Client Satisfaction Surveying: A Manager's Guide

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CITIZEN-CENTRED SERVICE NETWORK
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

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Faye Schmidt
Province of British Columbia

Contents

1. Introduction

This guide is designed to assist managers of public services across Canada by providing best practices in surveying client satisfaction with public services. The primary goal of this project is to help improve the public services that are offered to our clients and citizens.*

In July 1997, the Citizen-Centred Service Network noted that a significant service gap still exists in Canada between citizens' expectations and the actual services provided despite substantial efforts to modernize service delivery.[1] The network recognized the need to broaden understanding of citizen/client expectations, satisfaction levels, and priorities for service improvement. The development of this guide is the result of the impetus provided by the network.

It is hoped that this guide to client satisfaction surveys will lead more public service organizations to initiate such research, facilitating improvements to the ways our public services are delivered. Ultimately, the objective of this project is to assist in building a "client-oriented" public service environment that will directly benefit our clients and indirectly benefit the citizens whom we serve.

> "Come to the edge," he said.
> They said, "We are afraid."
> "Come to the edge," he said.
> And they came.
> And he pushed them over.
> And they flew.
>
> *Guillaume Apollinaire*

This guide explains the potential benefits of client satisfaction surveys and provides direction on how they should be planned and implemented. In addition, and most important, this guide outlines how to use the valuable information that results from this research, thereby facilitating improvements to the delivery of public services.

This guide also introduces a new client satisfaction survey tool – the Common Measurements Tool (CMT), designed in response to a need identified by the National Citizen-Centred Service Network for an improved, consistent client survey tool. The CMT offers a set of commonly

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*The term "clients" refers generically to direct users of a service and the term"citizens" refers to the indirect contributors and beneficiaries of services provided. More detailed definitions are discussed later in this document. In the best practices examples cited in this guide, the terms "customer" and "client" are used interchangeably reflecting the terminology used by the organization referenced.

used survey items and a consistent measurement system to public service organizations. Organizations can use the CMT as a template in designing an instrument suited to their specific objectives and services. Once the CMT is customized and then implemented by an organization, it will allow like organizations that wish to do so to compare their results, and to measure progress over time. The CMT is included in this guide (see Appendix II) along with directions on its use. Please note, copies of this document and *Client Satisfaction Surveying: Common Measurements Tool*, the research report which establishes the rationale and value of the CMT, can be obtained from the Canadian Centre for Management Development's website at http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca

2. Why Survey Client Satisfaction?

Effective management demands sound decision making. Decision making is only as accurate and reliable as the information upon which is based.[2] In an environment of fiscal restraint, public service organizations depend on feedback from their clients in order to make effective decisions about the services they provide.

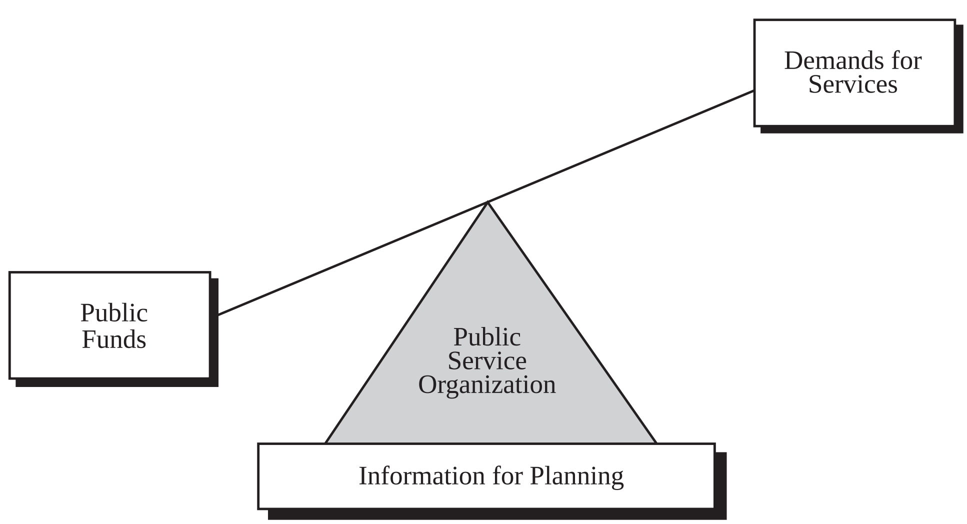
At the present time, many public service organizations face the challenge of achieving a balance between increasing demands for services and ongoing funding limitations. Others face expansion in services and resources that require a different type of balance. By surveying clients to assess their service expectations and satisfaction levels, organizations obtain the information they need to assist in decision making and strategic planning.

Surveying clients about services can help to reveal the areas that require resources and to identify areas where resources are unnecessarily being expended. Where demands (client expectations) are beyond resource allocations, information collected will assist organizations to target service areas where a communications strategy is needed in order to manage expectations.

Accessing information through client satisfaction surveys may help the organization come closer to achieving a balance between these two conflicting factors.

Figure 1

Present Public Service Challenge



COST OF CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

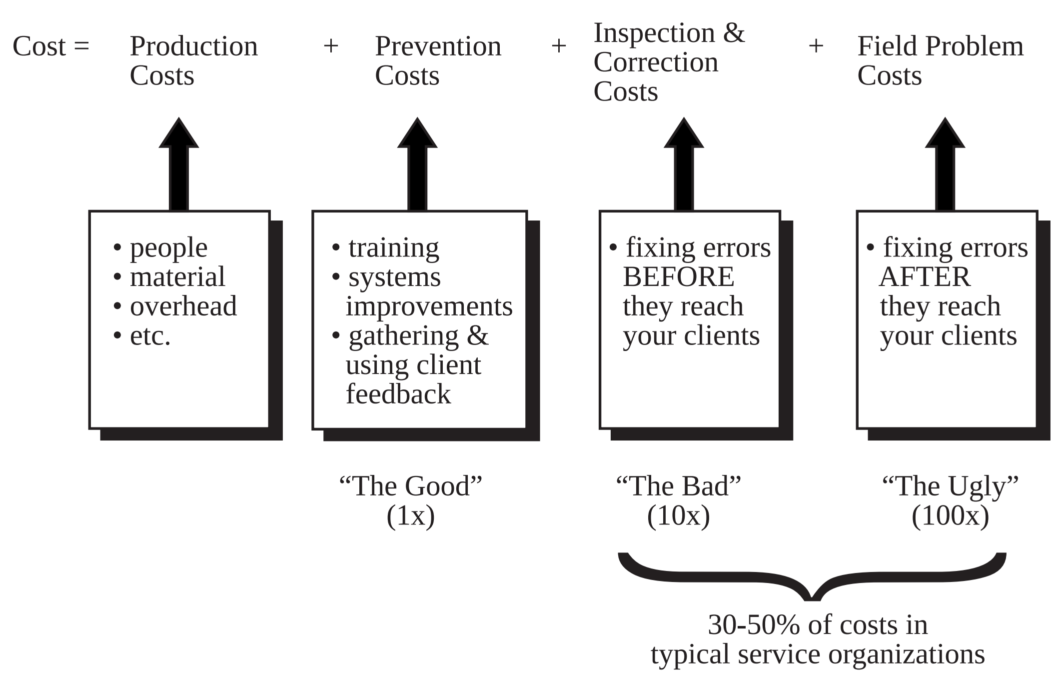
"Can we afford to survey our clients?"
"Can we afford not to?"

Surveys of client satisfaction demand resources in time, human input and funds. However, in assessing these costs there are some important factors to consider.

It is generally believed that for every dollar *not* spent in preventing typical service errors or problems, organizations can expect to spend at least 10 times – and as much as 100 times – more, fixing things after an error occurs (see Figure 2 below). This can easily be seen in public sector organizations. For example, once a problem has occurred and a client takes the initiative to write a letter to the appropriate minister/executive, and/or involves the media, the costs of addressing and responding to the problem are alarming.

Fiscal constraint is the present reality of the public service, which is all the more reason to proactively seek to avoid errors or problems before they occur. By surveying client satisfaction, organizations can gather information which potentially may help them avoid these costly problems, respond to client needs and expectations by making changes, or manage expectations through communications.

Figure 2
The Cost of Quality .....



Be proactive! Be preventative!

Information collected through client satisfaction surveying provides your organization with your clients' views. This information enables your organization to understand your clients' perspective and communicate with them effectively.

CANADA POST – TRANSFORMS ITSELF THROUGH PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

In 1980/81, the year of its conversion from the Post Office department of the federal government to Crown corporation, Canada Post Corporation sustained a loss of $487 million. In 1996/97, this organization recorded a profit of $112 million.

Canada Post has transformed itself from a debt-ridden federal department to a dynamic, customer-focused, profitable corporation by assessing delivery performance against service standards, and conducting both customer and employee satisfaction surveys. Their integrated service measurement system, overseen by the Corporate Measurement and Analysis department, provides them with information that is used to drive developments in everything from operations, to collection and delivery, sales strategy, product development and customer service.

Customer and employee satisfaction surveys are conducted through telephone interviews and mail surveys tailored to fit the subject being researched. Comments are recorded verbatim along with other data and then analysed and reported on. The report is then relayed onto the relevant employee group *within a week*. The employee group is then responsible for developing action plans and implementing solutions.

For example, in the case of a large corporate customer, the report is forwarded to the sales representative responsible for that customer. The report enables the representative to deal knowledgeably, one on one, with customers about their concerns. Turn-around time for implementation of the feedback by the representative is *two weeks*.

BENEFITS OF SURVEYING CLIENT SATISFACTION

There is a powerful rationale for investing in client satisfaction surveys. By surveying client satisfaction with services, your organization will be able to do the following.

- ❖ Identify opportunities for service improvements
- ❖ Identify what clients want as opposed to what organizations think they want
- ❖ Allocate resources more effectively to meet client priorities by targeting high service priorities and reducing or eliminating services that clients do not value, (where appropriate)
- ❖ Develop proactive responses to emerging client demands, reducing crises and stress for staff and clients
- ❖ Provide feedback to front-line staff, management and political leaders about program effectiveness
- ❖ Evaluate the achievement of the organization's mandate and even substantiate amendments to the mandate
- ❖ Strengthen the strategic planning process
- ❖ Evaluate the effectiveness of new program strategies (for example, assess success of newly implemented technologies from the clients' perspective), and
- ❖ Validate requests for increased resources to areas in need of improvement.

BRITISH COLUMBIA PARKS

Measuring Client Satisfaction: Survey Information for Over 10 Years!

Currently, BC Parks is one of the largest suppliers of overnight accommodation in British Columbia. This organization has about 11,500 campsites in 430 campgrounds and almost 450 day-use areas (i.e. beaches, picnic facilities, boat launches, etc.).

One of the reasons BC Parks initiated client satisfaction surveys was due to declining visitor attendance at provincial park campgrounds. Obviously, this was a major concern to BC Parks executives.

Campground Attendance, 1975-1996

*continued on next page.

BRITISH COLUMBIA PARKS

Measuring Client Satisfaction Survey Information (continued)

In response to declining attendance, BC Parks made a commitment to proactively improve service quality. One important component of their service quality initiative was to conduct client surveys in the parks on a rotating basis. These surveys specifically ask park visitors what their *expectations* for services are, how *satisfied* they are with services provided, and what service elements are *important* to them.

Data collected through client surveys indicated that visitors wanted showers/ washrooms in the campgrounds. The information from these in-park user surveys and other household surveys with BC residents enabled BC Parks to present a strong business case for obtaining funds in the late 1980s to construct new visitors' showers/washrooms in provincial parks.

This process indicated that by meeting these expectations, client satisfaction was increased substantially. The end result was a general increase in visitor attendance in provincial parks.

Client survey information provides a basis for determining which service improvements are most required or desired and hence where limited resources need to be allocated. This is very useful when developing priorities for business plans.

"The satisfaction surveys have provided our agency with one tangible way to be more sensitive and responsive to visitor needs and desires. Client surveys have helped our organization to better understand our clients' expectations, and, where possible, to respond to those expectations either through service improvements, in our communication strategy when expectations cannot be met, and in our forward business planning."

Lessons Learned:

- Stay in touch with your clients
- Take action – use the information gathered to the benefit of the client and your organization.
- Client data can effectively support funding requests.
- Client data can be used to monitor the effects of service and facility changes.

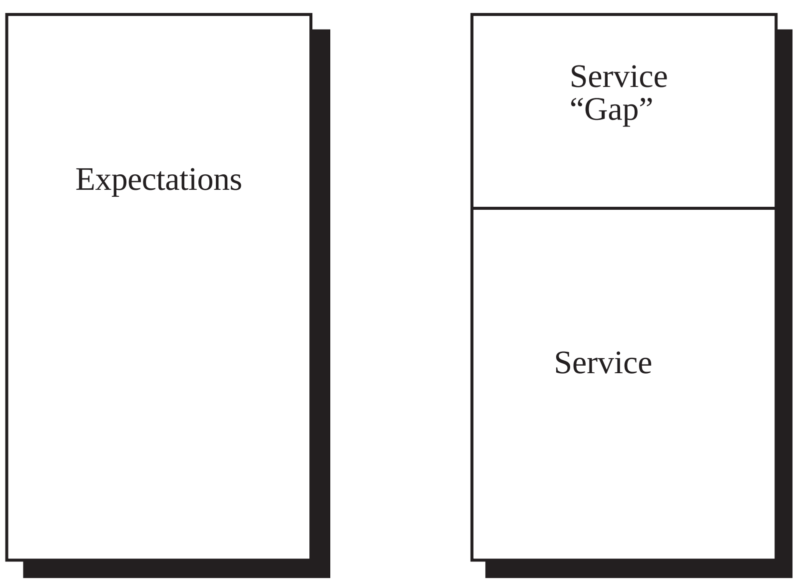
3. What Is Important to Consider?

THE SERVICE GAP

Client satisfaction measures to what extent your clients' expectations for your services are met. Client satisfaction is achieved when the quality of service received parallels or exceeds their expectations.

The ultimate objective of client satisfaction surveys is to identify the "service gaps" between what your clients expect or need from your organization (expectations) and the level of service that they feel they actually receive (perception of service).[3] The diagram below illustrates this concept.

Figure 3
The Service Gap



Once the organization has discovered its service gaps it can narrow them by either:

a) improving its service delivery to increase *satisfaction*, or

b) managing client *expectations* where these exceed the organization's limitations or mandate.

A more comprehensive model of the service gap may be found in Appendix I.

KEY ELEMENTS OF SERVICE TO ASSESS

In order to provide your organization with information that can be used effectively to make improvements, client satisfaction surveys need to ask questions about the following five areas:

1. Client expectations
2. Perceptions of service experience
3. Level of importance
4. Level of satisfaction
5. Priorities for improvement

In addition, it is important to collect demographic information about your clients.

1. Client Expectations

Use rating scales and/or open-ended questions to find out what level of service would be considered "very satisfactory" for individual service features. Your clients' expectations will tell you, in operational terms, what clients want/need to be fully satisfied. While satisfaction and importance tell you which features need to be fixed, expectations will tell you what "fixed" means to the client.

If your organization cannot meet client expectations, you will:

a) have the data to support a request for increased resources, or

b) need to manage their expectations through communication with your clients.

A Word about Service Standards

Service standards are fundamentally different from client expectations. Service standards are indicators of the best level of service delivery an organization can realistically provide with the resources available. Good service standards are meaningful to clients and developed with client expectations and input in mind. However, client expectations may or may not be realistically transformed into standards, given resource and mandate provisions. When service standards are well defined and communicated to clients, expectations can be managed somewhat.

It is possible for an organization to reveal that it is meeting its service standards at a very high level, and yet its clients are not satisfied. By surveying clients about their expectations and satisfaction levels, an organization has valuable information to use to bring client expectations and their service experience closer to one another.

As previously mentioned, the Canada Post Corporation has utilized performance measures to transform the organization. The following account provides a valuable lesson learned by this organization in relation to service standards and increasing customer satisfaction levels.

CANADA POST – SERVICE STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

As mentioned previously, Canada Post has been assessing corporate performance with service standards since 1987. The following account serves to emphasize the importance of differentiating between your service standards and your clients' level of satisfaction with your services.

In 1993 it became apparent to Canada Post that while its performance measurement system was effective, further research was needed in order to remain competitive in the market in which it was positioned.

Despite the fact that data indicated that the corporation was meeting its service standards 96-97 percent of the time, delivery research revealed that letter mail was declining as a source of revenue. In addition, the corporation identified that large volume customers with different service needs required proactive courting if the corporation was to remain competitive. These combined factors resulted in a new customer focus within the corporation.

At this time, Canada Post decided to implement and integrate customer and employee satisfaction surveying on a regular basis along with its existing performance measurement of service standards.

By late 1996, its corporate customer satisfaction index began to rise. Today, it stands 11 percent higher than it was when the performance measurement program commenced.

The lesson here is that an assessment of service standards does not provide an organization with enough information to ensure that customer expectations are being met. Assessing satisfaction levels on a variety of service elements enables organizations to target areas of improvement that are noticeable to the customers.

2. Perceptions of Service Experience

It is important to understand client perceptions of the service experience in order to identify how to make improvements that are noticeable to clients. As previously stated, client perceptions are a key variable of the "service gap" and therefore it is critical to consider them.

The following example illustrates how different perceptions of the same incident can create service problems. A client views service staff as being unhelpful because he or she is redirected to another counter. The service staff, on the other hand, perceive this response as helpful since the client has been redirected to the appropriate service personnel. On one level, the problem in this situation is a difference in perception of the same service experience. On another level, the problem may be with the actual service delivery.

By identifying client perceptions of the service experience, the problem may be addressed by the service agency. The organization may choose to clarify points of contact through communications, or they may redesign their service delivery process to decrease the number of contacts required by the client in order to receive the service needed.

3. Level of Importance

Understanding how important service features are to your clients helps your organization target areas of improvement that are meaningful to them. Data on importance combined with satisfaction assessments provide your organization with highly effective decision-making information.

4. Satisfaction

Ask your clients to rate their satisfaction with your organization's performance on a set of relevant service features and collect a rating of "overall satisfaction" to chart your long-term progress as you repeat the survey process.

Satisfaction or performance ratings will tell you where and how large your service gaps are. However, you will still need to know:

a) which features are most important to your clients (to help you prioritize issues to resolve); and

b) specifically what your clients' expectations are (that is, what it would take to fully satisfy them).

5. Priorities for Improvements

By understanding your clients' satisfaction with individual service features, as well as how important those things are to your clients, your organization can make important decisions on where to allocate resources in order to solve problems that are important to the client.

Features with the lowest satisfaction ratings (largest gaps) will not necessarily be your clients' priorities for improvement. Having clients also indicate the importance of each of the features will help you allocate resources to the improvements that will have the greatest impact.

The following example of the Office Products Centre (OPC) of the British Columbia Purchasing Commission illustrates how this information can lead to improvements that actually make a difference to your clients. The information collected by OPC was analysed using a Satisfaction (Performance) by Importance Matrix (similar to the one cited on the following page). Any organization, once it has collected information on client satisfaction and importance is able to conduct similar analyses for its planning purposes. In a climate of fiscal constraint, this is a powerful decision-making tool to have available.

OFFICE PRODUCTS CENTRE OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA PURCHASING COMMISSION

The Office Products Centre (OPC) is a distribution outlet that supplies ministries, Crown corporations, and other government-funded agencies with a broad range of stationery, office products, and protocol giftware. Using a five-point rating scale to assess the performance and importance of various service features, the OPC was able to identify service areas requiring improvements in a study conducted in 1992.[4] The matrix below illustrates some of the results of this study.

Service features that were low on satisfaction and high in importance (upper left quarter) were identified as priorities for improvement. Priorities in this case were having the products arrive by the date requested by the client and prompt handling of customer complaints. Conversely, service features that received high satisfaction ratings and were low in importance (lower right quarter) were possible areas where resources could be spent more effectively elsewhere. In this case, on-line electronic ordering and billing were identified. This valuable information enables an organization to plan resource allocation in line with client needs and expectations.

Satisfaction / Importance Matrix

	Satisfaction (Performance)	
Importance	*Low*	*High*
High	• **Attributes that need attention – areas where priorities should be focused** Service Features: • Products arrived on time • Prompt handling of customer complaints	• **Current organization strengths** Service Features: • Courteous and helpful staff • Same-day delivery service
Low	• **Low Priority** Service Feature: • Personal visits by customer service representatives	• **Unnecessary strengths – possible overkill** Service Features: • On-line electronic ordering • Electronic billing

Adapted from: Alan Dutka. *AMA Handbook for Customer Satisfaction.* (Illinois: NTC Publishing Group, 1994).

DEMOGRAPHICS: WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF OUR SPECIFIC CLIENT GROUPS?

Collect demographic information to determine the specific needs and service gaps among the different user groups in your survey.

Common demographic categories include: age group, gender, income level, areas of residence, occupation, the branch location, the specific service used and the client's familiarity or experience with the services. Be careful to use only those categories that will be relevant to your objectives.

BC PARKS DISCOVERS SOURCE OF PROBLEM BY UNDERSTANDING WHO THEIR CLIENTS ARE.

The following anecdote illustrates the importance of gathering demographic or user information about your clients and shows how this information can help in solving service problems.

A BC Parks district manager noticed repeated comments made by visitors indicating that park signs were not clear enough. Initially, this was difficult for the employees to understand as they thought the signs were clear and well located. Information from the surveys also indicated that first-time users were less satisfied with the signs than repeat visitors. When the district manager drove to the park and looked at the situation from the "eyes" of a first time visitor, he obtained a better understanding of how first time visitors might be confused by the signage for the park. The signs were relocated and complaints dropped off considerably.

Understanding the clients and their needs contributed to improved service.

SERVICE FEATURES: BUILDING BLOCKS OF YOUR SERVICE

There are five broad service features that organizations should consider in planning client satisfaction surveys. The five broad service features include: responsiveness, reliability, access and facilities, communications, and cost. Each service feature has numerous elements, as listed below.

Service Features

Responsiveness	• timely delivery of service • number of contacts to receive service • waiting time • timely reaction to expressed concerns Service Staff are: • empathetic • courteous • helpful • skilful and competent • equipped with up-to-date information • respectful • flexible • fair • able to protect my privacy/confidentiality
Reliability	• provided needed service • provided what was promised • adhered to policy and standards • minimal error rate
Access & Facilities	• convenient location • physical access to building • comfort of offices and waiting areas • adequate parking • hours of service • appearance, clarity and location of signs • ease of obtaining appointments • telephone access • use of technology • variety of access modes
Communication	• questions were answered • availability of information • plain language • consistency of information/advice • services delivered in official languages • ease of understanding information, documents • ease of understanding procedures
Cost	• ease of billing/payment • reasonable cost

4. How to Get Started

Although requiring time and resources, surveying must become an ongoing process rather than an occasional venture to ensure that government be fully responsive to the public's changing needs.

The illustration below identifies the steps involved in developing and implementing a Client Satisfaction Survey Process and describes the various research strategies and tools that can be used.

Client Satisfaction Survey Process

Step 1
Identify Services and Clients

- list all of your services and the clients for each

Step 2
Clarify Your Objectives – What Information Do You Need?

- involve your clients
- use existing service information
- plan a comprehensive approach

Step 3
Develop Measurement Strategy

- interview methods
- questionnaire methods
- ongoing feedback methods

Step 4
Interpret, Analyse and Report

- do a content analysis of qualitative data
- code and analyse quantitative data

Step 5
Develop Improvement Plan

- use client feedback to set new service standards
- assign responsibility for implementation

Step 6
Evaluate and Repeat ***(Back to Step 1)***

- evaluate improvements by repeating the process
- modify your instruments but maintain long-term comparability

PREPARING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Step One: *Identify Your Services and Clients*

Who Should Be Involved in Planning?

As mentioned earlier, surveying requires time, money and human input. The amounts of each will depend on your objectives and your chosen strategy. There are many approaches to the implementation of client satisfaction surveys. It is important to include employees from all levels of your organization in the planning stage if possible. By including staff from the service delivery level through to senior management you will ensure that the design of your client satisfaction survey will be relevant and appropriate. Planning is the most critical stage of this process.

After establishing your client satisfaction team, the first task in this process is to identify all of your services and the clients for each. This is a more intricate and important exercise than most people realize. A thorough analysis here will allow you to pinpoint the relevant client group(s) to survey as you develop your objectives and will ensure that valuable feedback is not overlooked.

Multiple Services

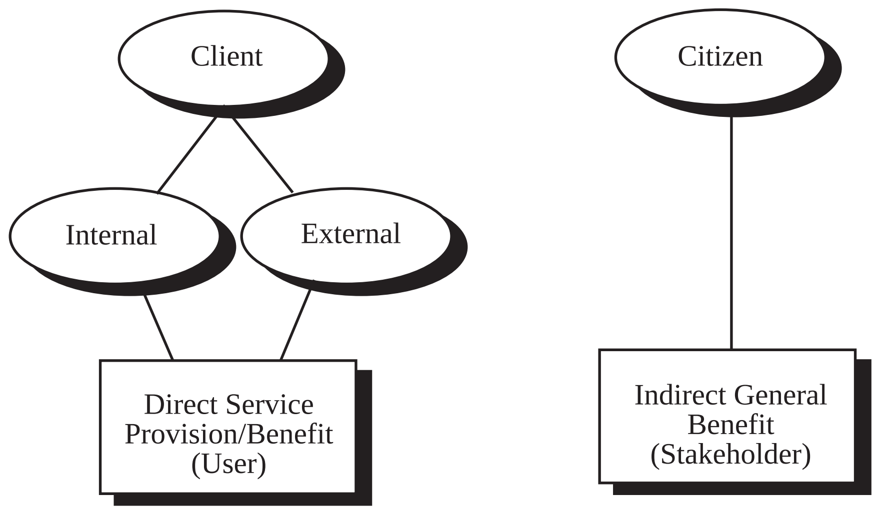
Each government ministry or agency offers a wide variety of services; this is usually true of individual branches and independent agencies as well. Your organization must identify its core services and single out the specific services or outputs within each so that all of the organization's clients can be identified.

Clients: Internal and External

Clients are the direct recipients of government services (see Figure 4 below). Clients can be further divided into two sub-groups – "internal" and "external" clients. *Internal clients* refer to public sector employees that receive services directly from fellow government service providers in order to, in turn, provide services to their clients. *External clients* are members of the public who are direct recipients of public services. The use here of the term *citizen* refers to taxpayers who do not actually benefit directly from a service, but who may draw an indirect benefit and who contribute to it and therefore have an interest in it.

The following example may serve to illustrate these definitions. A citizen may not collect employment insurance and yet has an interest in how the system functions; the actual recipient of an employment insurance payment would be an external client. A regional employment insurance office that depends on a central agency to distribute the employment insurance payments to their office would be an internal client.

Figure 4
Client/Citizen Service



Once you have identified the specific services and have determined whether the clients are internal, external or both, you can begin to think about how to survey them about your services.

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY (YVR)

The Vancouver International Airport Authority (YVR) provides a fine example of how consistent survey methods and analysis help build benchmarks over time, facilitating effective decision making and planning. In addition, the Vancouver International Airport is notable for separating its client groups based on their use of its different services. The YVR also conducts surveys on a quarterly basis, capturing information important to the service characteristics unique to certain times of the year (e.g., Christmas vs. summer).

Since 1993, the Vancouver International Airport Authority has been monitoring passenger satisfaction levels on a quarterly basis as a benchmarking tool to formulate future initiatives and to evaluate the impact of current capital improvements and customer service enhancements. Consistent methodology and analysis has been essential in enabling this organization to benchmark customer satisfaction levels accurately over time.

For all customer satisfaction measures, passengers are asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with a number of key variables that contribute to their experience at the airport.

Satisfaction scores are assessed on a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied" with a central neutral point.

In 1997 a total of 2,738 full interviews were conducted with passengers using the Vancouver International Airport; this amounts to 680 interviews per quarter. Respondents were broken down into various client groups: departing, connecting and arriving passengers, all 18 years of age or older. All three client groups were assessed through face-to-face interviews and/or self-administered satisfaction surveys.

Specific research objectives for YVR's customer satisfaction tracking program continue to be:

- to measure, monitor and benchmark core assessments of customer satisfaction;
- to maintain a current passenger profile based on demographic and facility-use characteristics; and
- to identify and track customer responses to specific product, service and facility enhancements.

Step Two: *Clarify Your Objectives*

Clarifying your objectives can be the most important part of your survey project. Most of the problems typically encountered at the subsequent stages of the survey process can be avoided by spending sufficient effort here.

Developing Your Research Objectives

Your objectives are the terms of reference for your survey project. For clarity, it is essential that you view your objectives as the overall questions that you want your survey to answer. The following are examples of research objectives stated in the form of research questions – any or all of them can be objectives of a single survey.

General Research Questions:

- How satisfied are our clients with the services we provide?
- Which of our services are most important to our clients?
- What service improvements are our clients' first priorities?
- What service standards do our clients expect from us?

To formulate your research questions we recommend that you:

- Involve your clients
- Use existing service information
- Plan a comprehensive approach

Step Three: *Develop Your Measurement Strategy*

Once your survey objectives are specified your group can decide on an appropriate *survey strategy* and develop the *measurement instrument(s)* (i.e., interview script, questionnaire, etc.) that you will use to collect information. Consultants are often hired to assist with this stage of the process to ensure that the information collected from your respondents is reliable and valid. It is recommended that organizations pre-test their survey to ensure that questions are relevant and important to clients and not just what managers see as being so. Involving clients in the design of the tool is often effective.

Assessing client satisfaction should not be confused with other studies such as audits or program evaluations. Client satisfaction measurements do not replace other performance measurements that are also used as decision making tools.

The Measurement Strategies

Below are some of the measurement strategies for eliciting information from your clients. The strategy you choose will depend on your objectives and on the resources you have available.

Interview Methods:
- In-depth interviews
- Client focus groups
- Exit interviews

Questionnaire Methods:
- Mail surveys
- Telephone surveys
- Exit surveys
- E-mail surveys

Ongoing Input Mechanisms:
- Toll-free numbers
- Suggestion boxes
- Response cards

THE COMMON MEASUREMENT TOOL (CMT)

The Common Measurements Tool (CMT) is located at the back of this guide for your use. The CMT offers your organization a complete survey tool, including sections where you can input information specifically relevant to your organization. As has already been mentioned, this survey includes questions about client satisfaction, perceptions of the experience, client expectations, as well as how important service elements are to them and what their priorities are for improvements. Most questions are quantitative in nature, using a five point scale with a "not applicable" option. In addition, questions have been included that are descriptive in nature and are intended to provide you with more detailed information.

Towards the end of the CMT, general questions about service delivery and your clients' needs are included. Finally, so that the CMT can be used to survey both internal and external clients, the demographic section is presented twice – once for each client group.

Using the Common Measurements Tool (CMT)

Rather than being a rigid set of items that must be used in exactly the same way every time, the CMT offers a set of items and response scales intended to form an item bank from which organizations can make choices. It is anticipated that organizations may:

- use some of the common items along with other customized items;
- use different sub-sets of items from the CMT at different points in time; or
- use the entire CMT.

There are methodological issues that are critical to how organizations will customize the CMT. Three factors that need to be considered are: a) prescribed wording of items and response scales; b) prescribed ordering of items; and c) prescribed definitions of terms used. In all three of these areas consistency is the key concern.

The first factor, item wording, ensures that each respondent receives exactly the same stimuli. Without this, comparability between the results of different organizations is not possible. With this in mind, the items in the CMT are worded in a general way so that they are appropriate for the broadest possible groups of respondents. It is suggested that the wording of items only be altered to specify the service/product provided by the organization in order to ensure relevance and comprehension of the item. For example, organizations may want to include an exact reference to their service by replacing the words, “this service/product” with, for example, “driver’s licence renewal,” “passport,” “employment insurance claim.” This enables the organization to customize and utilize the CMT to assess particular areas of the service/products they deliver that is more focused than a broader organizational level of inquiry.

Common item ordering is also important. Evidence exists indicating that responses to certain kinds of questions vary depending on the items that precede and follow them.[5] To this end, it is recommended that when organizations use items from the CMT with others that are customized to fit particular needs, these additional questions should form a separate section of the survey, inserted just after the bulk of the CMT items and before the demographic items (see note on page 53 of Appendix II).

Finally, prescribed definitions and explanations are necessary to provide the respondents with consistent clarification in order to ensure the validity of the data collected. To facilitate this consistency, definitions of key terms are embedded within the CMT.

The section on demographics requires cautious customization by the organization using the CMT, specifically when applied to external clients. The CMT offers as many possible demographic items as an organization may need to know about. However, organizations should carefully consider the goals of their research prior to deciding on what demographic items are appropriate. The rationale behind this cautionary note is that some respondents may find certain questions invasive and therefore may choose to overlook all demographic items. For example, organizations may want to consider whether knowing if respondents are Aboriginal or not is really important to know. Including such an item that is not clearly relevant, may do more damage than good by decreasing the value of the data collected. Organizations should include only the items that they really need to know about.

The overriding consideration in the use of the CMT is that you draw items from it that meet your needs but still stay close enough to the CMT that your results can be compared to the results of other organizations, when desired. Once an item is selected for use, it should be used exactly as presented in the CMT (i.e., the wording should be unchanged, the measurement scales and the array of questions related to each service dimension – perception of experience, expectations, level of satisfaction, level of importance and priorities for improvement – should be included). Although locked into these elements of assessment, organizations nevertheless have the freedom to select which items to use from the five broad service dimensions (responsiveness, reliability, access and facilities, communications, and cost).

The following example may help clarify this process. A provincial agency may exclude CMT items relating to cost, as the service it wishes to assess has no direct charge for clients. In addition, if its service is provided indirectly via various forms of correspondence (telephone, posted mail, e-mail, fax or internet) it will also ignore items related to access to service locations (e.g., parking, location, etc.). If it has introduced a new voicemail service they may wish to add additional questions about its functionality (e.g., ease of use, appropriateness of the number of response levels, etc.). The critical factors are that all items selected from the CMT are used precisely as presented in this document and that organizations obtain all the information they require.

It should be noted that CMT can be utilized for various survey methods. This tool, once customized by you, could be used in mail surveys, as exit surveys, or as telephone surveys. Content of the CMT could also be applied to designing various types of interview methods such as exit interviews or focus groups. In order to make the CMT work in an interview format, you would need to do more customization.

It is anticipated that at a later date there will be a repository for CMT survey data, possibly at the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD). This will facilitate inter-organizational comparisons and benchmarking, as desired by organizations. To this end, organizations are encouraged to use as many CMT items as appropriate to their needs.

USING SURVEY INFORMATION FOR PLANNING

Step Four: *Interpret, Analyse and Report*

If your planning has been thorough to this stage, your interviews or questionnaires will bring in a collection of quality raw data. The ways in which you code, interpret and analyse your data will depend on whether it is qualitative or quantitative information.

Maximizing the Value of Your Analysis and Report

Depending on the research questions that are guiding your survey, you may want to consider making the following comparisons when analysing and reporting:

- ❖ Provide comparisons over time, and across branch locations and geographic areas
- ❖ Compare satisfaction, importance, etc. across demographic groupings
- ❖ Prioritize the service improvements which are indicated
- ❖ Determine if your service standards meet with client expectations
- ❖ Assess whether or not client expectations are feasible, given your mandate
- ❖ Determine if client expectations vary among groups
- ❖ Construct a baseline for each attribute for comparison with future measures.

Reporting Results

Circulating the results of the survey to managers and staff will raise awareness of the improvement process and help to enlist support. This is particularly important for staff who will be involved in implementing the improvements. In addition, it is very important to let your clients know the results of your survey. Clients want to know that their responses to your questions are used – reporting to them indicates that your organization has gone to the next stage with this information.

Use uncomplicated visual methods, such as tables and graphs, to express the results in a way that will be read and acted upon. A simple reporting method such as the *Client Report Card* (shown on the next page) lists the rated service features down the left-hand side of the matrix, in order of the clients' priorities, then outlines client expectations and satisfaction ratings for each. This just a hypothetical example of what to include and how to make it easy to read and understand.

When reporting their results, some organizations "group together" all satisfaction ratings that are above the middle or "acceptable" level and consider clients to be generally "satisfied" in these areas. An example would be reporting a 90 percent satisfaction rate where 60 percent said they were "satisfied" and 30 percent said they were "very satisfied" with service overall. Continuous improvement towards "very satisfied" is the objective of surveying client satisfaction levels with services, and overlooking the smaller gaps is a dangerous trap that can lead to complacency. The difference between viewing services as being delivered at an "acceptable" level and providing the same service that leads to clients feeling "very satisfied" means a great deal to a hospital patient, to a social services recipient, or to any client.

The Vehicle Licensing Bureau 1997 Client Report Card		
Service Features (in order of client priority)	*Satisfaction Rating 1=Very Dissatisfied 5= Very Satisfied*	*Client Expectations*
Line-ups	2	• 90 percent expect 5-minute maximum wait
Hours of Service	1	• one evening per week until 9:00pm • open Saturdays
Processing Time	4	• reduce average turnaround to 10 business days
Staff Courtesy	5	• pleasant greeting every time
Waiting Area	2	• use a number system so we can sit down or return in X minutes

Step Five: *Develop an Improvement Plan*

To improve commitment and to capture valuable input, actively involve front-line staff in planning improvements indicated by the survey. Consider these points:

- Plan the improvements in order of client-determined priorities,considering also the magnitude or simplicity of the changes that are required.
- Use client expectations to identify target service levels that are challenging but realistic. The more clearly you have respondents state where and how changes should be made, the simpler this process can be.
- Assign responsibilities and time frames for updates and resolution. Employee work teams can be formed to plan and implement improvements in each area.
- Plan to manage any unrealistic client expectations by developing improved external communications, which state your limitations or clarify your organizational mandate.

Review Your Current Delivery Systems to Identify Obstacles to Better Service

Improving your service delivery requires identifying and removing the obstacles from your current delivery systems. Bear in mind that your *management systems*, not your people, are the origins of your service shortfalls. For example, there may be too much emphasis placed on policies and procedures and too little autonomy or incentive given to staff for them to be client-responsive. Involving staff and their unions in improving your management systems and work processes will be more productive than finger pointing.

Empower and Motivate Staff

To enlist staff commitment and participation, give your employees the freedom and skills necessary to respond to clients' needs in new ways. They should feel empowered, not forced, to identify and overcome traditional bureaucratic service attitudes and employ a client-oriented philosophy. Training in these areas is a key factor to consider. While empowerment can provide its own incentive, formal and informal recognition of employees' service efforts will help to make client responsiveness a part of your organization's culture.

Communicate the Results to Your Clients

Inform your clients, especially those who participated in the survey, of the survey results and your proposed improvements. This lets them know their input has value and that your organization is sensitive to their needs. However, be careful not to oversell: it is better to deliver more than you promise than to promise more than you can deliver.

The following account of the Town of Ajax's quality system is an excellent example of a public organization fully committed to achieving quality standards through policy and procedures that ensure that all customer feedback is listened to, responded to, and utilized within planning.

TOWN OF AJAX

Client Feedback is Viewed as a Strategic Planning Gift

Town of Ajax Service Credo
"*We believe that customer feedback is a valuable gift, to be received thankfully and with appreciation. Because of this belief, we will go out of our way to get as much customer feedback as we possibly can, knowing this is the best way to meet and exceed our customers' expectations, thereby enabling us to continuously improve our services.*"

The Town of Ajax began its service delivery focus in 1994 and has documented this commitment formally in the following Quality Statement, *"We are committed to meet or exceed our customers' expectations and the ISO 9000 Quality Standards**. *Utilizing a team approach, that emphasizes increased quality and service, we will seek to continuously improve all of the services that we provide".*

This public organization proudly upholds that its Quality System was made in Ajax, by Ajax employees and is based on the following principles:

- Customer Service
- Teamwork
- Continuous Improvement

During the initial development of this Quality System, nearly 500 standard operating procedures and work instructions were documented and implemented in relation to this new service initiative.

Customer feedback is collected on a regular ongoing basis at the service locations in written and verbal forms through the use of customer feedback forms.

Documented standard operating policy and procedures in relation to customer feedback stipulate that employees:

> *"will ensure that all concerns, comments, suggestions and compliments are listened to and addressed in a manner that is consistent with their quality policy.*"

The Town of Ajax, as a part of its Quality System, has designed a program to ensure that all client feedback is looked at, reported on, and then acted upon in one way or another.

Department General Managers/Supervisors are responsible for quarterly reviewing of all customer feedback forms and suggestions forms to determine trends and identify problem areas. They are responsible for providing the Department Director with a quarterly summary of customer feedback. All full-time and part-time employees are given training on how to deal with client feedback and how the Quality System works and their role in it.

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*ISO 9000 Quality Management Standards and Guidelines is a global standard for quality as defined by the International Organization for Standardization in Switzerland.

Step Six: *Evaluate Improvements and Repeat the Cycle*

A Continuous Improvement Cycle

The last step of the Client Survey Process is to evaluate the effect of your service improvements. This is done by repeating the survey cycle once necessary changes have been implemented, and by continuing to do so on a regular basis thereafter. By comparing the original or "baseline" measures with newer information, you can track the success of your efforts and continually adjust to your changing needs.

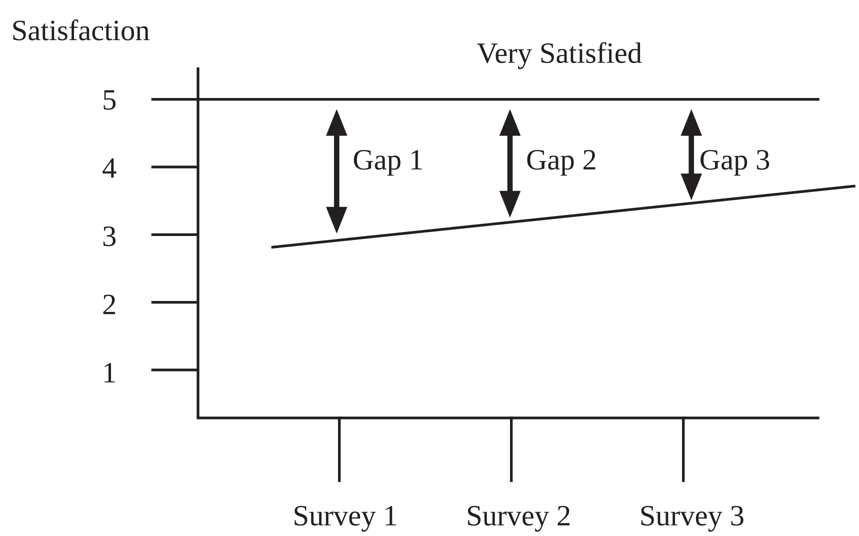
BC Parks is an example of an organization that has used repeated client surveys to improve performance. BC Parks' service standards are based on visitor satisfaction ratings. These standards are increased in response to service improvements and higher satisfaction ratings. This system ensures there is an ongoing effort to maintain or improve their services.

Figure 5

Ongoing Satisfaction Measures

Client ratings of "overall satisfaction" with performance can be plotted for a series of subsequent surveys to evaluate the success of the client survey process over time. As the diagram illustrates, the gap between the performance rating and full satisfaction would get smaller as organizations identified and resolved emerging service gaps.

"Overal Satisfaction" Over Time



Refining Your Survey Process Over Time

Your clients' needs and expectations will change over time, as will your program environment. You can adapt your measurement instruments to these changes by adding and discarding service features as gaps are resolved and new issues arise. Your ongoing feedback mechanisms and preliminary investigations will alert you to these changes.

It is important to keep key aspects of the survey instrument (such as the rating scale and the "overall satisfaction" item) consistent over time. This allows you to track your long-term progress.

5. Conclusion

It is hoped that this booklet will encourage more public service organizations to engage in client satisfaction surveying. The National Citizen-Centred Service Network and its members have made a commitment to working towards improving public services across the country. The establishment of this Network and its activities offers all public organizations in Canada access to information on better practices, effective tools, and an open exchange between fellow public service organizations with similar challenges.

Endnotes

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3. Valarie Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman and Leonard Berry. *Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations* (New York: Free Press, 1990).

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5. Peter H. Rossi, James D. Wright and Andy B. Anderson. *Handbook of Survey Research* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), p. 197.

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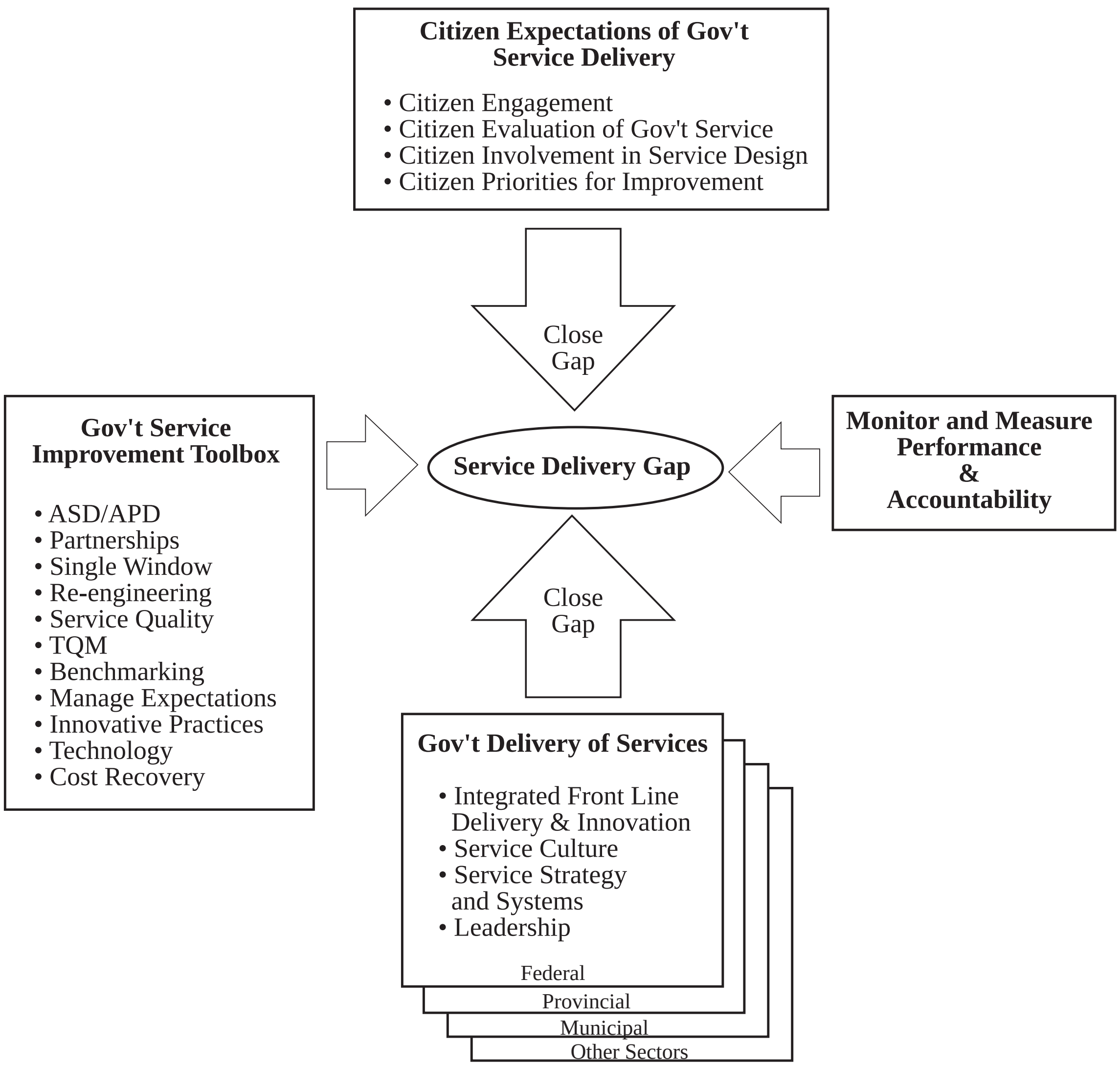
Appendix I

FRAMEWORK FOR MODERNIZING PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY



Appendix II
Common Measurements Tool

INSTRUCTIONS TO ORGANIZATIONS

At first glance, the Common Measurements Tool (CMT) looks like a “ready-to-use” client satisfaction survey, but it is not. The CMT, as it exists here, is lengthier than most organizations would want for a client satisfaction survey. Customization by the user is critical to its effectiveness in implementation. The CMT provides a comprehensive collection of potential survey items that public service organizations may select from in designing a client satisfaction survey.

Before proceeding with customization, there are a few methodological recommendations that organizations should consider. The CMT was designed to facilitate consistency and comparative analysis among similar public organizations, who choose to use it. In addition, the CMT will offer organizations an easily accessible survey system to use to build benchmarks within their own organization. This is achieved by using the tool in the same way repeatedly and then comparing results.

For the aforementioned reasons, it is important to maintain the measurement scale and the wording of the items that are selected by the organization. In addition, item ordering should also be maintained. The CMT has a prescribed section where organizations can add questions unique to their organization – placement of these questions should also be maintained in the designated section to decrease the effects these questions have on the other items included in the survey.

The customization process will involve the following steps:

1. Define the goals of your client satisfaction survey
2. Review the CMT in its entirety
3. Decide which items are relevant to your organization and the goals of your study
4. Identify any questions you want to ask that may not be included in the CMT
5. Design those questions and add into the designated section for additional questions
6. Customize the wording of the Introduction to suit your organization
7. Customize the wording (<u>service/product</u>) throughout the CMT to make it relevant to your organization and the specific service transaction the survey applies to.

It is recommended that organizations conduct pre-testing of the customized tool before implementing the survey. Pre-testing will indicate where any adjustments might be necessary before implementing the survey, avoiding errors that clients will be exposed to.

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

This client satisfaction survey is intended to provide (organization fills in name) with information that will assist in better serving your needs. This survey provides you, the client, with the opportunity to tell us how we are doing and how we can improve. We are interested in what you have to say about our service/product and value the time you take to complete this survey. Thank you!

We are surveying clients who have used our service in the last (organization fills in time period). Participants are selected on a random basis (or organization fills in otherwise). The information collected in this survey will be used by (organization) to better understand your needs and help us make improvements to the way we deliver our service/product. Your responses will remain anonymous as we will be summarizing all the information we receive.

This survey asks questions about many aspects of your experience with our services/product. These include how you were served, how reliable our service/product was, how easy it was to access, and others.

When you have completed this survey please (method of return specified by organization, i.e. place it in the box provided, mail it into our office with the self-addressed envelop) by (fill in date).

If you have any questions about this survey and the use of this information, feel free to contact (fill in contact person) at (fill in contact number).

Section I – Service/Product Delivery

This section asks about the way this service/product was provided to you by the service staff.

For the following questions (#1 – 10), please circle the one response that <u>best</u> describes your experience.

1. Have you received the service/product or is the service delivery process continuing at this time?

    a) service/product received ⟶ **go on to question #2.**
    b) service/product delivery in process or ongoing ⟶ **go to question #6.**

2. How long did it take to receive the service/product – from the time you first contacted the organization that provided the service/product until you first received service/product?

    Note to Organizations: The intervals for question 2 & 3 can refer to **minutes, hours, days or weeks** depending on the nature of the organization using the instrument.

    0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25-29 30+

3. What is an acceptable amount of time to receive this service/product?

    0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25-29 30+

4. How many contacts did it take for you to receive this service/product? A “contact” is each different phone call, e-mail, posted letter, fax, or office visit.

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8(+)

5. What is an acceptable number of contacts to receive this service/product?

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8(+)

6. Did you visit a service location to access the service/product?

    a) **Yes** ⟶ **go to question #7**
    b) **No** ⟶ **go to question #9 on next page**

7. How long did you have to wait at the service location before having contact with the staff who provided the service/product? **Responses are in minutes.**

    1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-30 31-45 46-59 60(+)

8. What is an acceptable amount of time to wait at the service location before having contact with staff who provide the service/product? **Responses are in minutes.**

    1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-30 31-45 46-59 60(+)

9. How many different people did you have to deal with in order to get what you needed?

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 or more

10. What is an acceptable number of people to deal with in order to get what you need?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 or more

11. In the end, did you get what you needed from our organization?

a) Yes
b) No
c) I got part of what I needed

12. Was the service/product provided without error?

a) Yes
b) No

If you answered **NO to the question # 12,** please comment on the errors you experienced in receiving our service/product.

Please circle the response that best describes your satisfaction with the following aspects of our service/product.

		How satisfied were you with this aspect of our service/product? 1 = Very Dissatisfied 2 = Dissatisfied 3 = Neutral 4 = Satisfied 5 = Very Satisfied N/A – Not Applicable	How important is this aspect of our service/product to you? 1 = Very Unimportant 2 = Unimportant 3 = Neutral 4 = Important 5 = Very Important N/A – Not Applicable
A.	Time required to deliver the service/product.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
B.	Number of contacts with the organization required to receive the service/product.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
C.	Waiting time at the service location.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
D.	Number of people dealt with to get the service/product.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
E.	The service was provided in a fair and equitable manner.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
F.	It was clear what to do if I had a problem.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Service staff were:			
G.	Courteous	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
H.	Helpful	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
I.	Good listeners	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
J.	Competent	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
K.	Had up to date information	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
L.	Respectful	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
M.	Flexible	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
N.	Met my safety and security needs	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
O.	Protected my privacy/confidentiality	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
P.	Overall, how satisfied were you with the way the service/product was provided by the service staff?	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	

Q. If we could only improve in **three** of the above areas, which should we focus on? **Please circle three.**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O

13. Please provide us with any further comments you may have about the people who served you.

Section II – Access & Facilities

Please circle the answer that best describes your experience in these areas.

		How satisfied were you with this aspect of our service/product? **1 = Very Dissatisfied** **2 = Dissatisfied** **3 = Neutral** **4 = Satisfied** **5 = Very Satisfied** **N/A – Not Applicable**	**How important is this aspect of our service/product to you?** **1 = Very Unimportant** **2 = Unimportant** **3 = Neutral** **4 = Important** **5 = Very Important** **N/A – Not Applicable**
The facility that provided this service/product:			
A.	Was easily accessible by telephone	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
B.	Was conveniently located	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
C.	Had adequate hours of service	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
D.	Had adequate parking	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
E.	Was easily accessible (e.g., there were no barriers to physically entering and using the buildings)	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
F.	Had offices and waiting areas that were comfortable	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
G.	Had signs that were easy to locate	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
H.	Had signs that were easy to understand	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
I.	Appointments with service staff were easy to make	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
J.	Offered various methods of access (i.e., fax, internet, telephone, e-mail)	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
K.	Overall, how satisfied were you with the **accessibility** of the service/product?	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	
L.	Overall, how satisfied were you with the **facilities** for the service/product?	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	

M. If we could only improve in **three** of the above areas, which should we focus on? **Please circle three.**

A B C D E F G H I J

1. If you found that the service location was not convenient, where would you like the facility to be located?

____

2. What are your preferred ways of accessing this service?
Please write in the numbers 1, 2, and 3 next to three of the items below to indicate your preferences.

___ In Person
___ Telephone
___ Fax
___ Internet
___ E-mail
___ Posted mail
___ Courier
___ Other ___________________

3. Do regular office hours meet your needs for accessing this service/product?
Regular office hours are defined here as Monday to Friday (approximately 08:30 am – 4:30 pm).

a) Yes
b) No

If you answered **NO to question # 3** please answer the following question:
If regular office hours as described above do not meet your needs, and we were able to extend hours, what is your preference for extending office hours? **(Circle one response)**

a) Open office earlier in morning one day a week (07:00 am for example)
b) Keep office open later one evening a week (07:00 pm for example)
c) Open office one day during weekend
d) Other suggestions (fill in blank) __________________________

4. Please provide us with further comments that you may have about the access and facilities through which you received the service/product. (For example, do you have any special needs that were not met?)

____

____

____

____

____

Section III – Communication

To receive this service/product a number of aspects of our communications with you may have affected your experience. Please circle the response that best describes your service experience.

	How satisfied were you with this aspect of our service/product? **1 = Very Dissatisfied** **2 = Dissatisfied** **3 = Neutral** **4 = Satisfied** **5 = Very Satisfied** **N/A – Not Applicable**	**How important is this aspect of our service/product to you?** **1 = Very Unimportant** **2 = Unimportant** **3 = Neutral** **4 = Important** **5 = Very Important** **N/A – Not Applicable**
In receiving this service/product:		
A. My questions were answered.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
B. The information that I needed was available.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
C. I received consistent information/advice.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
D. Written and verbal language was clear (e.g., not complicated).	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
E. I had a choice of English or French languages	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
F. Service staff were easy to understand.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
G. Documents and other information were easy to understand.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
H. Forms were easy to understand and fill out.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
I. Procedures were straight forward and easy to understand.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
J. It was easy to find out how to get the service.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
K. I was informed of everything I had to do in order to get the service/product.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
L. How satisfied were you with our communications?	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	

M. If we could only improve in **three** of the above areas, which should we focus on? **Please circle three.**

A B C D E F G H I J K

1. Which of the following would be the best way(s) for us to communicate with you about our service/product? **Circle as many as you wish.**

   a) media advertisements (e.g., newspapers, radio, TV)
   b) pamphlets/booklets in the mail
   c) posters
   d) information on the internet
   e) e-mail
   f) other (fill in blank) ________________________________

2. Please provide us with further comments that you may have about the communications that supported the product/service you received.

____

____

____

____

____

____

Section IV – Cost

To receive this service/product you paid a fee (e.g., license, registration, toll fee). Please circle the response that best describes your service experience relating to cost.

	How satisfied were you with this aspect of our service/product? 1 = Very Dissatisfied 2 = Dissatisfied 3 = Neutral 4 = Satisfied 5 = Very Satisfied N/A – Not Applicable	How important is this aspect of our service/product to you? 1 = Very Unimportant 2 = Unimportant 3 = Neutral 4 = Important 5 = Very Important N/A – Not Applicable
A. Billing for the service/product was timely.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
B. The billing process was straight forward.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
C. The method of payment was convenient.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
D. The payment period was reasonable.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
E. The cost was reasonable.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
F. Overall, how satisfied were you with the costing of the service/product you received?	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	

G. If we could only improve in **one** of the above areas, which should we focus on? **Please circle one.**

A B C D E

1. What is your preferred method of payment? **(Please circle one)**

   a) Cash
   b) Cheque
   c) Debit Card
   d) Credit Card

2. The most reasonable payment period would be within: **(Circle one)**

   a) 1 week
   b) 2 weeks
   c) 3 weeks
   d) 4 weeks
   e) 5 weeks
   f) More that 5 weeks

3. An acceptable range of cost for this service/product would be:
   (Fill in blanks) $ _______ to $ _______ .

4. Please provide us with further comments that you may have about the cost of the service/product you received.

____

____

____

____

____

____

Section V – General Questions

Please circle the answer that best describes your use of this service/product.

1. If you have used this service more than once, how often do you use it?
   First time users → **go to question #3**

   Every:
   - a) week or less
   - b) 2 weeks
   - c) month
   - d) 2-5 months
   - e) 6-11 months
   - f) Annually
   - g) 2-5 years

2. When was the last time you used this service?

   In the last:
   - a) week or less
   - b) 2 weeks
   - c) month
   - d) 2-5 months
   - e) 6-11 months
   - f) Annually
   - g) 2-5 years

3. My use of this service was:
   - a) a legal requirement → **go to question #6**
   - b) my choice → **go to question #4**

4. Will you use this service again?
   - a) Yes → **go to question #6**
   - b) No → **go to question #5**

5. Please tell us why you will not use this service again.

6. Did you have any of these problems while getting the service? **Check all that apply.**

____ I didn't know where to look
____ I couldn't find the service in the Blue Pages of the telephone book
____ I got bounced around from one person to another
____ Telephone lines were busy
____ I had trouble with automatic telephone answering systems or voice mail
____ I was given incorrect information
____ I got conflicting information from different people
____ I had to travel too great a distance
____ Parking was difficult
____ No one took time to explain things to me
____ Other (fill in blank) ______________________________

Please circle the response that best describes how much you agree or disagree with the following general statements about this service/product.

	1 = Strongly Disagree **2 = Disagree** **3 = Neutral** **4 = Agree** **5 = Strongly Agree** **N/A – Not Applicable**
A. This organization was responsive to my needs.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
B. The staff who served me did an excellent job.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
C. When I needed this service, I knew where to go to get it.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Please circle the number that best describes your overall level of satisfaction with this service/ product delivery.

	1 = Very Dissatisfied **2 = Dissatisfied** **3 = Neutral** **4 = Satisfied** **5 = Very Satisfied**
D. Overall, how satisfied were you with this service/product?	1 2 3 4 5

7. If we could only improve **three** areas of this service/product delivery, in which **three** of the following should we make improvement upon?

   Please write in the numbers 1, 2, and 3 to indicate the first, second and third most important areas for improvement next to the three items you select.

   ____ amount of time to receive service/product

   ____ number of contacts required to receive service/product

   ____ waiting time in line ups

   ____ waiting time on telephone

   ____ waiting time for mailed response

   ____ more methods to access service/product (e.g., internet, email, fax)

   ____ adequate office hours

   ____ convenience of office location

   ____ courtesy of service staff

   ____ skill/competence of service staff

   ____ ease of accessing information about the service/product

   ____ simple forms

   ____ clear instructions/directions

   ____ accurate and consistent information

   ____ dependability of the service

   ____ convenient payment methods

   ____ reasonable cost for service/product

   ____ other (fill in blank) ________________________________

***Note: This is where organizations can place additional customized items.**

Section VI – Information About You (For External Clients):

We would like to know more about our clients to better understand your needs for this service/ product. This information is used to assist our organization in planning improvements in the way we delivery our service/product to you. We would appreciate it if you would answer the following questions. This information will be **confidential** – we have no way of identifying any specific people who fill in these questions.

Please circle response that most closely describes your situation.

1. Gender

    a) Female
    b) Male

2. Age

    a) 18-24 yrs
    b) 25-34 yrs
    c) 35-49 yrs
    d) 50-64 yrs
    e) 65+ yrs

3. Please indicate the type of residence you live in.

    a) Single Family Dwelling
    b) Multi-Family Dwelling (townhouse, duplex)
    c) Secondary suite in a single family residence
    d) Apartment
    e) Other

4. Do you:

    a) Rent
    b) Own

5. Please indicate the type of household in which you live.

    a) Couple with no dependent children
    b) Couple with one dependent child or more
    c) Single parent with one dependent child or more
    d) Single adult
    e) More than 1 single adult sharing a residence
    f) Extended family
    g) Other ________________________

6. Are you presently employed?

   a) Yes ⟶ **go to question #7**
   b) No ⟶ **go to question #10**

7. If you are employed, do you work?

   a) Full time (35 or more hours/wk)
   b) Part time (Less than 35 hours/wk)

8. What is your primary occupation?

   a) Homemaker
   b) Manager, executive, business owner
   c) Office work, sales, service
   d) Professional
   e) Self-employed
   f) Student
   g) Trades, factory worker
   h) Other

9. Please circle the appropriate letter to indicate the type of organization in which you work.

   a) Municipal government
   b) Provincial or Territorial government
   c) Federal government
   d) Other publicly funded organization, e.g., public health system, school system, university, courts, etc.
   e) None of the above

10. If you are not employed, are you:

    a) Retired
    b) Student
    c) Receiving Employment Insurance
    d) Other ____________________

11. Which of the following do you have personal access to? **Circle all that apply.**

    a) Computer
    b) Internet
    c) Fax machine
    d) Electronic Mail (E-mail)

12. What formal education do you have, to date?

    a) Some public or high school
    b) Completed high school
    c) Some post-secondary
    d) Completed college or university
    e) Graduate or professional degree

13. What is your approximate total household income, before taxes? *Your household includes all members of your family who are living with you.*

    a) Under $10,000
    b) $10,000 to $19,999
    c) $20,000 to 29,999
    d) $30,000 to $49,999
    e) $50,000 to 69,999
    f) $70,000 to 89,000
    g) $90,000 or more

14. Are you a member of a visible minority group?

    a) Yes
    b) No

15. Are you Aboriginal?

    a) Yes
    b) No

16. Where do you live?
    (**organization inputs relevant options here**) (e.g., within community, region, province).

17. How long have you lived in Canada/Province/Region/Municipality/Community?
    (**the organization selects the appropriate variable**)

    a) All my life
    b) Ten years or more
    c) Less than ten years

Section VII – Information About You and Your Organization: (For Internal Clients)

We are collecting information about you and your organization to bring more meaning to the answers you have provided us with. This information is used to assist our organization in planning improvements in the way we delivery our service/product to you.

Please fill in blanks.

1. The name of your organization. ______________________________
2. The name of the division or area in which you work. ______________________________
3. Your position/title. ______________________________
4. Length of time you have worked in this position (in number of months). ______________
5. The length of time you have worked for this employer (in number of months). ______________
6. The number of people who report directly to you. ______________________________

Section VIII – We are Most Interested in Your Comments

Please write any other comments you have about this government service/product. Feel free to elaborate on questions from the survey or any other thoughts you wish to convey relating to the delivery of service to you.

Thank you for providing this information!