers of client satisfaction as identified by the *Citizens First* research: timeliness, knowledge/competence, courtesy/comfort, fair treatment, and outcome.[4] It is important to emphasize the implications of these findings: "If governments provide an acceptable level of service on these five drivers, they will achieve service quality ratings of 85 out of 100."[5]

While these are the key drivers of client satisfaction, you need to understand the key drivers for your specific type of service, as the drivers and their relative importance vary by service type. Understanding these drivers will assist you in further identifying your clients' priorities for improvement.

To assist you in identifying your key service drivers, each of five key drivers of service quality are discussed below. In addition, other potential related elements of service quality discussed below include: visibility and access; human resources; partnering, and information technology.

Five Drivers of Service Satisfaction

1. **Timeliness:** This driver refers to the satisfaction with the time it takes to get service, as opposed to the absolute length of time it takes. In terms of the five key drivers, the *Citizens First* research tells us that, by far, the most important driver is timeliness. However, depending upon the nature of the service, it should be recognized that there are limits to the extent government processes can be speeded up, which will impact satisfaction levels. For example, for some services considerations of fairness and accountability impose limits on the speed at which a service can be delivered. Fortunately, if service must be delayed beyond what citizens would normally expect, providing reasons for the required timeframe may serve to maintain acceptable ratings of timeliness.



4 For a basket of government services, the *Citizens First* research found that these five drivers explain 72% of the variance in service quality ratings.

5 *Citizens First* report, 1998. Prepared by Erin Research Inc. and published by the Canadian Centre for Management Development, p. 32.

2. **Knowledge/Competence:** The second most important driver is the knowledge and competence of the service provider. Research tells us that performance on this driver is maximized from a well-functioning system, including adequate staffing, proper training resources, and good internal services including management support, technical facilities, human resources services and so forth.
3. **Courtesy/Comfort:** The third most important driver from the *Citizens First* research is courtesy and comfort. That is, were the staff courteous and did they make the client feel comfortable? Despite the best efforts of government staff, citizens may feel uncomfortable in certain encounters with government—possibly to the point that staff may be unable to overcome it. A good example of this could be a taxation audit.
4. **Fair Treatment:** This driver refers to whether clients feel they were treated fairly. Governments make great efforts to ensure fairness in service delivery, but problems arise when opinions differ as to what is meant by "fair." Government service providers may see fair as what legislation and regulations prescribe, while citizens with opposing views may regard their treatment as unfair. Examples are most obvious when they involve social issues. In such cases, ensuring clients are provided with sufficient information could be an important factor in determining satisfaction levels.
5. **Outcome:** The final key driver of citizen satisfaction in order of importance is outcome. This is defined as whether or not the client got what they needed. Competing claims for resources mean that government cannot satisfy everyone. For example, applications for financial assistance may not meet requirements, or a tax levy may be larger than anticipated. The inability of government to provide the desired outcome may impose a ceiling on service quality scores for those who are denied the outcome they want. The desired outcome will be denied more often in some services than others, which means that service quality ratings will vary across different services.

Understanding the drivers for each particular service is critical for developing a service improvement plan. Although the above five drivers were found to be the most important based upon *Citizens First* research, there is no one set of answers that are standard for any particular service; each will have its own set of drivers and clients with a set of priorities for improvement. Understanding what your particular drivers are, which driver performed best, which was worst, and which priority for improvement is most important from your clients' perspective are all questions that you will want to pose. In addition, you will need to decide if it is practical to work on several drivers at once, or to proceed one at a time, with a recognition that some efforts will require more time for planning and training. Early efforts may work to attain the biggest gains in client satisfaction to secure early successes for the organization. It is the drivers of satisfaction to which particular attention should be paid when setting priorities. These are the elements that clients/citizens indicate are important, and priorities that they indicate will help close the service gap by working to meet their expectations.

Other Considerations for Service Quality

Visibility and Access

Visibility: On average, when Canadians want to contact a public service they do not know where to find it 25 per cent of the time. How visible is your operation to citizens? Can it be improved?

Access: How satisfied are the people that know how to contact you about the process? Are there concerns about the length of the wait? How many attempts were required to get through? How would they prefer to access you?

It is worth noting that sixty per cent of access issues are related to slow telephone responses, so this may be a priority area for action. For telephone service, citizens expect:

- less than a two minute wait;
- to find the right person on the first or second try;
- to have a response to a voice mail message within four hours.

In considering priorities, do not forget the importance of instructing clients on how to use the service. Service interactions can be unsatisfactory not because the product or delivery was inferior, but because the client did not know how to use the service or product. Public servants have a role as educators, which is especially true for those services used only once or twice in a lifetime. Just as advertising helps clients find and access a service, there are ways to support clients in the use of a service.

The People Dimension of Service

Employees are the key to success. It is difficult to conceive of any organization treating its staff poorly and then expecting them to treat clients well. If you look after your staff, they will look after the client. You do not order staff to smile; you recruit service-oriented people, train them well, give them good working conditions and a chance to do a good job. Courteous service is a by-product—empowered employees tend to enjoy their work.

Do staff have the proper skills to do the job (competence) for a citizen-centred approach? If not, a training plan should be developed. As well, do staff use their own initiative? The rules cannot foresee every eventuality. How can you give them the training, the tools and the freedom to use their initiative? In this, the organization needs to pay attention to the constraints that prevent capable employees from using their good judgement to achieve the mission. Welcome and applaud new ideas and initiative.

Service Integration

About one time in six, the service a client needs involves more than one agency— for example, a provincial birth certificate is required in order to obtain a passport. And to change an address, citizens must deal independently with a number of government organizations. Citizen-centred service delivery requires new partnerships within and between governments—and with the private and not-for-profit sectors—to integrate service so that it makes sense to the client. To start, the organization should ask how it can work with partners to improve service, and determine the logical place to start.

Government On-Line

Technology can be a great enabler to improve service delivery to Canadians. Electronic service delivery can bring services to citizens how they want them and when they want them, wherever they live. It also allows governments to provide seamless, integrated service delivery. The 1999 Speech from the Throne made the commitment for the Government of Canada to become, by 2004, the government in the world that is most connected electronically to its citizens, and provide Canadians with electronic access to federal information and services. This initiative, known as Government On-Line (GOL), is the beginning of an agenda to offer citizens and businesses faster, more convenient and seamless electronic access to services and programs. GOL will make it easier for citizens and businesses to find what they need through one-stop access points with services and information organized by theme—like the environment—or type of activity—such as services for seniors—rather than by government department. It also supports improved client satisfaction in that it can improve performance on some of the key drivers of client satisfaction, such as timeliness.

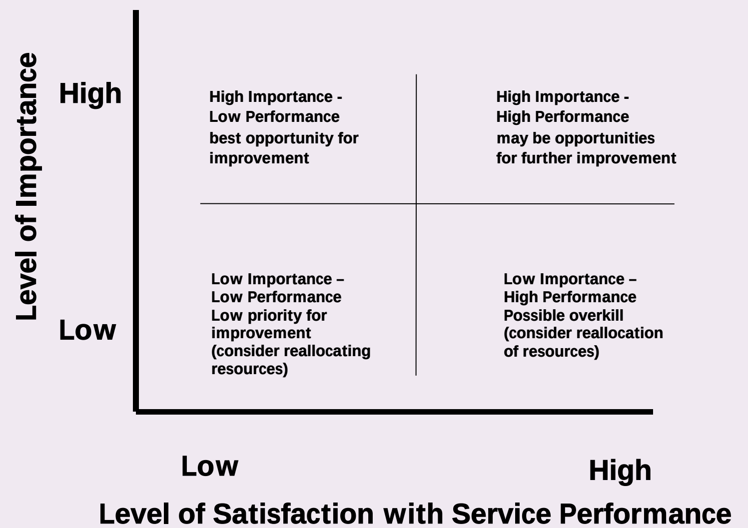
The past few years have seen great progress and many innovations in the on-line delivery of federal services and information. Government is just starting to tap the potential of getting on line. With the ever-increasing potential of new technologies and the growing demand for electronic service delivery, the need for a co-ordinated, forward-looking approach is clear. The Government On-Line initiative builds on what has already been accomplished to ensure that government works consistently and collaboratively, and with other partners, to create a world-renowned system of on-line service delivery. How can you make use of client-focused electronic service delivery to improve service in your organization?

Further information on the Government On-Line initiative can be found on the GOL Web site at http://www.gol-ged.gc.ca.

Setting Priorities

So far, a considerable amount of information has been gathered from clients on their needs, expectations and priorities for improvement. The above areas are starting points but you should ask how the information gathered should be used for decisions. The Service Improvement Team should work with the management team to discuss and agree on a decision model, which will then be applied to the situation.

Perceived Service Importance vs. Performance Ranking[6]



One such model is the satisfaction importance matrix (Appendix E).[6] This model assists in identifying which service improvements should be focused on first. Briefly, the model creates a service improvement matrix by plotting the satisfaction rating with the importance rating on a two-dimensional grid. This allows decision makers to determine which improvements are a top priority (low satisfaction rating, high importance rating). Unless both dimensions are measured and evaluated, improvement efforts may be misguided. If the organization only measures satisfaction and sets priorities based on the lowest satisfaction scores, improvement efforts may have little impact in improving satisfaction levels if these items have little importance to clients. Items with low satisfaction scores and high importance are areas to target improvement efforts.

[6] Woodhouse, S.A. et al., 1993. *Listening to Customers: An Introduction.* Victoria B.C.: Service Quality B.C. Secretariat, Government of British Columbia.

Checklist for Step 4

At the end of this step, you will likely have:

- ❑ A list of priorities for service improvement.
- ❑ Identified priorities to improve visibility.
- ❑ Identified priorities to improve access.
- ❑ Identified priorities for improvement on each of the five drivers of satisfaction.
- ❑ Priorities for strengthening the people dimension of service delivery.
- ❑ Priorities for integrated service delivery.
- ❑ Priorities for improved use of information technology.

See Appendix E
Setting Priorities

Where Do Our Clients Want Us To Be?

STEP 5

Setting Client-Centred Service Standards and Client Satisfaction Targets

After establishing priorities, it is vital to set standards and targets by which you intend to judge performance. Success needs definition. Standards and targets serve to focus the organization to ensure it achieves the most it can for both short- and long-term goals.

In this guide, standards refer to the levels of service performance, while targets refer to the levels of satisfaction aspired to. Standards are the performance levels we are committed to in the present—the quality one can expect. Targets are the satisfaction objectives we are moving towards.

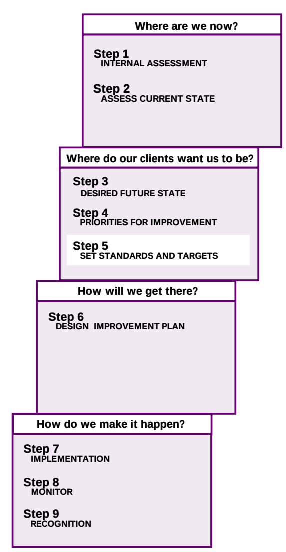
Service standards are a commitment by the organization to provide a certain level of service to clients. These are usually in areas such as communications, access, timeliness, interactions between staff and clients, and costs. For example, answering telephone calls within six rings nine times out of ten could be a standard. Consistency counts with service standards. Clients don't want great performance one day and lousy service the next. A client whose call is answered on the first ring and then locked in "voice mail jail" for ten minutes won't consider that "on average" good service was delivered.

Service standards must incorporate performance objectives. The standard of replying to a letter sent by mail within two weeks may not be achievable all the time, but may be achievable in a majority of situations. What is the appropriate level of performance for achieving the standard? It could be set at 80%, 90%, or even higher. This allows for standards that are citizen/client based and attempt to meet their expectations for service delivery. To ensure that it could respond to letters 100% of the time, an organization might have to set the standard at twelve weeks. However, it is unlikely citizens/clients would find this acceptable. Incorporating performance objectives into service standards also provides the organization with room for improvement, such as setting the goal to move the objective of meeting the standard, for example, from 80% to 85% of the time.

Service standards are an important tool for managing client expectations and should reflect the available resources. They tell your clients what you can provide and what they should expect to receive. Service standards must be published so they are known by all those affected—staff, partners, and clients. Publication motivates staff, influences client expectations, allows educated feedback on performance, and ensures that accountability and measurement are open and honest.

As well as service standards, targets should also be set for the levels of citizen and client satisfaction the organization wants to achieve within a given timeframe. Service standards are the key means for managing client expectations based on available resources. But satisfaction targets are the key means for improving actual service performance and quality.

Satisfaction targets should be reasonable. For the Service Improvement Initiative, the Treasury Board has established a government-wide objective of a minimum 10% improvement in client satisfaction for all key services to the public. To begin, set targets in a few areas identified as key by the client and doable by your staff within five years. Targets must be realistic, reviewed regularly and adjusted annually as necessary to meet the minimum 10% objective over five years.



How to Set Service Standards

Your surveys will have told you what levels of service your clients want. Service standards should be client-driven and reflect what the client wants, but also what the organization can currently afford. Standards are a way of managing expectations. They tell your clients what you can provide and they can expect. Service satisfaction is related to expectations. Managing expectations well is an important part of service improvement. Look at the standards in other similar operations that have high levels of client satisfaction. What is the "industry standard"? Discuss these with your staff, to find out what it would take to meet them. Review what level of service you are now providing. Determine what standard you can achieve now, and what standards you will strive for in the longer term. Further information on how to set service standards can be found in Appendix F.

Satisfaction Improvement Targets

Client satisfaction targets are more complicated since they are less direct. By helping to manage client expectations, service standards may contribute to increased client satisfaction. But they will not guarantee satisfaction. Satisfaction targets must be set and measured independently. What satisfaction levels do you want to achieve?

It is important not only to set targets for satisfaction improvement, but also to measure achievement. Improved client satisfaction, after all, is the end goal of the Service Improvement Initiative. Improved client satisfaction is also the way to measure whether you have actually set the right priorities for service improvement and whether you are making regular annual progress toward the minimum 10% satisfaction improvement objective over five years.

Steps To Take

The steps you take will vary according to your structure and organizational culture. But here are eleven steps that offer guidance. Throughout, ensure that staff are actively involved in the process and support the targets that are set.

1. Review the data you gathered about client priorities.
2. Divide the priorities into two areas: access (including the ability to find the service); and service performance (including the main drivers of satisfaction).
3. Use the Service Improvement Team or subgroups to deal with each area. Decide what standard of service is appropriate in each area.
4. Present the management committee of the organization with a complete list of proposed service standards and satisfaction targets.
5. Reach organization-wide agreement on service standards; select the most important few to focus on while keeping in mind the different service delivery channels.
6. Ensure the government-wide target of a minimum 10% improvement in client/citizen satisfaction over five years is translated into specific annual targets for each service or program area and that these targets are reflected in accountability agreements.

7. Ensure that a strong service culture is being developed to complement client satisfaction target setting. This will help make the targets achievable if the organizational culture supports and promotes the delivery of good service.
8. Continue to measure regularly client expectations, priorities and satisfaction, and anchor your planning process in this data.
9. Ensure a client complaint redress mechanism is in place.
10. Make sure that for any satisfaction target or service standard the results can be and are measured, benchmarked, monitored, reported, and used to guide management decisions.
11. Ensure the results-based service improvement planning and implementation process is integrated with the annual business planning process, for ongoing monitoring and updating of targets. Standards and targets are not static, but dynamic. Monitoring and updating for continuous improvement is a never-ending process.

Setting targets can be a source of anxiety. This may be particularly true in a traditional workplace with an inside-out focus that suddenly finds itself judged by the standards of its clients. But in the end, targets can also unify. Most people are goal oriented. They enjoy achieving and surpassing performance targets. If the targets are reasonable and the purpose clear, you can secure buy-in and unleash new energy as people strive to show their stuff.

Establishing priorities for improvement, and setting standards and targets, further refines where the organization wants to be. These should be woven into the fabric of the organization's planning process (including the Report on Plans and Priorities), and are even deserving of a special improvement plan specific to this initiative.

Checklist for Step 5

At the completion of this step, you should have:

- ❑ Service standards that are published and openly accessible.
- ❑ Service standards based on client priorities and expectations, reflecting available resources.
- ❑ Satisfaction improvement targets that are sufficiently challenging that achieving them will result in a noticeable reduction in the satisfaction gap, yet realistic enough that they can be achieved.
- ❑ Measurement and performance reporting against the service standards and satisfaction improvement targets.

See Appendix F

Setting Service Standards and Performance Objectives

How Will We Get There?

STEP 6

Designing the Improvement Plan

By now you know where you are and where your clients want you to be, but not the path between the two. Thus far, the vision and mission have been stated, a client-feedback strategy created, and input solicited. Priorities for improvement have been identified, client-centred service standards and client satisfaction improvement targets set. Now it is time to create an improvement plan—the map that will guide you and your organization between the two points—and set the actions necessary to achieve the targets.

The improvement plan is not intended to serve as a self-contained or isolated plan. It is an integrated part of the total business planning process of the organization. It provides for a systematic and organized approach to service improvement planning and implementation integrated with the regular annual planning and reporting cycle of the department or agency.

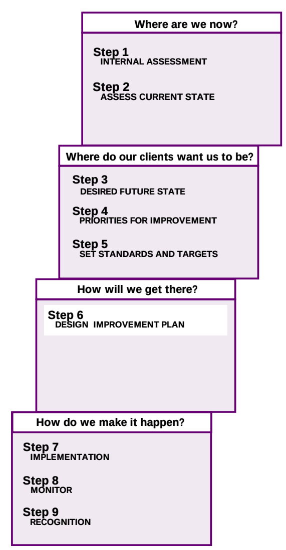
Flexibility is key to the approach and to implementing the improvement plan. The plan and improvement process must be brought to life—a living part of the organization—which embraces the concept of continuous improvement. As you plan and implement, you will be receiving new and additional information that will alter your plan. You must be ready to change direction when required. And staff must be given room to innovate within the basic framework and be consistent with the overall goals.

Government Priorities and Plans

As you begin to develop your improvement plan, it is vital to ensure that you are well informed not only about the Service Improvement Initiative, but other relevant initiatives such as Government On-Line, in order to complement them and benefit from their lead. The main points have already been outlined and should be central to your thinking by now: responsiveness to the needs and service improvement priorities identified by citizens, and the pursuit of continuous improvement in meeting client and citizen satisfaction.

Beyond that, government has placed priority on:

- a choice of channels and points of service;
- support for electronic government; and,
- enhanced visibility and presence.



Setting the Plan

The core of the Service Improvement Plan is to focus on the service improvement priorities that are most important for citizens and clients, as identified in Step 4. For each priority identified by clients, the organization will identify the key actions required to address that priority. In turn, each of these key actions will be further refined by identifying the sub-activities required to support them.

The improvement plan is an opportunity to draw on the creativity, innovation and problem-solving skills of the organization. There is usually more than one solution to any problem and more than one way to address the priorities. The creation and selection of actions to achieve the priorities provides an opportunity for the organization to think "outside the box." For example, a common response to client demands for faster telephone service is to add capacity to a call centre. Yet, a more innovative approach can reduce workload by determining why clients need to call in the first place, and address the underlying cause rather than a symptom of the problem (e.g. a form that is unclear to clients). Therefore, it is critical to ensure active employee participation in the creation of the plan and to clarify for everyone what goals the organization hopes to accomplish and how they will be accomplished.

Example of a Service Improvement Plan Template

To help departments and agencies get started, this section outlines an example of a potential Service Improvement Plan template. A complete description of this generic example can be found in Appendix G. The development of an improvement plan does not require a cookie cutter approach. Every organization is unique, as are the needs, expectations and priorities of its clients and the environment in which the organization operates. What an improvement plan will look like will vary from organization to organization. Yet, while specifics may vary, there are common elements to an improvement plan. For each priority identified, it is necessary to establish actions to address the improvement priorities, identify the person(s) responsible, and state a timetable for action and specific targets for achievement. The improvement plan will also address the monitoring and reporting process for client satisfaction targets and service standards, and identify management accountabilities.

Direction

The first section of a Service Improvement Plan should be direction: how does the plan link into and support the organization's mission statement and the desired future state for the organization? Stating this vision up front enables department or agency personnel to better understand the purpose of the Service Improvement Plan. It is also important to document here how the plan was developed, who participated, how citizens' views in terms of their priorities for improvement were obtained to produce the plan (e.g: surveys, focus groups, or formal consultations), and how these views shape the plan. The important point is to ensure that the activities outlined in the plan focus on citizen priorities and as such, if implemented properly, will result in improved client satisfaction so that the department or agency's targets for client satisfaction are met.

Since the improvement plan is also a document that affects the work and work culture of the organization, it is important in this section to outline who in the organization worked in producing the plan and how employees were engaged in its creation.

The program(s) impacted by this particular service improvement plan and the duration of the plan.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN
FOR
[ORGANIZATION]

The context of the plan: its background, how clients are determined/defined, any previous planning efforts etc.

For the Period: Dates for which the plan is in effect

Scope: Services/programs affected by the service improvement plan

---

THE CONTEXT
Brief summary of the background to the plan, in the citizen-centred approach, and any previous planning efforts.

The purpose of the organization and its desired future state as expressed in a vision of citizen-centred service.

DIRECTION

MISSION STATEMENT
A brief explanation that states the purpose of the organization.

VISION OF CITIZEN-CENTRED SERVICE
The desired future state for the organization based on the citizen-centred service approach.

Priority Areas for Improvement

The core of the plan should outline the department or agency's priority areas for improvement: what are the key actions, who is responsible, what are the timeframes and expected results, and how will these results be measured? Below are two different examples of how the priorities for improvement section could be structured. Example #1 adopts the approach whereby for each priority area, the specific actions required are identified. Example #2 organizes the priorities for improvement by the five key drivers of client satisfaction, in addition to identifying which service delivery channels (e.g. telephone, over the counter, electronic, etc.) are implicated. The benefit of this second approach is that it assists in ensuring that each driver is addressed and that the Service Improvement Plan addresses all service delivery channels. This emphasizes a balanced, integrated approach between and among the various channels used to deliver the service. The type of template you develop will depend upon the nature of your business and what works best given the environment in which you work.

It is important to note that the plan should be comprehensive but kept as simple as possible so that it is clearly understood. For example, simply requiring staff to say "Have a nice day" (the staff courtesy service quality driver) will not lead clients to believe they have had a positive service experience if none of the other key drivers of client satisfaction are in place.

Sample Service Improvement Plan—
Priority Areas for Improvement (Example #1)

Statement of the priority identified by clients that you are addressing

The method by which the results will be measured

PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT—EXAMPLE #1

Priority 1: Reduce the need for clients and citizens to contact the government office by exploring new approaches in client service delivery

Main actions to address priority

Sub-actions to support the main action

	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Results	Measurement
1.	Reduce telephone calls for information				
A.	Review of most frequent requests for information by telephone to identify gaps	Client Services Manager	May 2000	Thorough review of information requests	Summary reports of findings and information gaps
B.	Review information products for informati gaps related to client requests	Director of Communications	June 2000	Increased satisfaction wit information needed being available	Client satisfaction survey
C.	Review forms for clarity and plain l ge	Client Services Manager	June 2000	Increased satisfaction wit forms being easy to understand and fill out	Client satisfaction survey
2.	Increase availability of infor ross service channels				
A.	Expand information a e internet	Director of Communications	August 2000	Expansion of information available through the Inter service channel	Number of paper nformation documents vailable electronically rough the Internet

The person who is responsible for implementing the action

The timeframe for implementing the actions and sub-actions

The intended result of the action

Sample Service Improvement Plan— Priority Areas for Improvement (Example #2)

The service channels that are impacted by the improvements

The time frame for implementing the actions and sub-actions

The method by which the results will be measured

Improvement priorities based on the five key drivers of citizen satisfaction

Improvement objective for each satisfaction driver

The specific actions needed to meet the objective

PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT—Example #2

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENTS	OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS	SERVICE CHANNELS					RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	MEASUREMENT
Based on client and citizen priorities Identify improvement priorities on which actions should be taken	Which action(s) will be taken to address client priorities for service improvement?	Phone	In Person	Mail	Electronic	Other	Who is (are) responsible for taking action?	When will this be undertaken (U) and finished (f)?	What result(s) is (are) expected?	How are progress and results measured?
IMPROVE SERVICE ACCESS	**Objective 1:** facilitate the identification of points of service									
	Action 1.1: installing new signage inside and outside building	x					Director of Administrative Services	U: June 2000 F: October 2000	Increased client satisfaction with signage	Measured through the client satisfaction survey
	Action 1.2: review of "blue pages" information in telephone directories	x	x				Director of Communications	U/F: September 2000	Increased client satisfaction with accessibility by telephone	Measured through the client satisfaction survey
	Objective 2:									
	Action 2.1:									
IMPROVE SERVICE TIMELINES										
IMPROVE STAFF COMPETENCY/ KNOWLEDGE										
IMPROVE SERVICE FAIRNESS										
IMPROVE SERVICE STAFF COURTESY										
IMPROVE STAFF SATISFACTION										

The person who is responsible for implementing the action

The intended results of the action

Monitoring and Accountability

A final section in any solid plan should include a section on monitoring and accountability. The example below presents possible elements that you may want to include. Specifically outlining how the plan is to be monitored, the frequency with which the results will be reported and to whom assists in ensuring that key actors are identified, an accountability regime is in place, and all relevant aspects of the plan are being properly communicated. In addition, the value of outlining the monitoring and accountability aspects of the plan not only comes to play when you move to implementation, but also becomes readily apparent in succeeding steps as implementation efforts are monitored and evaluated.

Monitoring and Accountability Section—Example

Statements on how the Service Improvement Plan will be monitored and reported by the organization

ACTION PLAN AND FOLLOW UP

MONITORING AND REPORTING PROCESS

Brief description of how the plan will be monitored, how frequently results will be reported, and how results will be reported (i.e. reports)

Statements on who in the organization is accountable for the Service Improvement Plan, frequency and content of reports, and to whom reports are made

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Identification of those accountable for the initiative, and to whom the reports are presented for action

Summary

The departmental Service Improvement Plan links planning in the organization in two directions. First, it links to planning upward on the strategic level though the Report on Plans and Priorities and subsequent evaluation in the Departmental Performance Report. Second, it brings planning downward through its impact on the detailed work plans of organizational units and individual staff members. In many respects, the improvement plan is a summary document that integrates information from a variety of sources. This step incorporates the findings and work undertaken in the previous steps. It sets out for each priority the action necessary to attain the objectives and associated targets, sets a timeframe and identifies the resources that are required, and establishes who is responsible and ultimately accountable for the actions. The improvement plan must also integrate and consider other organizational issues, such as the HR plan, staff training needs, links to related services (service integration) and Government-On-Line and the information management/information technology (IT/IM) strategy.

Checklist for Step 6

At the completion of this step, you should have an improvement plan that:

- ❑ Integrates the findings of the previous steps (vision, mission, leadership, employee and client feedback, identified priorities, targets and service standards).
- ❑ Dovetails with the Service Improvement Initiative and other government-wide initiatives, while focusing on the specific needs of your clients.
- ❑ Is a result of active employee engagement.
- ❑ Is simple, clear and compelling.
- ❑ Describes the actions to address the service improvement priorities identified in Step 4, in order to achieve increased client satisfaction.
- ❑ Specifies the client satisfaction targets for achievement and identifies timeframes.
- ❑ Identifies responsibilities and accountabilities for actions to address service improvement priorities.
- ❑ Is consistent and considers other organizational plans, such as the HR Plan, staff training, IT/IM strategy, and change management strategy.

See Appendix G

Sample Service Improvement Plan Template

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) is responsible for caring for those who have served their country in combat and peacekeeping, and for their families. Already sensitive to its clients, VAC wanted quicker turnaround times on disability pensions—benefits for clients with a permanent disability or disease as a result of military service. Part of a comprehensive plan, this initiative was one of several client-centred initiatives.

However, the improvements sought were constrained by regulations. Rather than accept the impediment and continue with a service gap, the process began with legislative changes and the creation of new regulations to address revised procedures. This was followed by a major reorganization within the VAC portfolio.

On the operations side, staff developed procedures and re-engineered workflows to increase flexibility for program delivery, consultation, staff training and teamwork on projects. Information technology changes followed. This was a lot of planning and work for one small improvement. Yet, the changes incorporated many other improvements and paved the way for the future, as VAC learns more about the changing needs of its clients.

Each work unit was made responsible to know its targets/goals and to manage to achieve them. Due to the high level of support and the clear knowledge of direction and targets, it was not necessary to bring in outside consultants, or set up a special change management team.

The lessons learned by Veterans Affairs Canada include:

- A separate structure is not always needed for change. The already existing planning function was adequate, so they did not add a quality management framework.
- The will to make it happen is required; commitment from all levels of the organization; the support and flexibility of employees and external partners; strong communication tools and contact with clients.

STEP 7

Implementing

This section presents activities to support the implementation of the Service Improvement Plan. As leadership is central to successful implementation, a leadership checklist is provided. In addition, this section also explores implementation best practices and lessons learned from previous research undertaken in the field of service improvement. It also presents potential service improvement tools and resources available to assist managers in implementing service improvements.

Service Improvement Plan Implementation

In terms of implementing the Service Improvement Plan, there are several general support activities that you will want to consider:

1. Communicate the Plan

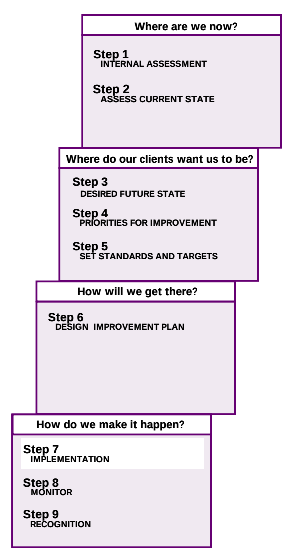
Memos do not change organizations. Do not assume that because a memo describing the implementation plan was issued, that everyone knows about it, remembers, and will act according to plan. Continue to communicate the plan. Too much communication is better than insufficient communication. Remember that communication is a two-way process: management must listen to staff as much as staff must listen to management.

2. Verify Responsibilities

Confirm that responsibilities assigned during planning remain the right ones and adjust them as needed. Build precise results into the targets set for teams or work units, and into the performance contract of each individual. Ensure that your data systems provide information at the individual and work group level so that you can monitor achievements against targets.

3. Ensure Supporting Changes are made

From legislation to organizational unit operating procedures, support is needed to enable employees to act in a new, more client-centred manner. This includes the removal of impediments that limit an employee's ability to do a good job. Processes, forms and policies should be reviewed to ensure they facilitate rather than impede client/citizen-centred service delivery. This may mean simplified forms, the use of clearer language in forms and documents, changed hours of service, staff training, and the regular review of procedures. Empowered staff are central to removing impediments, and removing impediments is central to empowering staff.



4. Support the Human Dimension

There is a human response to change. There will likely be resistance to change, and there may be fear and anxiety among staff as well. This is okay and not unexpected, but these reactions must be dealt with and staff assisted and supported during the transition. Implementation impacts the organizational character since it involves change, and represents another area where leadership is essential.

As well, many initiatives are likely to involve changes to the skill sets of employees. Therefore, ensuring that employees have access to the training and tools necessary for them to undertake their jobs is vital. After all, in many cases the service experience of the client/citizen involves direct interaction with a public service employee. Training is very important to the success of the organization in terms of client satisfaction. For example, research of telephone call centres has shown significantly higher levels of client satisfaction in call centres with high levels of employee training versus centres with low training levels. Training often helps support the five key drivers of client satisfaction (timeliness, knowledge/competence, courtesy/comfort, fair treatment, and outcome) and often involves job-specific training and training in customer service skills.

5. Creativity and Innovation

Promoting an environment that is conducive to risk taking and innovation should underlie the implementation of the Service Improvement Plan. Purposely seeking out new, innovative ideas to bring into the organization should be promoted. External, innovative ideas can be found through networking with similar organizations, keeping up to date on the latest developments in your field through media such as journals, and other related activities such as conferences. Conducting exercises such as participative problem solving, or engaging external resources can also assist this.

6. Have Fun

The challenge of meeting client needs should be enjoyable. If managers and employees are consistently not having fun, implementation likely is not going well. This may require revisiting the earlier steps to find the problem, or reviewing the improvement plan to see how morale can be boosted. Citizen-centred service improvement is not just a process but a part of the character of the organization that is lived every day.

7. Adjust the Service Improvement Plan

Change is messy. Mistakes are made. Planning is not perfect and does not end when implementation starts. The two phases support each other. Re-plan. Re-train. Re-adjust.

Leadership Checklist

When it comes time to implement the plan just developed, leadership is again at the fore. Sometimes managers are so preoccupied with their daily must-do routine that they forget how closely their staff watches them for clues about what matters in the workplace. This is not the time to give everyone a handshake and move on to something else.

Leadership Checklist for Implementing the Service Improvement Plan

- ✓ Remain involved and constant in your support. Raise the service improvement profile through daily attention and speeches; place it on key agendas and talk about it with staff.
- ✓ Set the tone. Treat your staff with the same degree of timeliness, courtesy, competence and fairness you expect them to use with clients. Ensure the outcomes they want are achieved.
- ✓ Communicate. Gain buy-in from staff and ensure continual feedback on the problems they encounter with implementation and their ideas to enhance the initiative. Capitalize on the feedback and ideas. Communicate new initiatives to clients.
- ✓ Continue to learn. Build trust. Make allowances for mistakes.
- ✓ Listen.
- ✓ Do the right thing. Set an example by doing what is right rather than what is easy.
- ✓ Continue the Service Improvement Team, changing their role from planning to implementation, monitoring and adjustment. Make consultation continuous.
- ✓ Empower staff and support their decisions.
- ✓ Accept that you may not know the answer. Build enthusiasm. Create a “pull” by staff to make service improvement changes rather than limiting it to a “push” by management.
- ✓ Recognize and celebrate achievement.

Lessons Learned—Signposts for Success

In devising specific service improvement solutions to meet citizen priorities, a good place to start is to research best practices in similar organizations or business lines. Successful service improvements are often based on good research. The organization is well served by your reading up on similar initiatives and meeting with practitioners and experts in the field. There are numerous resources to assist in this. The Canadian Centre for Management Development’s Citizen-Centred Service Network undertook a research agenda in citizen-centred service. Two products, *Good Practices in Citizen-Centred Service* and *Innovations and Good Practices in Single-Window Service* provide an exhaustive description of best practices with a summary of lessons learned. Some of the lessons learned from these two studies are outlined below:

- **Ensure Leadership is in Place for the Long Term:** Sustained leadership by senior executives is critical for the long-term success of a service-improvement initiative. Seeking and sustaining political support for your service improvements was also identified in the research as another important success factor.
- **Encourage Citizen-Centred Values & Culture:** A shared commitment to improving service delivery, supported by citizen-centred values is at the heart of any successful service improvement. Starting the change process by beginning with the development of a service culture is key.
- **Focus on Continous Improvement:** Organizations should focus on continuous improvement in service delivery, based on client and employee input and measurement.

- **Firmly Fix Improvements to a Results-based strategy:** a results-based strategy works effectively especially when action is focused on client priorities for service improvement and progress is continuously measured and communicated.
- **Focus on Improving the Workplace:** A results-based focus should be complemented by a continuous improvement strategy for increasing staff satisfaction. This helps to achieve a supportive corporate culture. This might entail using teamwork approaches, educating and training staff with the information they need to succeed, empowering staff to make service improvements, and recognizing and rewarding good service.
- **Partnerships:** Considerable research has been done in the area of partnerships and its benefits have been well documented. Sound partnerships involve shared decision making and clear accountabilities.
- **Consult with Clients and Key Stakeholders:** Throughout the implementation process, consultation assists in ensuring that any changes are appropriately targeted. Although consultations can be time consuming, they assist in maintaining and improving the range and quality of services provided. For example, if the service improvement involves the redesign of a form, it should be focus-tested to identify whether or not the improvements actually address the original problem. If this type of consultation is not undertaken, attempts at service improvement could result in less client satisfaction.
- **Piloting:** Implementing service improvement initiatives through pilots can be a good way of obtaining buy-in, demonstrating success and finding what works best. This also enables risks to be managed so that deficiencies can be found and corrected before full-scale implementation takes place.

Service Improvement Toolbox

The Canadian Centre for Management Development's Citizen-Centred Service Network's research: *Good Practices in Citizen-Centred Service* and *Innovations and Good Practices in Single-Window Service* identify a number of potential tools to assist managers in undertaking service improvements. Some of these tools involve one-time implementation whereas others require ongoing application. Although not exhaustive, the purpose of this brief description is to serve as a starting point.

Potential Service Improvement Tools

✓ New Organizational Forms	✓ Quality Management
✓ Technology	✓ Benchmarking
✓ Service Standards	✓ Public-Private Partnerships
✓ Process Improvement	✓ Cost Recovery
✓ Re-engineering	✓ Service Agreements

- **Service Clustering, Single Window Access, and New Organizational Forms** such as Special Operating Agencies can be an effective means of clarifying roles and responsibilities, improving service, reducing delivery costs, reducing overlap and duplication, and enhancing accountability. This may include looking at Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) to see if there is an alternative method available to deliver the service. You might also consider single-window service delivery and service clustering.

- **Technology,** although discussed elsewhere in this guide, should be noted as another potential service improvement tool. Technology has been a major driver for service improvement in recent years. Electronic kiosk systems such as those at Human Resources Development Canada and Service Ontario provide an expanding range of services to citizens and clients. Internal technological improvements in information management have allowed organizations to offer citizens service from any location. However, through the research, technology was found to be a two-edged sword in service delivery—to be effective, technological delivery must be designed in close consultation with the client.
- **Process improvement techniques** such as process mapping and re-engineering can have a powerful, positive effect on service performance and client satisfaction if implemented properly, in consultation with employees and clients. Public sector services and programs often have legal and technical requirements that affect the service experience. While such requirements are often necessary, the system designed to implement them may not be the most simple and efficient possible. Examine your systems and processes from a client/citizen perspective. See if it is possible to cut red tape, root out unnecessary rules, change workflow and internal processes, and expand the use of plain language.
- **Quality Management Frameworks** offer another method to assist managers in improving their service delivery. A variety of quality management systems exist depending upon the needs of the organization. Careful consideration of the organizational needs versus the framework used is required. Systems range from ISO, which maintains demanding compliance standards and ongoing authentication, to the National Quality Institute's Fitness Test, which is more flexible in its application.
- **Benchmarking** is not only an important tool for measuring performance but is also useful in identifying areas of success and those needing improvement. Search out the best organization in your business line. How does your organization compare? How did this organization that is considered the best attain their results? See what can be learned from their experiences that can be adapted and implemented in your own organization to improve service delivery to citizens and clients.
- **Service Agreements and Service Guarantees** were also noted by the research as potentially important tools of accountability, specifically for internal government service providers and their clients.

Additional Resources

Here are some additional resources that departments and organizations can access to assist them with service improvement implementation:

- ***Service Improvement Initiative* Web Site:** This site offers a complete overview of the *Service Improvement Initiative*, along with related research and up-to-date communications on events within both the National Capital Region and the regions (http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/).
- **InnoService:** For innovative/good practices, one source to consult is InnoService, a knowledge management repository maintained by the Service and Innovation Sector at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/). This online resource includes a selection of good practices in service improvement. These good practices can be searched by department or agency, the elements of service improvement involved, or by major public service business line.

- **Canadian Centre for Management Development's Best Practice Research Case Studies:** The Canadian Centre for Management Development's research used within this chapter (*Good Practices in Citizen-Centred Service* and *Innovations and Good Practices in Single-Window Service*), as well as other useful information can be obtained on CCMD's Web site (http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/publica/recent.html).
- **Service Improvement Team, Service & Innovation Sector, TBS:** The Service Improvement Team at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat provides ongoing advisory services to departments and agencies on developing and implementing Service Improvement Plans; monitoring and reporting on client satisfaction; developing and implementing client-centred service standards; and undertaking service delivery improvements.

Checklist for Step 7

After the initial wave of implementation, you should have:

- ❑ Contributed to the process through your leadership, focused on listening, understanding, building trust, continuing to learn, setting the tone.
- ❑ Effectively communicated the implementation plan to everyone and continued to communicate it.
- ❑ Confirmed responsibilities and ensured that data is gathered.
- ❑ Continued to adjust the plan in response to the emerging situation.
- ❑ Ensured that supporting changes in processes and people are made.
- ❑ Removed impediments to staff empowerment and improved service.
- ❑ Asked each of your staff what their key responsibilities and accountabilities are, and obtained concise answers without their digging out their performance contracts.

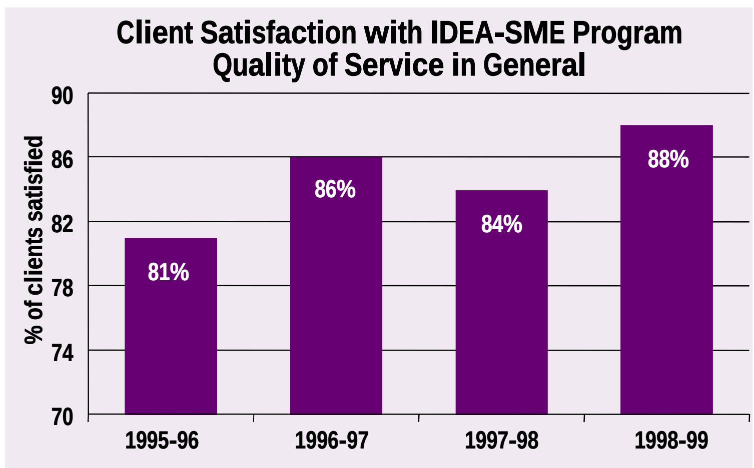
STEP 8

Monitoring

With implementation underway, attention must now turn to monitoring performance and ensuring accountability for results. This section commences with an example of client satisfaction monitoring, examines linking information needs to the various target audiences, and discusses reporting to Parliament. In addition, related topics such as aligning service improvement reporting into departmental or agency organizational performance efforts, as well as benchmarking activities are discussed. Accountability and communication activities associated with the *Service Improvement Initiative* are also outlined.

Ongoing Client Satisfaction—Monitoring and Reporting

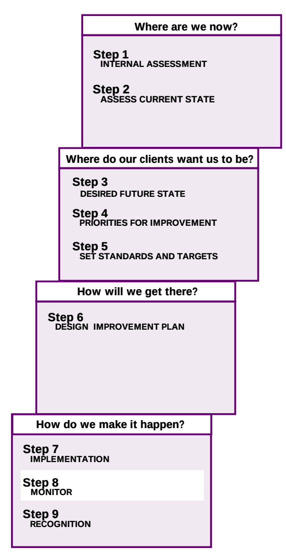
The most reliable indicator of improvement in service quality and service performance is the continuous and measurable improvement of client satisfaction. Monitoring activities at regular intervals should allow the organization to clearly demonstrate its progress in meeting its client satisfaction targets. An example of such reporting is the results of the Canada Economic Development Agency's client feedback strategy, which demonstrates the agency's annual progress in client satisfaction levels for its main program IDEA-SME.



As this example demonstrates, measuring client satisfaction levels and moving towards established client satisfaction targets requires consistent measurement through time and ongoing adjustment of activities to achieve client satisfaction improvements.

Linking Information Needs to Target Audiences

The Service Improvement Plan that you prepared identifies key targets for measurement to ensure the *Service Improvement Initiative* is on track, and that you are having a positive impact on client satisfaction. Ensuring that the information needs of the various target audiences are met is crucial to the success of the Initiative. This section examines the information needs of internal audiences such as the Departmental Service Improvement Team, program managers involved in implementing service improvement, and departmental senior management. As well, the information needs of outside audiences, such as the Office of the Auditor General, Parliament, and, most importantly, clients and citizens, are also explored.



As you monitor implementation, measure progress and ensure accountability for results, focus on three aspects: a) implementation process, b) outputs, and c) outcomes. Monitoring involves having a system, measuring, communicating, and being accountable. Monitoring means to track, document and report information to the right audiences in order to support decision making and accountability mechanisms. The types of information needs and the various target audiences are discussed below, while a summary is provided in the following table.

Linking information needs to target audiences

Audiences	Document and report on: Implementation process	Outputs	Outcomes
	• Programs and services under the Service Improvement Initiative • Priorities for improvement • Responsibilities • Progress toward schedule • Client feedback strategy	1. Service improvement plan 2. Actions to improve service 3. Service standards	1. Performance against service standards 2. Client satisfaction baseline measures and client satisfaction targets 3. Progress toward client satisfaction targets
Departmental Service Improvement Team	✔	✔ (1, 2, 3)	✔ (1, 2, 3)
Departmental program managers	✔	✔ (1, 2, 3)	✔ (1, 2, 3)
Departmental senior managers	✔	✔ (1, 2, 3)	✔ (1, 2, 3)
Parliamentarians		✔ (3)	✔ (1, 2, 3)
Auditor General		✔ (1, 2, 3)	✔ (1, 2, 3)
Clients and Citizens		✔ (3)	✔ (1, 2, 3)

By putting in place the right mechanisms to measure, analyse and disseminate the information to the right audiences, you will create information based on continuous improvement, where managers can not only use the information to manage the implementation of their service improvement initiative but use the information for reporting purposes as well. The more relevant the information is to meeting management needs, the more efficient and effective will be the reporting on your improvement initiatives. But more than that, managers and employees will be able to determine the impact of the ultimate goal of the Service Improvement Plan: improving client satisfaction.

Monitor the Implementation process

On a regular basis, the Departmental Service Improvement Team will have to update information about the implementation process of the *Service Improvement Initiative*, first to plan its own work and second to report to managers on progress and keep the organization informed about priorities. These information items are:

- programs and activities targeted and covered by the *Service Improvement Initiative* within your department or agency;
- priorities for improvement identified by clients and agreed upon within the organisation;
- responsibilities for implementing the *Service Improvement Initiative* and each action identified in the Service Improvement Plan;
- progress toward the Service Improvement Plan schedule; and
- main actions undertaken to implement the client feedback strategy.

Monitor the Outputs

Primary outputs for the *Service Improvement Initiative* include the Service Improvement Plan, the specific actions to improve services, and the creation of citizen-centred service standards. The Departmental Service Improvement Team should track progress in implementing the actions adopted in the Service Improvement Plan. They will want to make sure that the work has been done, that implementation difficulties are solved, and that any readjustment required will be recommended.

The Departmental Service Improvement Team will also want to ensure that an appropriate monitoring system is in place to monitor the implementation of the service standards. For each key service delivered to the public, service standards will have to be shared with staff and clients. The performance objectives demonstrated by these service standards will also have to be validated by senior management and shared with employees.

Monitor the Outcomes

The primary outcomes for the *Service Improvement Initiative* are: a) performance against service standards; b) client satisfaction baseline measures and targets for increases in client satisfaction; and c) progress toward client satisfaction targets.

When the ***Service Standards*** have been established, verification mechanisms need to be identified for each service standard, as well as the frequency for reporting. A manager should be identified as the person accountable for the verification and the provision of performance information for each service standard. The Departmental Service Improvement Team will have to make sure that each service standard is monitored and reported.

The Departmental Service Improvement Team is also responsible for documenting and consolidating **the client satisfaction baseline measures and for establishing client satisfaction targets** in consultation with senior departmental management. Based upon their baseline measures, each department will have to establish their annual targets for improved client satisfaction keeping in mind the overall commitment to achieve a minimum 10% increase in client satisfaction with government services by the year 2004-5. Thus, the Departmental Service Improvement Team will need to report to their management on a regular basis on client satisfaction improvement and on progress toward the annual and the overall client satisfaction target. Using the core questions of the CMT and any other core item that the organization has decided to focus on, the Departmental Service Improvement Team should consider producing a report that demonstrates achievements in client satisfaction levels by service, delivery channel and/or region in improving the client satisfaction. By doing this in a consistent manner over time, the organization will be able to build a time series sequence of its progress like the example shown at the beginning of this section.

Reporting to Parliament

The work done by the Departmental Service Improvement Team to set up monitoring mechanisms and to consolidate information to meet managers' needs will also be extremely useful to produce the annual report to Parliament, to meet the information needs of other organizations such as the Office of the Auditor General, and to meet the information needs of client and citizens generally.

The Policy Framework for Service Improvement approved by Treasury Board in March 2000 commits departments to report within their Departmental Performance Report to Parliament the following:

1) service standards for all key public services;

2) performance against service standards;

3) annual improvements in client satisfaction; and,

4) progress toward client satisfaction targets.

Within this report, departments and organisations should also take the opportunity to report on their service improvement story including the programs and business lines covered by a Service Improvement Plan and their main achievements in improving service from a citizen-centred perspective.

The Guidelines for the Preparation of Departmental Performance Reports, which can be found at the TBS Web site (http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/tb/estimate/estime.html), describe the current reporting requirements for the *Service Improvement Initiative*. A more detailed description, with suggestions on formatting this information, is contained in Appendix A of this guide. The templates presented in the appendix may also be useful for structuring your internal information needs.

Accountability

Improved client satisfaction with the quality of service provided by government departments and agencies is not the responsibility of any one person in the organization but rather a collective responsibility. This is true for the broader scope of government, with accountability from "Clerk to clerk"—from the Clerk of the Privy Council to the clerk in the local government office. Progressively, organizations will be asked to incorporate in their current accountability frameworks the responsibility for providing good quality of service and improving client satisfaction.

Monitor Broader Organizational Performance

Service performance is just the outer skin of an effective organization. Therefore, it can be beneficial to link the service performance into broader monitoring of overall organizational effectiveness. Systems—such as ISO, the Baldrige award criteria, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat/National Quality Institute's criteria, or professional standards—support this monitoring. While the use of one of these is not a requirement, they do provide a structure around which to build a monitoring program. Search out and consider using one appropriate to your situation.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the continuous, systematic process of measuring and assessing the products, services and practices of recognized leaders in the field to determine the extent to which they might be adapted by the organization to achieve superior performance. Therefore, it is important to have a system to monitor the progress made by others outside your organization. This will involve keeping up to date on the literature and how similar agencies or work units are faring in their own transition. What are they doing now? Are new tools being developed? Excellence, like an Olympic record, is a moving target.

Communicate Results

Progress must be communicated, as does information on areas that need improvement. Make sure you communicate regularly:

- up the line, so supervisors and central agencies can monitor the organization's progress;
- to other agencies, for benchmarking purposes;
- to staff;
- to clients;
- to Parliament, in the annual Departmental Performance Report.

Checklist for Step 8

By the end of this step, you should have broken down monitoring into doable pieces, integrated with each other. You should:

- ❑ Review each of the steps, reassess your current state, review improvement priorities, review improvement actions adopted, update standards and targets, and re-plan.
- ❑ Continue to benchmark and learn.
- ❑ Oversee the measurement of results in service improvement and client satisfaction, using both qualitative and quantitative measures.
- ❑ Communicate the results to staff, managers, parliamentarians and clients.
- ❑ Ensure measurements relate to objectives and performance targets.
- ❑ Ensure measurements are timely.
- ❑ Hold yourself and your staff accountable—for both positive and negative results.

See Appendix H

Reporting Guidelines for Departmental Performance Reports

How Do We Make It Happen?

STEP 9

Recognition: Celebrating Success

People need to be recognized when they do a good job. It is not only fair but also eminently practical since recognition and incentives improve performance.

Many public service organizations have established recognition programs. Existing programs should be reviewed to ensure that service improvement and client satisfaction measures are used and good client service rewarded. If you do not already have such a program, you should institute one as part of your *Service Improvement Initiative*.

Here are some key elements for establishing a new program or reviewing an existing one.

1. Widely Based

It is important that recognition be fair and open to everyone who contributes to improved service. It should be based on a wide variety of sources—information on who is doing well based upon the achievement of client satisfaction targets, or which staff are most appreciated by clients and why. Information should be gathered that shows contributions to the organization's mission and performance for each program, by each work unit, and, where possible, by each employee.

2. Which Results To Reward

Decide what results to reward, remembering that it is advisable to have a wide range, from extraordinary achievement to ordinary accomplishments. Make the recognition appropriate to the achievement.

Employees are the clients of the recognition program. As such, solicit their opinions on what should be rewarded and whom they think should be recognized.

3. Methods to Use to Recognize, Reward and Celebrate

The methods to recognize staff are endless, but tend to fall into five main styles. The most successful recognition systems adopt a mixture of all five, while keeping the program simple to understand and administer, transparent and fair.

The styles are:

- *Interpersonal Recognition*
  A simple, effective and valued way to recognize staff is to listen to them—through surveys, in meetings, and face to face. Acting on what they say enhances that recognition. Dropping in to give praise or sending a congratulatory e-mail or note can work wonders.

- *Symbolic Recognition*
  There are many effective, low-cost symbolic ways to show recognition, such as certificates of appreciation, coupons to the movies or dinner out, or staff appreciation days. Use creativity when developing methods and ask employees for suggestions.
- *Financial Rewards*
  For the most part, policy on major financial rewards is decided centrally. But some modest rewards may be possible.
- *Give External Recognition*
  Many outsiders may help your organization to attain its goals and this contribution should be recognized. Create opportunities to show your appreciation such as volunteer appreciation nights or plaques to present to other agencies.
- *Seek External Recognition*
  A number of competitive awards are given for good public management. Seek them out.

4. Implement the Program, with Attention to Good Management

It is not uncommon for recognition programs to fall apart once they are created because of poor implementation. Leadership is critical, and managers must demonstrate their commitment to the program. Ensure the person responsible for the program is someone who gets things done. Ensure the program is visible, adequately funded and sustainable, and reaches into all areas of the organization. Also, maintain a balance between recognition of the big and small successes. Cynicism creeps in if management attention is only paid to big successes.

5. Publicize the Results

Results should be shared with your staff and the public. The public is tired of whitewashing and spin doctoring. But they never seem to tire of good stories. Public recognition is another important way of honouring your staff.

6. Close the Circle

Once the program is underway, it needs to be reviewed to determine if it is having the desired impact. Celebration is not the end of the process. Even as the cleaning staff is taking down the last of the decorations from an awards banquet, the organization needs to recommit to the process of surveying the clients, revising the plan, and reaching for higher levels of service.

> The Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management awarded its 1998 bronze prize for service innovation to the team at Industry Canada who put together SchoolNet, a project to connect every library and school in Canada to the Internet. The team celebrated that success and then promptly set the loftier goal of providing 250,000 connected computers, the equivalent of one per classroom. The next year, they won the Government in Technology gold medal. Taking pride in their work, exceeding expectations and celebrating their success while pressing on to improve their service—SchoolNet is helping build children’s skills for the knowledge economy.

Checklist for Step 9

In recognition of your organization's achievements, you have a method to recognize and celebrate success that has, at a minimum, these features:

- ❑ It is based on solid data, both quantitative and qualitative.
- ❑ It is client-centred, with your staff as the clients.
- ❑ It recognizes performance improvement, client satisfaction and target achievement, as well as the traditional criteria.
- ❑ It blends financial rewards, interpersonal, symbolic, and external recognition.
- ❑ Small successes are not overlooked.
- ❑ Results are shared and made public.
- ❑ It loops back into steps one through eight, as part of continuous improvement.

SUMMARY

The example on the following pages provides a summary of the Service Improvement Planning and Implementation methodology at work. Each of the above identified steps are important and contribute to overall success; none can be skipped or glossed over. Although presented as discrete elements, the steps are obviously interconnected.

For success, leadership from all employees is a must and serves as a base to build a strong service improvement initiative. This starts with the creation of a Service Improvement Team to assist with the process. This team sets out to adopt a results-based service improvement planning and implementation approach that answers four key questions in nine steps in this methodology.

The first question is “Where are we now?” This is addressed with an internal assessment by identifying the clients, products, services, partners and stakeholders of the organization. Then, the current state is assessed through the establishment of a client feedback strategy and the identification of current levels of client and employee satisfaction, expectations and priorities.

The next question is “Where do our clients want us to be?” This involves defining the desired future state of the organization by ensuring the mission statement includes a service vision. Client priorities for improvement are identified based on client and employee feedback. Client satisfaction targets are then set along with client-driven service standards.

The next question, “How will we get there?” is addressed by the design of a service improvement plan that has action plans to achieve targets, a defined schedule, and resources and responsibilities allocated.

The final question asks “How do we make it happen?” and involves the implementation of the service improvement plan, and the monitoring and measuring of progress made while ensuring accountability for results. This concludes with an employee recognition program that celebrates success.

Each must be revisited as part of a continuous improvement approach, some more frequently than others. For example, the Service Improvement Plan will be reviewed more frequently than the mission and vision statement.

The task is not easy. But it can be fun. There is joy in achievement. There is also joy in watching clients’ satisfaction levels rise. It reassures us of the value of our work and makes the workplace more enjoyable—cause for celebration.

Example of the Service Improvement Planning and Implementation (SIPI) Methodology at Work

The following example is fictitious and designed for demonstration purposes only. A Ministry of Agriculture has an information and training program designed to assist farmers with environmental management of sensitive lands along streams. The Ministry is not certain how well this program is performing for its clients but some anecdotal feedback makes them think it could perform better using a structured service improvement planning process. The Ministry has decided that it would like to achieve an improvement of 10% in service performance over a three-year period.

To begin, the Ministry has decided to create a small team to assist with the development of a Service Improvement Plan. As the plan will only involve a modest sized program, the team will be ad hoc rather than dedicated.

<u>Assessment.</u> The team starts with an identification of all the clients, partners and stakeholders involved in the program. Once started, the team quickly realizes that the program has a much larger impact than they originally thought. While the primary clients of the program are farmers, several others are identified, including one that was previously overlooked: rural property owners who are not farmers but rent their property out for intensive agriculture. Some internal clients of the program include the Communications Unit that provides information and brochures at autumn fair displays. In terms of partners, other government ministries were identified: Ministry of Environment (water protection, pollution control), Ministry of Natural Resources (fisheries protection), and local watershed management authorities. As well, non-governmental organizations are identified as partners, including farming associations and conservation groups that provide information and training to their members. Stakeholders include anglers and the local community—the latter through the flood control benefits derived from the program.

<u>Current State.</u> The team establishes a client feedback strategy, with comment cards for clients coming to offices for information, and satisfaction surveys for clients taking training. When required, focus groups will collect more detailed information from clients. The improvement initiative focus is on improving the satisfaction of direct program clients: farmers. To begin, these clients are brought together for a few focus groups to gather some initial information on the issues. This is followed by a CMT-based client survey for which, in addition to the core questions, the team adds a few standard items (notably from the Communications Unit) and creates a section related specifically to the program (such as questions specifically on training), using standard CMT metrics. This survey provides a benchmark to measure progress. The survey reveals an overall satisfaction level of 70%, which leads to a target of 77%, representing a 10% increase in client satisfaction.

<u>Mission/Vision.</u> In reviewing the mission statement of the branch delivering the program, the team sees room for improvement. The current mission is *"To provide high quality information and training on sustainable agricultural practices to the farming community."* While good, the team and senior management think it best to tweak the wording to state: *"To provide high quality information and training on sustainable agricultural practices to <u>meet the needs</u> of the farming community."* While minor, this ensures the focus is on the needs of the clients and indicates a culture shift to a citizen-centred organization.

Priorities for Improvement. From the survey, clients clearly identified three improvement priorities. These deal with the clearness of communication, the amount of time required to deliver training, and telephone access to the Branch for program information.

Standards and Targets. The team looks at the data and determines that in order to achieve the 10% service performance improvement, it will set an annual objective of 2.3% (72.3% in Year 1; 74.6% in Year 2; and 77.0% in Year 3). For service standards, the team takes the lead from the survey and the *Citizens First* survey. For in-person service, the clients want service within five minutes; to deal with no more than two people; and phone calls answered within three rings. The objective is to achieve these standards 80% of the time.

The Service Improvement Plan. The team then constructs the Service Improvement Plan. An integrated document, it contains much of the content already developed. This plan includes statements on the timeframe and scope of the initiative, the efforts taken to develop the plan, the mission statement of the program, and the vision of citizen-centred service in the Ministry. From the three priorities identified, the team draws up the action plan that identifies the needed actions for improvement, and states the responsibilities, timeframes, results, and how results will be measured. Several individuals involved in the program are identified with responsibilities. The improvement plan also states that the results for implementing the plan will be reported as part of the regular reporting process for the program, with additional reports made on a quarterly basis for staff and partners. Management accountability for the improvement plan lies with the Branch Director, who gives final approval to the plan, and has made the Service Improvement Plan part of the accountability agreement with her ADM.

Implementation. The team recognizes that the implementation of the improvement plan is strongly linked to the next stage of monitoring. This includes communication of the plan—not just to staff, but to the partners and stakeholders. The responsibilities stated in the plan are verified so that everyone is clear on expectations, why the changes are being made, and what the desired outcome is: increased client satisfaction. This supports a culture shift to a citizen/client focus. Management also ensures that changes are made to support the plan, such as working with Systems to improve the telephone services, and addressing the clarity of the information in documents. Where needed, staff training is identified and undertaken. As it exists, the plan is likely not perfect and will require adjustment. While intended as an annual document, the plan is expected to have periodic adjustments, especially during early implementation. Implementation is not a one-off event, but a continuous improvement process.

Monitoring. With implementation underway, the improvement plan is monitored as part of a continuous improvement process. A monitoring system is put in place as part of the client feedback strategy that provides timely feedback. In addition, periodic reviews are undertaken through informal staff networks and periodicals to see how other jurisdictions are performing on similar programs as part of a benchmarking exercise. Results are measured and communicated on a regular basis to staff, clients, the legislature, and the public. Accountability decisions are then made based on the monitoring. With a short timeframe (three years), the team decides that monitoring and revision will focus only on the Service Improvement Plan. Longer timeframes might make it appropriate to revisit the earlier steps and reconfirm the identification of clients and the program mission to ensure they are still valid.

Rewards and Recognition. After consulting with staff and management, the team decides to recommend to management that the improvements recognize all staff involved in the initiative rather than only individuals. They also feel that both ordinary and extraordinary achievement should be recognized, from completion of an action item to achievement of the client satisfaction targets, and reflect the significance of the accomplishments. An annual recognition dinner is also suggested to recognize the external partners who help deliver the program.

GLOSSARY

Baseline data: data captured at the beginning of a process that an organization can compare with the same type of data collected at the end of the process. This allows organizations to measure differences in performance.

Benchmarking: the action of identifying, comparing, understanding and adapting outstanding practices found either inside or outside an organization. Benchmarking is based mainly on common measures and the comparison of obtained results both internally and externally. This information will help the organization to know where it is in terms of performance and to take action to improve its performance based on a best practice organization.

Citizens: bearers of rights and duties in a framework of democratic community. There are three dimensions of citizenship: citizens as "clients" (the users or recipients of government services), citizens as taxpayers, and citizens as members of a civic or democratic community, with the rights and obligations such membership entails.

Client expectations: the assumptions that each client has about the kind of service that will be provided during a transaction. The expectations are usually related to timeliness, reliability, accessibility, responsiveness and product quality.

Clients: the category of citizens who are the direct users or recipients—sometimes involuntary recipients—of government services.

Continuous improvement: the ongoing process of assessing performance against desired results and client feedback, and subsequently making adjustments to improve performance.

Departmental Performance Report (DPR): an annual report tabled to Parliament in the fall by departments and agencies as part of the estimates process. This document reports on the commitments made in the Report on Plans and Priorities.

External Client: a member of the public who is a direct recipient of public services.

Focus group: a small group of clients—usually between 6 and 12—brought together to provide their views on particular services and products.

Innovation: the implementation of new methods or ideas to improve the quality of service provided. An innovative approach to providing quality service includes looking beyond traditional methods of doing business.

Internal Client: a public sector employee who receives services directly from fellow government service providers to, in turn, provide services to their clients.

Partner: organizations who work co-operatively together towards shared or compatible objectives with some degree of shared authority and responsibility, joint investment of resources, shared risk and mutual benefit.

Quality: the degree of excellence clients perceive, based upon their needs and expectations.

Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP): an annual report tabled to Parliament in the spring by departments and agencies as part of the estimates process. This document outlines the results the department or agency expects to achieve over a three-year planning period and the necessary resources required to achieve those results.

Satisfaction target: the level of satisfaction an organization strategically identifies as a minimum to obtain for a defined period of time.

Service gap: the difference between what clients expect and what they perceive they received.

Service Improvement Plan: based on knowledge of client needs, preferences, expectations and priorities for improvement, the improvement plan is a management tool used to set activities to meet the service standards and satisfaction targets set for the organization.

Service Standard: a pledge that a service will be delivered at a defined level. It provides a yardstick against which services can be measured.

Stakeholder: an individual or organization who receives an indirect social benefit from a public service and who may be affected by changes in service even though they are not themselves a client.

Target: an objective the organization would like to achieve, usually within a certain timeframe.

APPENDIX A

Service Improvement Assessment Grid

Steps		Low	(1)	Transition	(2)	High	(3)
Service Improvement Planning Assessment Grid							
		Performance					
1	**Internal Assessment** Identify the internal and external client(s), product(s), service(s), partner(s) and stakeholder(s)	Little or no definition of client groups, partners, or stakeholders		Some attempt to identify client; some attempt to identify partners and stakeholders		Everyone in the organization has a clear understanding of who the clients for each product or service are, who the partners and stakeholders are, and how they are involved	
2	**Assess Current State** Establish a client feedback strategy; identify current levels of employee and client satisfaction, expectations and priorities	No consistent mechanisms to obtain feedback from clients and employees		Sporadic client and/or staff surveys		A strong strategy to continually measure client and employee satisfaction, expectations, and priorities for improvement	
3	**Desired Future State** Create service vision and mission statements	Citizen-centred approach not articulated in the mission and vision statements		"Let's improve service" mission and vision statements communicated to staff		A mission and a vision statement that supports citizen-centred service improvement developed with and supported by staff	
4	**Priorities for Improvement** Identify areas for potential improvement	No organizational priorities have been defined		Some priorities to improve service have been defined and communicated within the organization		Priorities have been identified and communicated around the five drivers of satisfaction: visibility, access, human resources management, partnerships and use of IT for service improvement	
5	**Set Standards and Targets** Set improvement targets; set client-driven service standards	None, not clear; performance not measured		Service standards are not client-driven; occasional performance appraisals		Client-driven standards established and published; performance measured at all levels and reported regularly to all staff	
6	**Design Improvement Plan** Develop an action plan to obtain improvements for each goal; identifying responsibilities, defining a schedule; allocating resources	No improvement plan; no specific action to improve service; not linked with client priorities for improvement		Not formalized; not integrated within the planning cycle, one-shot effort		Service improvement plan is set that includes actions to improve service, identify responsibilities, monitor results, and clarify accountability, and a schedule for completion and renewal	
7	**Implementation** Implement the improvement plan	No implementation		Actions defined in the plan are partially implemented; no clear responsibility and accountability to implement the plan		Actions defined in the plan are fully implemented; responsibility and accountability to implement the plan are clear to all employees	
8	**Monitor** Monitor and measure progress, ensure accountability for results	None		Review from time to time the current state of each improvement action		Regular review of current improvement actions as well as improvement priorities; regular updates of standards; re-planning	
9	**Recognition** Establish, monitor and maintain an employee recognition program	None		Occasional award ceremonies; management-driven; part of performance appraisal		Formal and systematic; recognizes performance improvement, client satisfaction, and targets achievement	
		Subtotal A:		Subtotal B:		Subtotal C:	

A+B+C=

Add up your scores
Low SIP Performance: 9 - 15
In Transition SIP Performance: 16 - 23
High SIP Performance 24 - 27

APPENDIX B

Service Improvement
SAMPLE-WORKSHEET – SAMPLE-WORKSHEET –

Client Feedback Strategy

Continuous Feedback Strategy—sample

Data required	Method	Frequency	Responsibility
Citizen expectations and needs	Focus groups	Annually	Director, Strategic Planning
Client satisfaction	Exit survey Postal survey	Continuous Annually	Front line staff Director, Client Services
Client priorities for improvement	Exit survey Postal survey	Continuous Annually	Front line staff Director, Client Services
Client complaints	Complaint management system	Semi-annually	Director, Client Services
Employee satisfaction	Short electronic employee survey	Semi-annually	Director, Human Resources
Employee ideas for improvement	Quality circle meeting	Bi-monthly	Director, Client Services

Appendix C

Client Feedback Tools

Focus Groups

A focus group is a small group, usually between six and twelve people, brought together to provide views on particular services and products in a consensus-building discussion. These groups stimulate discussions on specific topics, and are useful for gathering balanced and detailed input from a variety of clients with different perspectives. Focus groups encourage innovative thinking and consensus building around a specific product, service or service delivery process. A discussion guide often helps to direct the group. The guide focuses the discussion on specific topics to ensure the information required is obtained.

Within the *Service Improvement Initiative*, focus groups can be used in the assessment process to identify what is important for the client in terms of service and what could be a good service in terms of standards. Focus groups could also be used in the middle of the process to identify solutions or actions to undertake to improve service or to better understand what is the meaning of specific comments provided by the clients in a survey or on a comment card.

Tips on conducting successful client focus groups:

- Small focus groups (between six and ten participants, including moderator) are generally more successful than larger groups.
- The recruitment process should ensure the group is representative of the whole target group.
- The goal is to reach a consensus among group members.
- A moderator is needed to lead the discussion group. This person should ensure that all relevant topics are covered, everyone has the opportunity to voice their opinions, and the results of the session are recorded.
- Outline the general purpose and overall approach for the discussion to all participants at the start of the discussion meeting.
- Each person should be encouraged to actively participate in the discussion and voice their opinions.
- Some topics can be facilitated through graphics, flip charts, video, etc.
- Refreshments could be provided.

Further Information

For more information on focus groups, potential sources to consult include:

Canada. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1998. *A Guidebook on Performance Measurement.* Audit and Evaluation Branch.

Geoffrion, Paul, “Le groupe de discussion”, in *Recherche sociale: de la problématique à la collecte de données* directed by Benoit Gauthier, Presse de l’Université du Québec.

Common Measurements Tool

The Common Measurements Tool (CMT) provides public organizations with a set of standard questions and standard measurement scales for use in surveying their clients. It must be stressed that it is a tool, not a "ready-to-use" client satisfaction survey. Rather, it is a comprehensive collection of potential survey questions that an organization may select from, to custom design a client satisfaction survey that meets their information requirements. Organizations are encouraged to select those sections that are most appropriate to their services and clients. The use of standard questions allows the organization to benchmark progress on its service improvement journey over time and, since questions are standard, organizations can compare results with other organizations within the same business line. To ensure this ability to benchmark performance, several core questions will be required for inclusion in all surveys. These are presented on the following page.

The CMT is also a client satisfaction survey, not a citizen survey. A client survey deals with questions about service delivery at an operational level and specifics of the service delivery experience, such as the time required to deliver service, whether staff were courteous, and accessibility of the service. In contrast, a citizen survey addresses issues indirectly related to the delivery of services, such as the service delivery mechanisms and structures.

Designed to provide client feedback to any public organization and ensure that all aspects of client service are considered, the CMT is conceived around five key elements: client expectations, perceptions of the service experience, satisfaction levels, levels of importance, and priorities for service improvements. These are the basis for the types of questions asked in the CMT, which is arranged around five dimensions of service delivery: responsiveness, reliability, access and facilities, communications, and cost (where applicable).

With a focus on these five elements, the organization is able to know the degree of client satisfaction on various aspects of service delivery, and what clients consider important in service delivery. When the priorities for improvement are considered and the expectations known, the organization can then focus efforts that will best serve to close the service gap in meeting the needs, expectations and priorities of clients.

Comprehensive information on the five key service delivery elements provides a solid foundation on which to base decision making, such as the areas to focus improvement efforts and resource allocation. It may also help in the management of client expectations, if those expectations are unrealistic or achievable, through better communication with clients.

Further Information

For more information on the CMT, including the questions contained in the tool, please consult:

Schmidt, F., and T. Strickland, 1998. *Client Satisfaction Surveying: Common Measurements Tool*. Prepared for the Citizen-Centred Service Network, Canadian Centre for Management Development. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development.

Schmidt, F., and T. Strickland, 1998. *Client Satisfaction Surveying: A Manager's Guide*. Prepared for the Citizen-Centred Service Network, Canadian Centre for Management Development. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development.

CMT Core Questions

Issue	Question	Scale	
Overall Assessment	Overall, how satisfied were you with this service (product)?	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied 2 Dissatisfied 3 Neutral 4 Satisfied 5 Very Satisfied	
		How satisfied were you with this aspect of our service (product)?	**How important is this aspect of our service (product) to you?**
Timeliness	Time required to deliver the service (product).	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied 2 Dissatisfied 3 Neutral 4 Satisfied 5 Very Satisfied	Importance 1 Very Unimportant 2 Unimportant 3 Neutral 4 Important 5 Very Important
Timeliness	Waiting time at the service location.	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied 2 Dissatisfied 3 Neutral 4 Satisfied 5 Very Satisfied	Importance 1 Very Unimportant 2 Unimportant 3 Neutral 4 Important 5 Very Important
Competence	Service staff were competent.	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied 2 Dissatisfied 3 Neutral 4 Satisfied 5 Very Satisfied	Importance 1 Very Unimportant 2 Unimportant 3 Neutral 4 Important 5 Very Important
Courtesy	Service staff were courteous.	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied 2 Dissatisfied 3 Neutral 4 Satisfied 5 Very Satisfied	Importance 1 Very Unimportant 2 Unimportant 3 Neutral 4 Important 5 Very Important
Fairness	The service was provided in a fair and equitable manner.	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied 2 Dissatisfied 3 Neutral 4 Satisfied 5 Very Satisfied	Importance 1 Very Unimportant 2 Unimportant 3 Neutral 4 Important 5 Very Important
Information	In receiving this service (product), I was informed of everything I had to do in order to get the service (product).	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied 2 Dissatisfied 3 Neutral 4 Satisfied 5 Very Satisfied	Importance 1 Very Unimportant 2 Unimportant 3 Neutral 4 Important 5 Very Important
Accessibility	Overall, how satisfied were you with the accessibility of the service (product)?	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied 2 Dissatisfied 3 Neutral 4 Satisfied 5 Very Satisfied	
Outcome	In the end, did you get what you needed from our organization?	a) Yes b) No c) I got part of what I needed	

While not a required core question, it is suggested that if the service involves a fee, the survey should also include the following general question related to cost:

		How satisfied were you with this aspect of our service (product)?	
Cost	Overall, how satisfied were you with the costing of the service (product) you received?	Satisfaction 1 Very Dissatisfied; 2 Dissatisfied; 3 Neutral; 4 Satisfied; 5 Very Satisfied	

Comment Cards

In addition to surveys, comment cards are a common method to gather feedback from clients. Both tools provide some of the same information, but each is intended for a specific purpose. A survey is intended to gather information that can be analyzed and results benchmarked over time. The process uses a methodology that ensures that the results are representative and statistically valid. This allows the organization to know with a degree of certainty the extent to which service improvement efforts have impacted customer satisfaction, and to make strategic decisions based on the information.

Comment cards only provide broad opinions, which are often valid, but which cannot be used to track changes. As they do not follow a rigorous methodology, they are not considered statistically valid or representative of the client base. Since anyone can complete a comment card, in many cases they are only completed after a negative experience and have been referred to as “complaint cards.” The primary purpose of the comment card is to provide information to staff quickly to so that operational problems can be corrected as soon as possible, notably on the key drivers of service (e.g. timeliness, staff courtesy, staff competence, quality of information, fairness, and outcome of the service). In addition, comment cards emphasize open-ended questions for broader comments on the service experience. Comment cards, as such, serve to supplement rather than replace a customer satisfaction survey. A generic comment card can be found on the following page.

Client Comment Card

(identify service scope/point of service)

In order to continue to offer to our client a high quality level service, we would like to receive your comments.

Your feedback is important for us. It provides guidelines on what should be improved in order to meet our client expectations.

Could you please take some time to complete this questionnaire and (how to return comment card should be explained)?

Thank you

(Signature)

What was the reason for your contact with us? (Question not required if there is only one service offered at a point of service)

- ☐ Service A (to be specified)
- ☐ Service B (to be specified)
- ☐ Service C (to be specified)
- ☐ Service D (to be specified)

How did you get access to the service?
(This question is not required if there is only one delivery channel)

- ☐ In person
- ☐ By phone
- ☐ By mail
- ☐ By Internet or electronic kiosk

How satisfied are you with this aspect of our service?

	Very Dissatisfied				Very Satisfied
Timeliness	1	2	3	4	5
Staff courtesy	1	2	3	4	5
Staff competence	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of information	1	2	3	4	5
Fairness of service	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of service	1	2	3	4	5

Did you get what you needed from our organization?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I got part of what I needed

Could you indicate what should be our priorities for service improvement?

____

____

____

If you wish to comment on any of the above or other matters, please do so below.

____

____

____

____

____

____

Would you like someone to contact you concerning your comments or the problems you had to deal with our service?

- ☐ Yes, please complete the next section
- ☐ No

Name:

Phone #: ( ) _____ - ________

Your personal information will be protected under Canada's *Privacy Act*

Canada

APPENDIX D

Employee Surveys

Purpose of an employee survey

Organizations may conduct employee surveys as part of their *Service Improvement Initiative* for a number of reasons. Employee involvement, commitment and participation are key elements of any organization that would like to improve service for citizens. Management needs the opinions of the work force to identify areas for improvement and should, therefore, provide regular opportunities for employees to participate in the decision-making process.

A well-handled employee survey can catalyze or enhance communication, partnerships with employees, and motivation. Morale, productivity, commitment and organizational vitality can be substantially improved by listening to and acting on employee suggestions.

Employee surveys can:

- allow an organization to tap employees as a resource to focus on areas within the organization that can be improved. Survey data can identify the highest-priority elements of the organization's *Service Improvement Initiative*;
- establish baseline data for an organization in terms of the degree to which it meets the criteria of a quality service organization. From this baseline data, the organization can measure progress made in implementing or improving its quality service initiative. The baseline data could also help organizations identify, understand and adapt current outstanding practices that will provide the basis for further improving performance;
- obtain input from employees, thereby encouraging participation in the change process and fostering buy-in;
- identify training and learning needs to support the *Service Improvement Initiative*, and
- gather perceptions on other key elements of a *Service Improvement Initiative*, such as leadership and recognition programs.

Success criteria

To ensure the quality and the validity of the survey some methodological and strategic decisions will be required to:

- determine whether to use the whole employee group or a representative sample;
- involve staff representatives in the first step of the process;

- control the size of the questionnaire by focussing on what is really important;
- design a comprehensive questionnaire ensuring that employees understand the meaning of each question and are able to answer it in preliminary test;
- dedicate adequate resources and time;
- clearly communicating the survey purpose and its link with the organizational mandate;
- use management representatives to send the survey, and raise the importance of this consultation by ongoing communications;
- send a reminder memo in order to increase the participation rate;
- ensure confidentiality and anonymity to participants;
- ensure independence of the process in delicate situations by using external resources;
- integrate staff satisfaction in organizational performance indicators;
- use appropriate resources and mechanisms to conduct statistical analysis;
- act on results.

As part of the survey process, the organization should determine if the survey met its stated objectives. The organization might assess success against the following criteria:

- the employee participation rate;
- the extent to which the survey assisted in the design of the *Service Improvement Initiative*;
- the extent to which the data helped measure progress in defined areas;
- the extent to which the survey data was integrated with other service improvement data to design or improve service delivery;
- the extent to which follow-up surveys are used to measure progress in service delivery; and
- the extent to which feedback loops were built into the survey to give employees information on survey results and on actions deemed necessary by those results.

Content of an employee survey

An employee survey should focus on satisfaction and priorities for improvement in five areas:

- Communication
- Management behaviours

- Human resources management and development
- Teamwork, staff relations and work facilities
- Service delivery

Further Information

For more information on employee surveys, please consult:

Canada. Statistics Canada, 1992. *Guide to Conducting an Employee Opinion Survey in the Federal Public Service*. Special Surveys Group, Statistics Canada.

Canada. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1999, *Public Service Employee Survey*.

Canada. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1995. *Quality Service Guide VI*: *Employee Surveys.*

Edwards, J. E., M. D. Thomas, P. Rosenfeld, and S. Booth-Kewley, 1996. *How to Conduct Organizational Surveys: A Step-by-Step Guide.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Harwood, Paul L, 1998. *Employee Surveys in the Public Service: Experience and Success Factors.* Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development.

APPENDIX E

Setting Priorities

The Satisfaction/Importance Matrix[7]

As noted in Step 4: Setting Improvement Priorities, one way to determine priorities for service improvement is to create a service improvement matrix. This allows decision makers to visualize potential areas for service improvement based on client survey responses by plotting client satisfaction and the importance of each service element.

By plotting the two ratings on a two-dimensional grid, it can be quickly determined which improvements are both necessary (low satisfaction ratings) and important for clients (high importance ratings). The location of each service element plotted isolates those that are service improvement priorities (see the legend on the following page).

The following data illustrates the use of the matrix, based on the five-point scale of the CMT.

	Dimension of Service	Satisfaction	Importance
a)	Hours of service	1	3
b)	Comfort of waiting area	2	4
c)	Waiting times	2	2
d)	Parking	5	2
e)	Staff courtesy	4	5

The Service Improvement Matrix

7 The description of the Service Improvement Matrix is taken from *Listening to Customers: An Introduction* prepared by S.A. Woodhouse et al. for the Service Quality B.C. Secretariat, Government of British Columbia, 1993.

The Four Quadrants of the Matrix

Priorities for Improvement. Service elements here have low satisfaction levels, but are the service dimensions which are also the most important to clients. These are the service elements that require *immediate* attention.

Strengths. This contains those service elements that the client considers important and that have a high level of satisfaction. *No improvement* is required on these elements.

Redeployment? Elements in this quadrant have high satisfaction levels but are not important to clients. No improvement is required to these service elements, or *the opportunity may exist to reallocate resources* in support of other improvement priorities.

Opportunities. Clients have low levels of satisfaction with these elements but they are also not important. Improvements on these elements are *not a priority* at the moment.

Note: By moving the crossed centre-lines of the matrix (up-down, left-right), the selection of improvement priorities can be adjusted. The example on the previous page reflects such an adjustment.

Based on the data in this example (which uses an adjusted centre line), Hours of Service and Waiting Times emerge as improvement priorities.

When designing your questionnaires and testing them with focus groups, be sure to verify that you will get data to construct a service improvement matrix. As well, several priorities will likely emerge, or priorities identified only by a minority of respondents may be squeezed out of the “Priorities for Improvement” quadrant. It is essential that the importance ratings be supported by a question that asks respondents to identify their top priorities for improvement.

APPENDIX F

Setting Service Standards and Performance Objectives

How to Set Service Standards

What Citizens Have Said

What are citizen expectations for the speed of service in various delivery channels? The 1998 *Citizens First* survey documents Canadians' expectations for service standards in the area of telephone service, counter service, voice mail, mail service, e-mail, and referrals.

- **Telephones:** 97% of Canadians feel that a thirty second wait on the telephone is acceptable; 76% of Canadians believe that a wait of one minute or more for a government representative is unacceptable.
- **Referrals:** 85% of Canadians find it acceptable to deal with two people in order to get the service; 84% find it unacceptable to deal with more than two people.
- **Voice Mail Messages:** 75% of Canadians believe that a telephone voice mail message should be returned within four hours; 86% believe that returning the call the next day is unacceptable.
- **Waiting in Line:** 98% of Canadians believe that waiting in line at a counter for two minutes is acceptable service; 74% of Canadians believe that a wait of ten minutes or more in a government line is unacceptable.
- **Postal Service:** 82% of Canadians feel a two week wait is an acceptable time to allow for a mailed reply; 72% find more than three weeks is unacceptable.
- **E-mail:** 90% of Canadians believe that an e-mail message should be returned within four hours; 74% believe a reply the next day is unacceptable.

Elements of Service Standards

1. **Description** of the service provided and, where applicable, benefits clients are entitled to receive.
2. **Service quality pledges or principles** that describe the quality of service delivery clients can expect to receive.
3. **Performance objectives** for key service aspects such as timeliness, access, and accuracy of delivery.
4. **Cost of delivering the service.**
5. **Clear complaint and redress mechanisms** for clients when they feel standards have not been met.

Service Standard Principles

- Widespread and equitable. Service standards should have a wide application across an organization, with the same standards applied to clients using the same services in different locations.
- Meaningful to individuals. Standards should be meaningful to the people using the service, relate to those service aspects the clients feel are important, and be expressed in terms the client can easily understand.
- Based on consultation. Service standards should be developed in consultation with clients.
- Attainable yet challenging. Standards should be realistic, based on analysis, consistent with program objectives, and achievable while at the same time providing a challenge to the service providers.
- Affordable. Standards should take account of user charges, if applicable, and be attainable within available resources.
- Owned by managers and employees. Service standards are an essential management tool in service delivery. The managers and employees are responsible for taking ownership of them and setting and using service standards to continually improve the cost-effectiveness of service delivery.
- Published. Service standards should be published and made known to clients.
- Performance measured and reported. Performance achievements should be monitored against the standards and client satisfaction with the service provided, with results reported to clients.
- Reviewed and updated. Standards should be regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect new circumstances.

Steps in Developing Service Standards

- Know your business. Identify clients (direct and indirect), services, and partners; define current activities; know what is affordable (what does it cost to deliver your services?).
- Consult with clients and staff. What are the most important features of the service you provide? What are the clients' satisfaction levels with the service? What changes do clients want or need? What are client expectations? What are your responsibilities? Outline reciprocal responsibilities and roles.
- Set client-sensitive service standards. Establish standards which are easily understood by—and important for—clients. Consider piloting a standard on a small scale, and provide cost projections when appropriate and reasonable. Fine-tune the standard.
- Empower and train service providers. Train and equip staff to help clients and let staff know what is expected of them. Empower front-line staff to make decisions. Train managers and supervisors in leadership and motivation.
- Communicate service standards and report on performance. Advise staff and clients of service standards. Report on the performance achieved versus the standards; report on clients' satisfaction level with this service.
- Implement service standards and manage service quality. Measure your performance against your standards. Strive for continuous improvement. Develop a Service Improvement Plan.

Further Information

For more information on service standards in the Government of Canada, please consult:

Canada. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1995. *Quality Service Guide VII: Service Standards*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada. Available on the Internet at: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/opepubs/TB_O/siglist_e.html

Canada. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1996. *Service Standards: A Guide to the Initiative*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada. Available on the Internet at: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/opepubs/TB_D3/GUID_e.html

Canada. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1996. *An Overview of Quality and Affordable Service for Canadians: Establishing Service Standards in the Federal Government. Quality and Affordable Services for Canadians: Establishing Service Standards in the Federal Government (An Overview)*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada. Available on the Internet at: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/opepubs/TB_D3/OQUA_e.html

Service Standards and Satisfaction Targets Template

Service Standards Our commitments to clients	Performance Objectives	Verification	Reporting frequency	Accountability
To answer voice mail messages within 3 hours	80% of the time	Mystery shopper	Bi-annually	Director, Client Services
To serve you in our office within 20 minutes of arrival	75% of the time	Electronic device	Monthly	Local office managers
To reply to a mail request within 3 weeks	90% of the time	Correspondence records	Bi-annually	Director, Client Services
To provide service in both official languages	100% of the time	Mystery shopper	Semi-annually	Official Languages Officer
	Satisfaction targets	**Verification**	**Reporting frequency**	**Accountability**
	75% very satisfied with overall access to service	Client survey	Annually	
	90% very satisfied with staff courtesy	Client survey	Annually	

SAMPLE-WORKSHEET – SAMPLE-WORKSHEET –
Service Improvement

APPENDIX G

Service Improvement Plan Template

The following pages present several options that departments and agencies, at different organizational levels, may wish to consider in the creation of their Service Improvement Plans.

Purpose

The Service Improvement Plan is—in essence—a comprehensive summary document that captures the information collected and synthesized in Step 1 to Step 5 and presents it in a concise manner. It will identify the clients, partners and stakeholders of the organization, and state the mission statement of the organization that includes a service vision to provide focus to serve as a reminder of the mission when drafting the plan. It will identify the client feedback mechanisms used and identify the current levels of client and employee satisfaction, expectations, and priorities. From this, it will identify the priorities that clients have identified for service improvement, and lead to the setting of satisfaction improvement targets and client-driven service standards. The improvement plan then states actions to achieve the targets, defines the schedule, and allocates resources and responsibilities for improvements. It is also forward-looking to the later steps by identifying how progress will be measured for each target.

Suggested Approach

The examples found on the following pages are examples only. They are not intended to represent the definitive ways to structure a Service Improvement Plan, but to serve as suggestions for organizations, from the work unit level up to the department, or agency-wide basis, for what such a plan might look like.

The examples presented are presented in a variety of formats, but generally all contain the same basic information elements. Remember, the Service Improvement Plan is designed primarily to serve the internal needs of the organization to structure and plan actions for improvements. As such, the structure of the plan should reflect the needs of the organization so that is understandable by management and staff. A secondary consideration will be any information needed for reporting purposes. In these cases, the organization may wish to use the same format in the plan as it will use in the reporting process to simplify report preparation.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN
FOR
[ORGANIZATION]

For the Period: Dates for which the plan is in effect

Scope: Services/programs affected by the Service Improvement Plan

---

THE CONTEXT

Brief summary of the background to the plan, in the citizen-centred approach, and any previous planning efforts.

DIRECTION

MISSION STATEMENT

A brief explanation that states the purpose of the organization.

VISION OF CITIZEN-CENTRED SERVICE

The desired future state for the organization based on the citizen-centred service approach.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

PRIORITY 1: Reduce the need for clients and citizens to contact the government office by exploring new approaches in client service delivery

	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	MEASUREMENT
1.	Reduce telephone calls for information				
A.	Review of most frequent requests for information by telephone to identify gaps	Client Services Manager	May 2000	Thorough review of information requests	Summary reports of findings and information gaps
B.	Review information products for information gaps related to client requests	Director of Communications	June 2000	Increased satisfaction with information needed being available	Client satisfaction survey
C.	Review forms for clarity and plain language	Client Services Manager	June 2000	Increased satisfaction with forms being easy to understand and fill out	Client satisfaction survey
2.	Increase availability of information across service channels				
A.	Expand information available on the Internet	Director of Communications	August 2000	Expansion of information available through the Internet service channel	Number of paper information documents available electronically through the Internet

PRIORITY 2

Definition/clarification of terms in priority statement, or elaboration on statement

	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	MEASUREMENT
1.	Objective #1				
A.	Action		Date finished		
2 .	Objective #2				
A.	Action		Date finished		

PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT—Example #2

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENTS	OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS	SERVICE CHANNELS					RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS	MEASUREMENT
Based on client and citizen priorities identify improvement priorities on which actions should be taken	Which action(s) will be taken to address client priorities for service improvement?	Phone	In Person	Mail	Electronic	Other	Who is (are) responsible for taking action?	When will this be undertaken (U) and finished (F)?	What result(s) is (are) expected?	How are progress and results measured?
IMPROVE SERVICE ACCESS	**Objective 1:** facilitate the identification of points of service									
	Action 1.1: installing new signage inside and outside building	x					Director of Administrative Services	U: June 2000 F: October 2000	Increased client satisfaction with signage.	Measured through the client satisfaction survey
	Action 1.2: review of "blue pages" information in telephone directories	x	x				Director of Communications	U/F: September 2000	Increased client satisfaction with accessibility by telephone	Measured through the client satisfaction survey
	Objective 2:									
	Action 2.1:									
IMPROVE SERVICE TIMELINES										
IMPROVE STAFF COMPETENCY/ KNOWLEDGE										
IMPROVE SERVICE FAIRNESS										
IMPROVE SERVICE STAFF COURTESY										
IMPROVE STAFF SATISFACTION										

SAMPLE-WORKSHEET – SAMPLE-WORKSHEET –
Service Improvement

ACTION PLAN AND FOLLOW-UP

MONITORING AND REPORTING PROCESS

Brief description on how the plan will be monitored, how frequently results will be reported, and how results will be reported (i.e. reports)

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Identification of those accountable for the initiative and to whom the reports are presented for action

ACTION PLAN AND PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION

ACTION/ACTIVITY	2000-2001 QUARTER				2001-2002 QUARTER				2002-2003 QUARTER			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4st	1st	2nd	3rd	4st	1st	2nd	3rd	4st

APPENDIX H

Reporting Guidelines for Departmental Performance Reports (DPRs)

Service Improvement Initiative 2000-2001

The following guidelines apply essentially to the lead departments in the *Service Improvement Initiative*. Other departments and agencies are not required to comply with them until FY 2001/02. However, all departments and agencies are encouraged to apply these guidelines where the information is available.

Departments have been improving the quality of their service and continue to do so. Through this initiative, Treasury Board encourages service improvements from a citizen-centred perspective, focusing on achieving real improvement in client satisfaction with service quality. The Treasury Board of Canada, through the *Service Improvement Initiative*, commits departments to achieve, at a minimum, a 10% increase in client satisfaction with key, significant direct service delivery activities by the year 2005. Departments are asked to use their DPRs to demonstrate their performance against this target. Ongoing service improvement depends on departments' and agencies' abilities to: measure levels of client satisfaction, set targets for improving client satisfaction with their key services to the public, monitor implementation, and report progress on improvement in client satisfaction for key services to the public.

Departments should report on four key elements of their service delivery performance:

1) programs and business lines covered by a Service Improvement Plan;
2) main achievements in improving service from a citizen-centred perspective;
3) annual improvements in client satisfaction and progress toward satisfaction targets;
4) service standards for all key public services and performance against service standards.

Programs and business lines formally covered by a Service Improvement Plan

The establishment of a formal and structured service improvement process by business line, program, delivery channel (or geographic basis) is one of the key tools to achieve improvements in client satisfaction. In the report, it is important to identify what is formally covered by a Service Improvement Plan, linked with an ongoing client feedback strategy which allows the department to understand client needs, expectations and priorities for improvement, as well as monitor progress toward satisfaction targets and update its service improvement strategy.

Departments should demonstrate that the most significant programs and services from the citizen's point of view are appropriately covered.

To know more about the *Service Improvement Initiative* and the Service Improvement Planning and Implementation approach recommended see: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/

Main achievements in improving service from a citizen-centred perspective

An overview of the key client priorities for service improvement identified this year, and the main actions taken to address them.

Annual improvements in client satisfaction and progress toward satisfaction targets

Measuring client satisfaction with service quality is the most effective way to assess whether or not actions undertaken to improve service have a real impact. Based on measurement of client satisfaction with key services, departments should report on annual progress in improving client satisfaction and on meeting their annual and five-year improvement targets. When pertinent, detailed survey results regarding client satisfaction levels and priorities for improvement should be made available by a proper link to the departmental Internet site.

Level of Satisfaction Table—Core Questions—Example

	Questions	1998-1999 results	1999-2000 targets	1999-2000 results
Timeliness	Time required to deliver the service/product.	XX %	XX %	XX %
Timeliness	Waiting time at the service location.	XX %	XX %	XX %
Knowledge, competence	Service staff were competent.	XX %	XX %	XX %
Courtesy, comfort	Service staff were courteous.	XX %	XX %	XX %
Fairness	The service was provided in a fair and equitable manner.	XX %	XX %	XX %
Information	I was informed of everything I had to do in order to get the service/product.	XX %	XX %	XX %
Outcome	In the end, did you get what you needed from our organization?	XX %	XX %	XX %
Access	Overall, how satisfied were you with the accessibility of the service/product?	XX %	XX %	XX %
Overall Satisfaction Rating	Overall, how satisfied were you with this service/product?	XX %	XX %	XX %
Where appropriate cost	Overall, how satisfied were you with the costing of the service/product you received?	XX %	XX %	XX %

Core questions on client satisfaction have been defined for government-wide reporting. To ensure consistency and be able to benchmark results, these core questions should be integrated into client satisfaction surveys undertaken by departments using the Common Measurements Tool (CMT). The CMT is available at http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/

Detailed client satisfaction results should be made available on the departmental Web site with the appropriate URL reference in the table.

Service standards for all key public services, and performance against service standards

Although improvement of client satisfaction is the key measure of service improvement and service quality, service standards continue to play an important role in the overall service improvement strategy. For each service standard, developed from knowledge of client expectations, departments should measure actual performance against these standards. Overall performance should be reported in the DPR, while additional information about service standards and performance against those should be made available by a proper link to the departmental Internet site.

Service Standards Table—Example

Areas	Service Standards	Performance expected	Results
Accessibility	We will provide you with at least eight hours service each business day and	XX %	XX %
	we will post our hours in each office.	XX %	XX %
Timeliness	When you leave a message in a voice mailbox, we will return your call within 2 hours.	XX %	XX %
Information	If you need information about your personal file, you can obtain a copy by mail within five business days.	XX %	XX %
Language	Our services are available in both official languages. You will be served in the official language of your choice.	XX %	XX %
Courtesy	You will be treated in a courteous manner by all staff.	XX %	XX %
Fairness	You will be treated fairly and impartially.	XX %	XX %

Detailed service standards and results are available on our Web site at: http://www.xxx-xxx.gc.ca

Detailed service standards and results should be made available on the department's Internet site with the appropriate URL reference in the table.

APPENDIX

References and Bibliography

References

p. 1, Erin Research Inc., 1998, *Citizens First*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development.

p. 5, P. Harkins, 1999. *Powerful Conversations*. New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 22-23.

p. 9, K. Albrecht, 1993. "Anne-Marie Goes to the Bank" from *The Only Thing That Matters*, by K. Albrecht. New York: Harper Business, p. 3-6.

Bibliography

These are suggested additional sources that the group working on preparing this guide have found useful. Resources will be kept updated on the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Service and Innovation Sector Web site (http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/). Please let us know of any additional resources that you have found especially useful.

LEADERSHIP

- Kotter, J.P., 1996. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Ingstrup, O. and P. Crookall, 1998. *The Three Pillars of Public Management*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

- Whiteley, R.C., 1997. *The Customer Driven Company: moving from talk to action*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley.

ASSESSING THE CURRENT STATE

- Edmunds, H., 1999. *The Focus Group Research Handbook*. Lincolnwood, Illinois: NTC/Contemporary Publishing.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Thor, C.G., 1998. *Designing Feedback*. Menlo, California: Crisp Management Library.

SETTING STANDARDS AND TARGETS

- Keehley, P. et al., 1997. *Benchmarking for Best Practices in the Public Sector.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

RECOGNITION

- Nelson, B., 1994. *1001 Ways to Reward Employees*. New York: Workman Publishing.