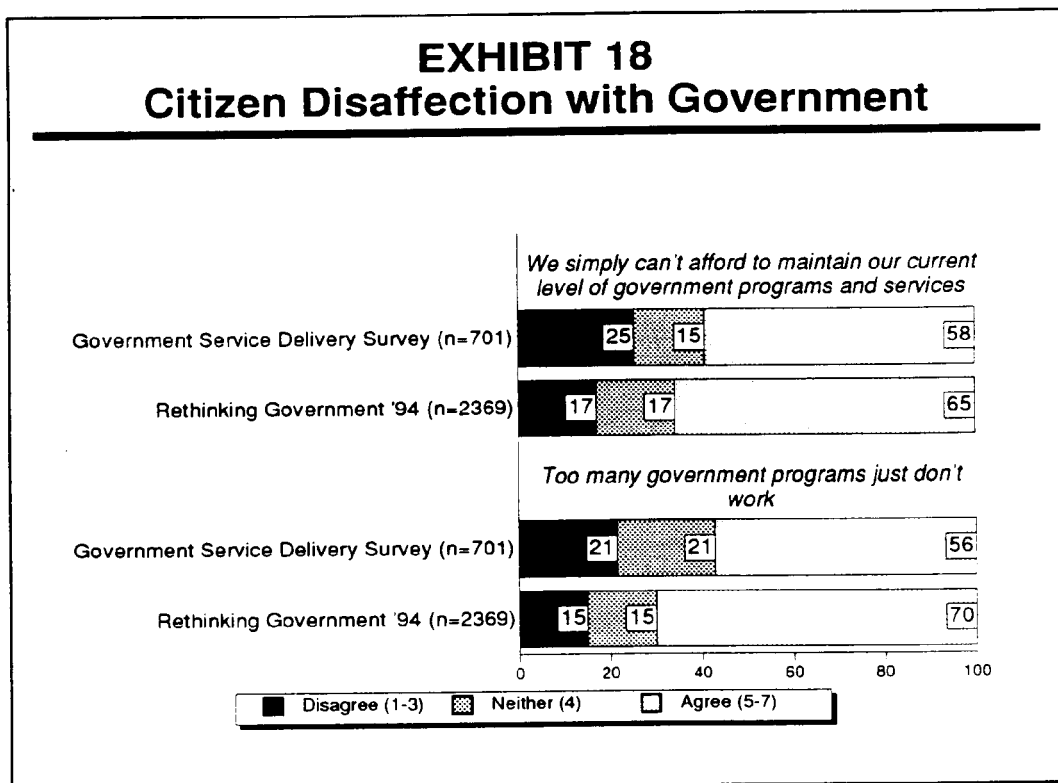CHAPTER

4

CLIENT/GENERAL PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

The chapter presents the findings from the survey of clients of public service (i.e., organizations, the Canadian public), as well as the findings from the focus groups with members of the general public. Many of these findings are compared with those of the public servant survey to examine the degree of congruence between public servants' perceptions and the views of their clients. The findings are broken down across a variety of demographic and usage characteristics (i.e., age, education, income, contact with government, etc.) as well as by the type of client of public service (i.e., household or organization).

This chapter also draws on data from the *Rethinking Government*[3] study to position the present survey results in a broader societal context.

3.   *Rethinking Government.* Ekos Research Associates, 1994, 1995.

4.1   Citizen Disaffection with Government

Findings from the *Rethinking Government* study suggest that Canadians' expectations of government have diminished over the past decade. This decline is produced by growing recognition of a deficit crisis, disillusionment with the efficacy of government intervention, and a consensus that citizens cannot rely solely on government to solve the range of problems that government was expected to solve in the past. Data from the current study further chart Canadians' disaffection with government (Exhibit 18).

EXHIBIT 18
Citizen Disaffection with Government

We simply can't afford to maintain our current level of government programs and services

	Disagree (1-3)	Neither (4)	Agree (5-7)
Government Service Delivery Survey (n=701)	25	15	58
Rethinking Government '94 (n=2369)	17	17	65

Too many government programs just don't work

	Disagree (1-3)	Neither (4)	Agree (5-7)
Government Service Delivery Survey (n=701)	21	21	56
Rethinking Government '94 (n=2369)	15	15	70

■ Disagree (1-3)   ▨ Neither (4)   ☐ Agree (5-7)

A majority of clients believed that we cannot afford to maintain our current level of government programs (58 per cent), and that too many government programs do not work (70 per cent). These views were particularly pronounced

among those who have not contacted government in the last three months, those who are employed and those with higher education. Comparing the present results with findings from the *Rethinking Government* study suggests that members of the broader general public are even more disaffected with government than those (in the present study) who have had more contact with government service.
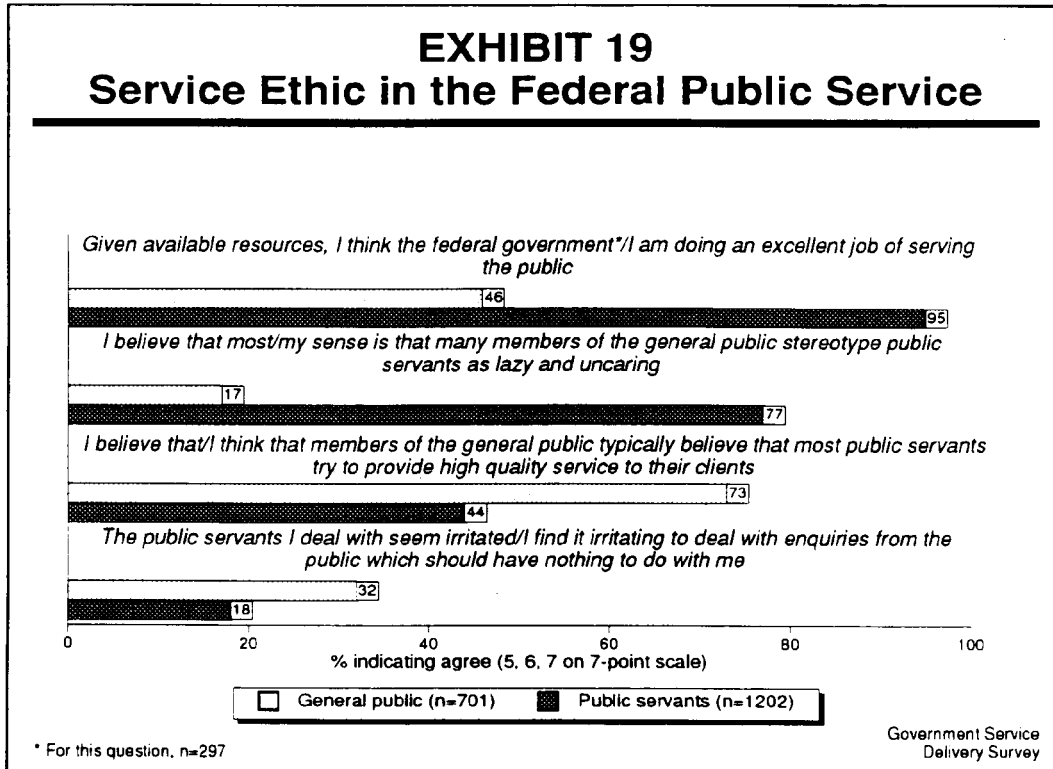
In the focus groups, members of the general public tended to put forward two interrelated views concerning their expectations of government. First, most participants readily acknowledged that it is "unrealistic" to expect the status quo in government service in times of fiscal restraint. Rather, they expect ranges in service delivery, including more self-service and computerized approaches. At the same time, however, they rejected the idea that a deterioration in service quality is inevitable under the current circumstances, particularly in the case of personal contacts with public servants.

With the exception of most senior managers, the majority of focus group participants believed that the public's expectations have remained high. Four contributing factors were identified: 1) the public/clients are more "sophisticated and aware"; 2) cost-recovery has raised the expectations of clients because they are paying for service; 3) generalized public frustration and antipathy towards governments; and 4) improvement in private sector service has "raised the bar for government".

4.2   Service Ethic in the Federal Public Service

A comparison of public servant perceptions of their service ethic to the views of the general public suggests that public servants are both self-lionizing and self-deprecating (Exhibit 19). Public servants were much more likely than the general public to feel that given available resources, they are doing an excellent job of serving the public. At the same time, they strongly believed that the general public thinks they
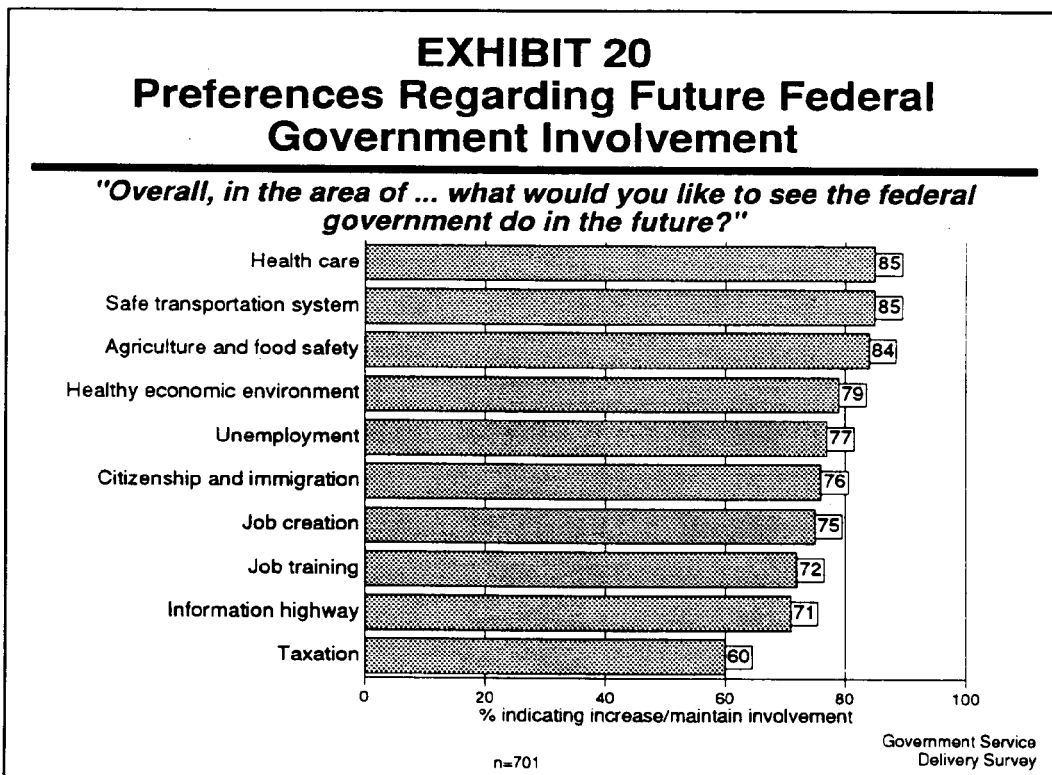
are lazy and uncaring; in reality, only a small minority of the general public reported feeling this way about public servants.

EXHIBIT 19
Service Ethic in the Federal Public Service

Given available resources, I think the federal government*/I am doing an excellent job of serving the public

46

95

I believe that most/my sense is that many members of the general public stereotype public servants as lazy and uncaring

17

77

I believe that/I think that members of the general public typically believe that most public servants try to provide high quality service to their clients

73

44

The public servants I deal with seem irritated/I find it irritating to deal with enquiries from the public which should have nothing to do with me

32

18

% indicating agree (5, 6, 7 on 7-point scale)

0   20   40   60   80   100

☐ General public (n=701)   ▧ Public servants (n=1202)

* For this question, n=297

Government Service
Delivery Survey

Survey respondents from households, those who have not contacted the government over the past three months and those aged between 18 and 29 harbour the most negative views of public servants. Young people hold particularly negative views of public servants, and this finding is another example of young people's disconnection from and hostility towards broader society — a finding documented throughout our *Rethinking Government* study (e.g., appallingly low government literacy, and pessimism regarding the influence of social programs on Canada's quality of life). This more recent data suggests that this disconnection and hostility among youth continues unabated. Organizations, respondents with a higher contact rate with government, older respondents and those with university education tend to hold more positive views about public servants.

4.3 Preferences Regarding Future Federal Government Involvement

Despite a growing disaffection with government, findings from this survey suggest that there is no real desire for federal government withdrawal from Canadian economic and social life. When asked what they would like to see the federal government do in the future (increase its involvement, maintain its current involvement, reduce its involvement, or eliminate its involvement altogether), fully 76 per cent of clients/the public indicated that the federal government should increase or maintain its involvement. Respondents were particularly likely to want federal involvement in areas pertaining to health care and safety (Exhibit 20).

EXHIBIT 20
Preferences Regarding Future Federal Government Involvement

"Overall, in the area of ... what would you like to see the federal government do in the future?"

Area	%
Health care	85
Safe transportation system	85
Agriculture and food safety	84
Healthy economic environment	79
Unemployment	77
Citizenship and immigration	76
Job creation	75
Job training	72
Information highway	71
Taxation	60

% indicating increase/maintain involvement

n=701

Government Service Delivery Survey

Ekos Research Associates Inc., 1996

Across the majority of areas assessed, particularly human investment areas such as training and job creation, the following sub-groups were more likely than their counterparts to desire increased or maintained government involvement:
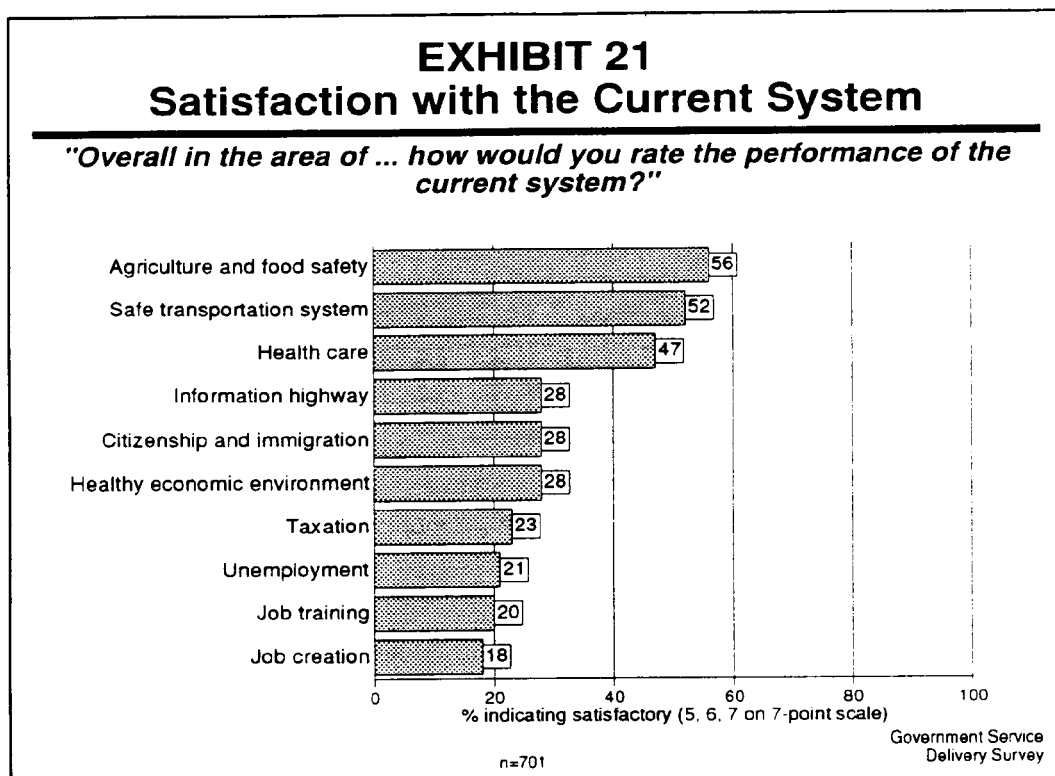
- households;
- those who have not contacted the government in the last three months;
- those who do not own a computer, fax or modem;
- younger (18-29);
- less educated; and
- lower income.

Like the survey respondents, those who participated in the focus groups felt quite strongly that the federal government should maintain an active presence in areas related to health and safety (e.g., health care, transportation safety, food and drug inspection). This opinion was based on a preference for maintaining national standards and universal access. In most other areas, participants indicated that they were looking mainly for efficiency. While some voiced concern that having a reduced federal presence in some areas might "weaken the country", the majority of participants agreed that many of the services currently delivered by the federal government should be devolved to other levels of government and the private sector if this translates into an improvement in service and/or reduction in costs.

4.4 Satisfaction With Current System

The *Rethinking Government* study suggests that Canadians are disappointed with the current performance of government across a variety of priority areas. Respondents from the present study were also asked to rate the performance of government in each of several areas (Exhibit 21).

Linked with the other attitudinal questions described above, it seems that Canadians remain dissatisfied with the current system. Only agriculture and food safety, and a safe transportation system were rated as satisfactory. Similar to the
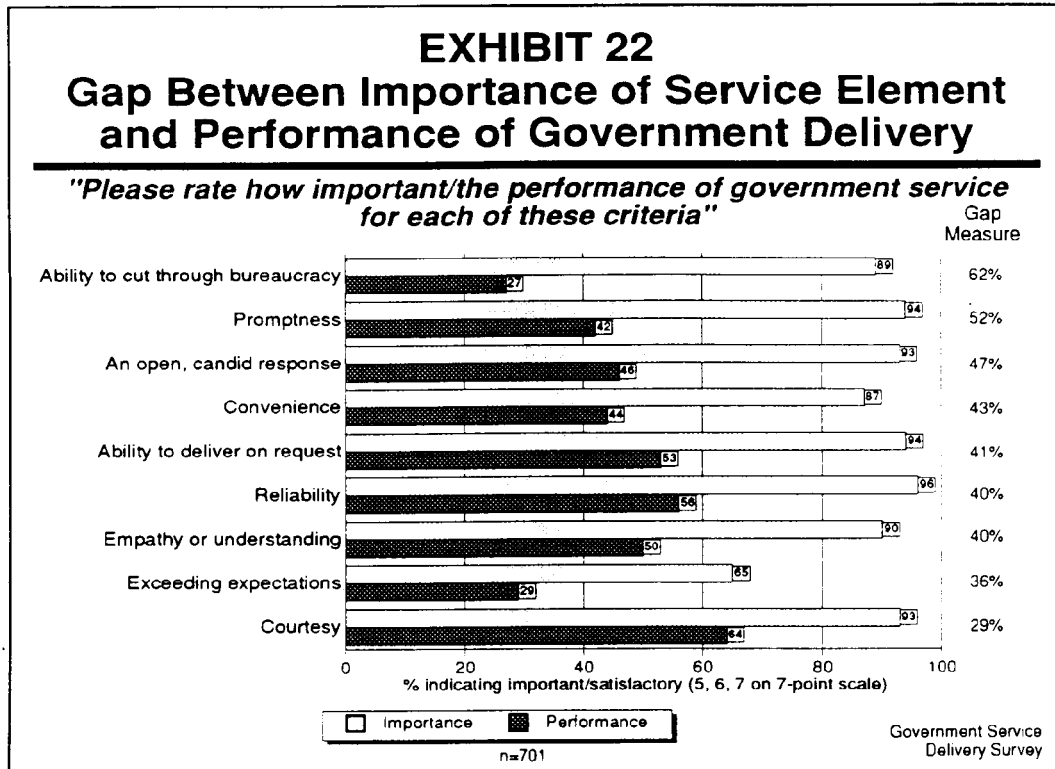
EXHIBIT 21
Satisfaction with the Current System

"Overall in the area of ... how would you rate the performance of the current system?"

Area	%
Agriculture and food safety	56
Safe transportation system	52
Health care	47
Information highway	28
Citizenship and immigration	28
Healthy economic environment	28
Taxation	23
Unemployment	21
Job training	20
Job creation	18

% indicating satisfactory (5, 6, 7 on 7-point scale)

n=701

Government Service
Delivery Survey

Rethinking Government findings, human resource areas (job training, unemployment and job creation) were rated the most poorly. Households, respondents who have not contacted the government over the last three months, those without a computer, fax or modem, and those with less education and less income were particularly disappointed with the system's performance in the human resource areas.

4.5 Gap Between Importance of Service Elements and Performance of Government

Respondents were asked to rate both the importance and performance of government service delivery across a variety of service elements. The general public/clients accorded a high priority to virtually all elements of service listed, but

were very negative in their assessment of public servants' performance in delivering on these elements (Exhibit 22).
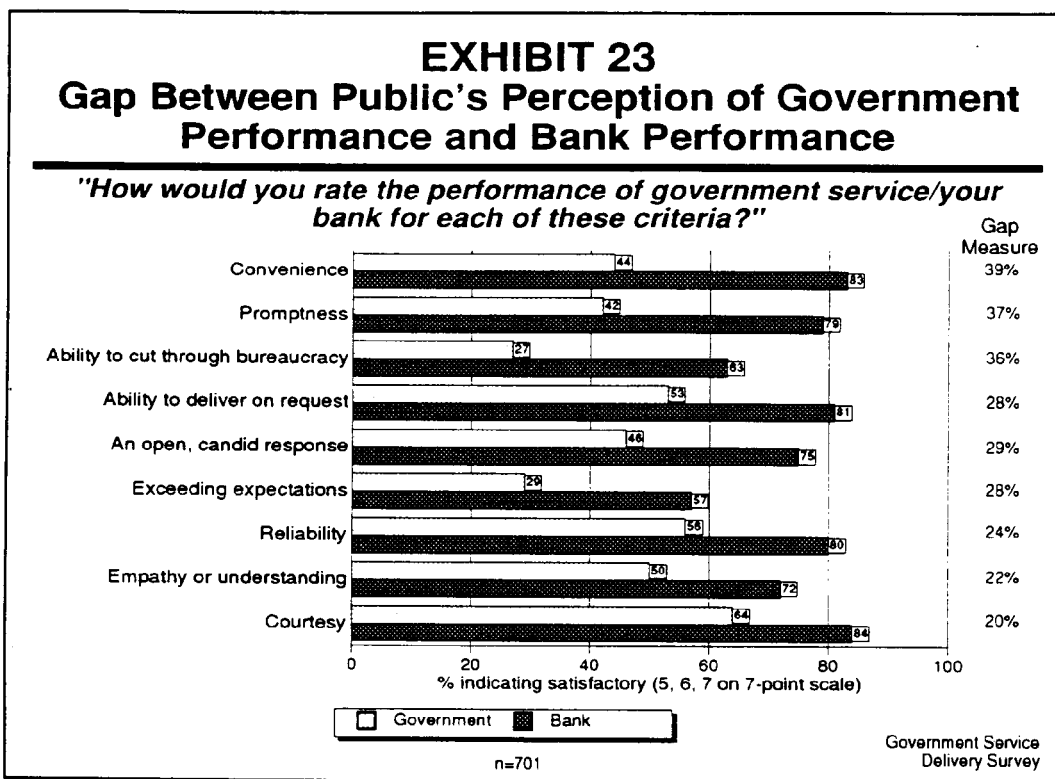

EXHIBIT 22
Gap Between Importance of Service Element and Performance of Government Delivery

"Please rate how important/the performance of government service for each of these criteria"

Gap Measure

Service Element	Performance	Importance	Gap
Ability to cut through bureaucracy	27	89	62%
Promptness	42	94	52%
An open, candid response	46	93	47%
Convenience	44	87	43%
Ability to deliver on request	53	94	41%
Reliability	56	96	40%
Empathy or understanding	50	90	40%
Exceeding expectations	29	65	36%
Courtesy	64	93	29%

0   20   40   60   80   100
% indicating important/satisfactory (5, 6, 7 on 7-point scale)

☐ Importance   ■ Performance

n=701

Government Service Delivery Survey

The gap between importance and perceived performance was largest for the ability to cut through bureaucracy (62 per cent) and smallest for courtesy (29 per cent). Few sub-group differences were observed with respect to the importance of each of the elements. In terms of satisfaction with each of these service elements, the following sub-groups were, generally speaking, the most satisfied:

- ❏ organizations;
- ❏ older (60 years and older);
- ❏ not employed;
- ❏ less income; and
- ❏ do not own computer, fax or modem at home.

4.6   Gap Between Government Performance and Bank Performance

Respondents were asked to compare how government service delivery compares to that of a bank (or some other private sector company). The general public/clients were much more likely to rate banks' performance across all service elements as superior to that of government (Exhibit 23).

EXHIBIT 23
Gap Between Public's Perception of Government Performance and Bank Performance

"How would you rate the performance of government service/your bank for each of these criteria?"

Criteria	Government	Bank	Gap Measure
Convenience	44	83	39%
Promptness	42	79	37%
Ability to cut through bureaucracy	27	63	36%
Ability to deliver on request	53	81	28%
An open, candid response	46	75	29%
Exceeding expectations	29	57	28%
Reliability	56	80	24%
Empathy or understanding	50	72	22%
Courtesy	64	84	20%

% indicating satisfactory (5, 6, 7 on 7-point scale)

☐ Government ▨ Bank

n=701

Government Service Delivery Survey

This finding is particularly troubling given public antipathy towards banks. The perceived gap between bank and government performance was greatest for convenience (39 per cent) and smallest for courtesy (21 per cent). Although satisfaction with a bank's performance varied considerably by service element examined, across all elements, older and higher income participants were generally more satisfied with a bank's performance than their counterparts.

In the focus groups this issue was discussed in the broader context of comparing federal government service delivery with the service delivered by the private sector. Participants were more or less divided about who provided better service. Essentially, federal government service delivery was described as more consistent, while experiences with the private sector were more likely to be characterized by peaks and valleys.

CHAPTER

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Smiling as You Bail: Service in An Era of Hostility and Restraint

There is little need to deliver a further body blow to the reeling institution of government in Canada. Yet the current research on internal and external perceptions of service vividly reinforces the thesis that there is a crisis characterising the relationship between citizens and governments. There is strong evidence that the fundamental breakdown between citizens and governments evident in recent years continues unabated. In this research project we examine the citizen-government relationship through the lens of "service delivery". Although there are some difficulties in reducing the citizen-government connection to the realm of a service transaction there are some important insights on this problem, and the deeper problem of citizen disconnection.

The research examines the nature and quality of service interactions from the perspective of both public servants and the clients they serve. It includes a random sample of 1,200 federal public servants representing the front line, middle management and senior management. It also includes a parallel sample of 700 "clients" of these same departmental staff composed of both individual citizens and representatives of organizations (public and private sector) who have recently dealt with the departments

included in the staff survey. In addition to extensive telephone surveying there were also 12 qualitative focus groups conducted with clients and public servants. Finally, these results are situated in the context of broader findings drawn from our ongoing *Rethinking Government* project.

5.2 Resilient Commitment to Service: A Two-Edged Sword

The surveys reveal a mixture of positive and negative findings. Running throughout this research is a disturbing gap between the views of public servants and the clients they serve. Although the gap often favours a flattering self-image of public servants — and particularly the quality of their service efforts — there are important exceptions where public servants maintain exaggerated notions of client antipathy. A number of crucial gaps characterise this area: gaps between self-rating and client-ratings; gaps between client expectations and client experiences; and gaps between management and front line views on service. These differences are not merely curious; they define some of the crucial challenges interfering with a healthier client-government correction.

One of the more striking findings of the study is the apparent strength of the commitment to excellent service to the public. In several survey items, and in the focus groups, we found public servants united in a virtual consensus that service to the public was the essence and *telos* of their job. This notion that serving the public is what their job is all about is also linked to a conviction that, given the practical constraints, they (personally) are doing an "excellent" job of serving the public. This strong service ethic appears to be resilient compared to our 1990 Service to the Public (STP) study. In fact there is some evidence that public servants feel that service to the public, and their commitment to client service, have improved in the past several years. Other survey indicators suggest that public servants believe that they are more open and transparent and placing more emphasis on consultation than in our 1990 research.

This commitment to service is clearly genuine. There are, however, some non-trivial problems underlying this broad service ethic.

There is a growing sense that the public servants feel themselves under seige. The broad based hostility to governments which has become an entrenched public mood in the nineties has clearly registered on public servants. Worse, public servants have seriously exaggerated public hostility to public servants such that almost eighty per cent believe that their clients think of them as "lazy and uncaring". In fact, slightly less than one in five clients really hold this view. Our most recent public research suggests that while public servants are not immune to the broad resentment to government, the greatest anger and alienation from government is directed to politicians and the entire institution of government. In fact, trust in federal public servants is significantly higher than trust in politicians. About 60 per cent have little trust in politicians versus only 25 per cent who have little trust in federal public servants (29 per cent have little trust in provincial public servants, suggesting that federal public servants are slightly more trusted than their provincial colleagues).

In addition to perceived public hostility, public servants are acutely aware of the impacts of retrenchment and restraint. Downsizing and other resource constraints are salient concerns raised in group discussions. All of these forces have coalesced to produce a significant decline in the overall morale of the public service. Yet in spite of these difficulties commitment to service has remained strong and perhaps even strengthened. Nearly 90 per cent of public servants agreed that "providing excellent service is what my job is all about". Many focus group participants took it as a point of honour or pride that they maintained this focus despite the travails of public service. There was a sense that many public servants, particularly at the front line and in the regions were transferring allegiance from their Minister, Deputy or manager to their client or the public.

5.3 The Client Perspective: A Reality Check

Although it is impressive that this service ethic is so resilient there is also reason to be concerned by this finding. The key problem is that *the current system is not working*. Despite the sense within the public service that progress is occurring, and that service performance is great given constraints, clients do not share this flattering self-image. For whatever reasons we find that the experiences of clients mirror broader public disaffection with government as an institution. Most clients do not agree that public servants are doing an excellent job — even recognising resource constraints. In fact, when comparing client expectations on the key dimensions of the service transaction rated by clients, there is a huge gap between recent experiences and going in expectations (Exhibit 24). Clients place a premium on cutting through red tape, timeliness, transparency and openness and getting results. On all of these crucial dimensions of the service transaction client satisfaction levels are depressingly low (25 to 50 per cent satisfaction).

Without exploring demographic variations in satisfaction with government in any depth here (see the full report), it is important to note a particularly strong and disturbing age effect. Younger Canadians have a *much* more negative view of the federal government, and the quality of service delivery. In past research we speculated that lower rates of contact and political literacy may have accounted for this antipathy. It is disconcerting to note that in a sample of clients who have recently dealt with the federal government, the negativity of young clients of the federal government may be even more pronounced (than those who have not recently dealt with government).

Even when comparing satisfaction levels on these same dimensions with the concrete example of one's last visit to a bank we note a sizable deficiency (about 30 per cent lower satisfaction). Recognizing that banks are not the most popular

EXHIBIT 24
Gap Between Importance of Service Element
and Performance of Government Delivery

"Please rate how important/the performance of government service for each of these criteria"

Gap Measure

Criteria	Importance	Performance	Gap
Ability to cut through bureaucracy	89	27	62%
Promptness	94	42	52%
An open, candid response	93	46	47%
Convenience	87	44	43%
Ability to deliver on request	94	53	41%

% indicating important/satisfactory (5, 6, 7 on 7-point scale)

☐ Importance   ■ Performance

n=701

Government Service Delivery Survey

institutions in Canada today it is quite discouraging to note this wide performance gap. Some of the gap can be attributed to the paper burden and accountability requirements of government but this can't explain all of this shortfall (or any of the 21 per cent shortfall on "courtesy").

It is possible to chart the gap between client expectations and the record of real world delivery in greater depth. It is, however, also important to note that if only two per cent of public servants rate their personal service performance as less than "excellent" this may be an obstacle to fixing the problem. There should be no doubt about the nature and severity of the problem itself. The public perspective on the federal government, whether judged from the specific vantage point at the last service episode, or from the broader perspective of public attitudes, reveals a level of disaffection which can only be characterised as a crisis. This crisis cannot be

addressed, much less solved, in a world where it is seen as unavoidable and unrelated to the efforts of public servants.
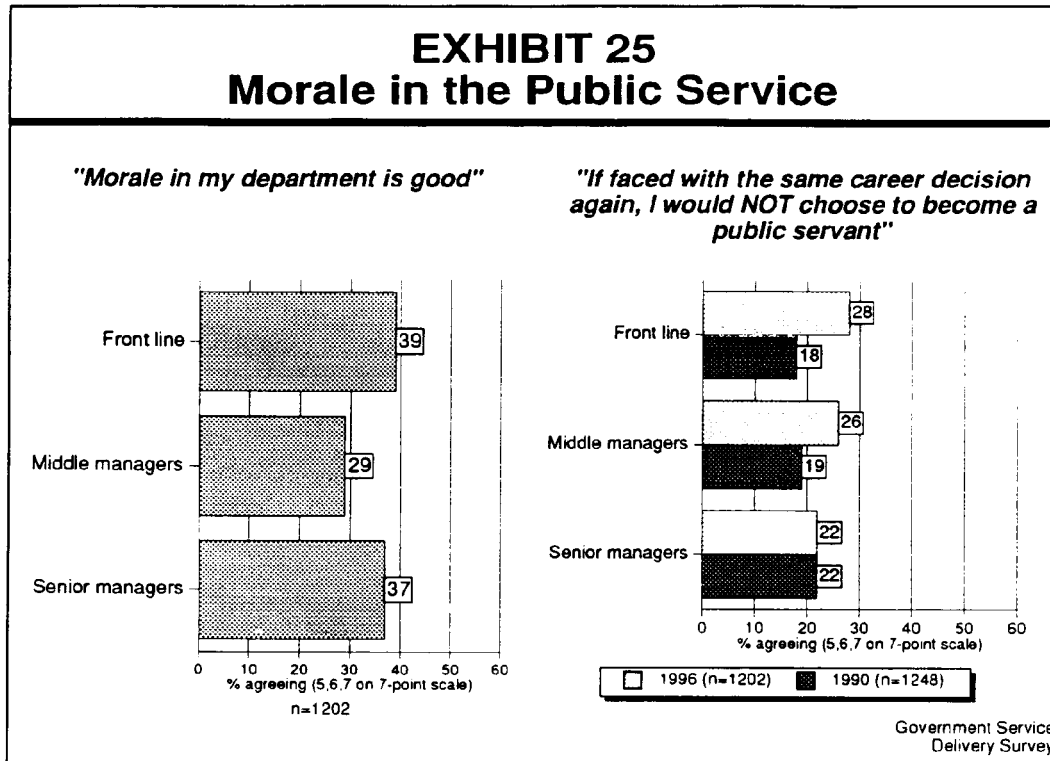
5.4 Linking Morale, Planning and Innovation: Creating an Organizational Service Edge

It is useful to examine the internal connections between service and other human resource and organisational issues. Beginning with the issue of morale we offer the unsurprising but clearly documented conclusion that poor departmental morale is a ubiquitous feature of the current federal public service (with some very sizable variation across different departmental settings).

Morale in the public service was examined on both a departmental and a personal basis. Only 35 per cent of participants feel that morale in their department is good. Middle managers are particularly pessimistic in their view of departmental morale (Exhibit 25). Departmental morale varies significantly across government departments.

It is also possible to make conclusions on the state of personal employee morale and where it is going. Only a minority (26 per cent) of participants indicated that if faced with the same career decision they would not choose to become a public servant. However, tracking this question from the 1990 Service to the Public survey reveals a significant increase in the percentage of both front line staff and middle managers indicating that they would not choose to become a public servant if given the same career decision.

It is instructive to note that while morale has clearly declined according to this indicator it also appears to be somewhat higher than for the average ratings across all other occupational groups. In a recent national survey, 30 per cent of Canadians agreed that they would *not* choose their career area again (Exhibit 26). Of

EXHIBIT 25
Morale in the Public Service

"Morale in my department is good"

"If faced with the same career decision again, I would NOT choose to become a public servant"

Front line — 39

Middle managers — 29

Senior managers — 37

0 10 20 30 40 50 60
% agreeing (5,6,7 on 7-point scale)
n=1202

Front line — 28 / 18

Middle managers — 26 / 19

Senior managers — 22 / 22

0 10 20 30 40 50 60
% agreeing (5,6,7 on 7-point scale)

☐ 1996 (n=1202) ▓ 1990 (n=1248)

Government Service
Delivery Survey

those currently in employment the number is 29 per cent which is still higher than for federal public servants.

5.5 Technology, Innovation and Human Resources

There is a strong constellation of recurring organizational features which tend to appear together. This bundling of planning and human resource factors is linked to organizational settings which reveal both higher morale and a stronger service ethic. The 1990 Service to the Public research referred to these features as the PVK factor (for people knowledge and values). Once again, we find a similar virtuous organizational circle at work.

EXHIBIT 26
Satisfaction with Career Choice

"If faced with the same career decision again, I would NOT choose to become a public servant"
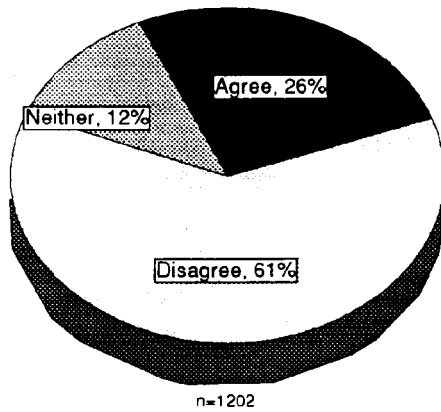
"If faced with the same career decision again, I would NOT choose the career I am currently pursuing"

Agree, 26%

Neither, 12%

Disagree, 61%

n=1202

Government Service
Delivery Survey

Agree, 30%

Neither, 14%

Disagree, 52%

n=922
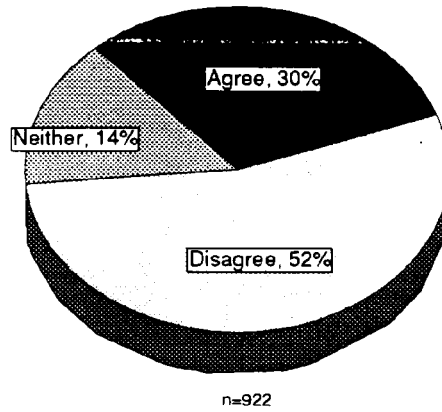
Rethinking Government 95-3
(preliminary spring data)

Public sector organizations which place a greater premium on innovation, technology, consultation and formal planning for better service tend to feature these elements in a mutually reinforcing pattern. Furthermore, these elements are linked to better departmental morale and a higher service ethic in our analysis of the current survey.

There are opportunities for making further gains because many of these elements are either underdeveloped or non-existent in many departments. For example, 40 per cent of departments do not have a written service plan. In itself a written plan will not transform underperforming departments into high performance organizations. On the other hand, formal planning is part of a relatively clear constellation of better service culture ingredients. We should be seeding these practices and cultures more broadly in the public service, and reinforcing them where they are already rooted.

5.6 The Technology Dilemma

Another theme emerges from the research. The demographic skew to an older public service workforce is also linked to a mixed level of comfort and commitment to the use of new information technologies. The surveys show that public servants recognize the advantages of new technologies in improving service delivery. The research also shows that there has been a significant expansion of technology-driven service and an expectation that this trend will continue.

There are, however, some tensions interfering with the move to more modern delivery systems. The public service is now dominated by aging survivors. Although they are not particularly technophobic this cohort does carry notions of ideal service delivery which are increasingly anachronistic. For example, the vast majority of public servants believe that in-person service is the model *par excellence* of ideal service. All other models are seen as pale emulations and most public servants believe clients would prefer in-person service (even if it is slower or more expensive).

It is the case that most clients do prefer in-person service *but* their preference is much weaker. Eighty-seven per cent of public servants believe the general public would rather deal with a person than a computer or voice mail even if it means slower service; only 68 per cent of the general public actually express such a preference. Furthermore, this preference for in-person service weakens for younger, more technologically comfortable clients (63 per cent for under 30 versus 83 per cent for over 60 years of age). It should also be noted that clients comparatively rated their last service episode at a bank much more highly than with the federal government, notwithstanding the fact that many of these transactions were with Automated Banking Machines.

There is an uneasy mixture of interests and values at work here. The notion of in-person service as the reference standard reflects the culture of an era

which is passing. There is also the recognition that new information technologies are alternatives for human labour (47 per cent of public servants are concerned that recent technological advances in servicing the public could result in their losing their job). It is not surprising that one's enthusiasm for new service technology may be muted by the recognition that the new electronic kiosk may replace you next year.

5.7   Next Steps: Repairing the Structure and the Surface

Clearly all is not well in the world of government. It is important to note that the specific transactions between citizens as clients and the federal government generate the same general reactions as the overall impressions of government as a whole. With little difference overall reactions/approval of the federal government are the same whether based on general impressions or most recent transaction.

5.8   Service in the Public Sector

The concept of service is at the heart of this discussion. The term is often treated as a primitive, a concept which is fundamental and somewhat obvious. After all government is synonymous with civil or public service. Most employees agree that service to the public is the essence of their job. But is the concept that obvious? Are discussions of service in this context somehow different than in other settings?

The answer is both yes and no. The key transactional elements of modern service are fairly obvious. They really don't vary that much whether we are talking about mufflers, fast food or legal advice. The key transactional service model is basically common to the modern consumer society. The research shows that both clients and public servants agree on the dimensions of the service model (if not the performance achieved). As the single greatest expenditure area citizens should expect at least as much of this sort of service when they visit their government office as they

do when they deal with a restaurant, a courier or a bank. Clearly against these yardsticks, the results are woefully deficient.

There is, however, no doubt that there is a crucial additional element of public service which is fundamentally different than other parts of modern consumerism. The essence of public service is representing the public interest. This is the basis of Hegel's notion of the historical shift from a mercantile to civil society. According to Hegel the essence of civil society was the focus on *public interest* and the rise of a new universal class, the civil service. Clearly a more prescient notion of a universal class than Marx's proletariat, Hegel's civil service was focused on public interest and knowledge, not property, was the basic fuel of this model. Interestingly, civil servant was defined broadly to include the professional class (e.g., doctors). We find the notion of an impersonal, rational bureaucracy developed into a much more chilling conception in Weber's notion of the "iron cage". The modern world has seen a remarkable growth in the influence of the civil service. There is, however, mounting evidence that the influence of modern bureaucracy and statism may be in decline in the post-modern world.

This post-modern era shows government and public service to be undergoing a fundamental transition. There is widespread hostility and disaffection with government. But it remains the case that the state plays a universally important role in the post-modern world and the essence of this role still revolves around the notions of public interest, reason and knowledge. The future of government may be smaller, but not necessarily less significant. Our broader research shows that Canadians remain committed to the goals of government but not the results (or value for money equation).

Is service essentially about results or the quality of the transaction? From the public's perspective both are important and they fail to see these as choices. Nearly 90 per cent of Canadians believe that "higher quality customer service" is important to producing a "result-oriented" federal government. "Accountability for

measured results" is seen as the most important criteria of a list of five ideas that might improve governance in Canada (transparent decision-making was second most important).

5.9 A Foundation of Core Values and Roles

It is also important to recognize that results/goals mean something different in the minds of the public than they do in the minds of the senior decision-makers running the show. The public continues to look to the federal government as a source of moral community. Goals and values like freedom, health and security are at the top of the public's list of core values for government. For those in charge the problem is seen in more rational and economic terms. Perhaps this is why about 85 per cent of Canadians agree that government leaders are disconnected from the values of ordinary Canadians. Any attempt to rebuild confidence in the federal government must broach the normative rupture which continues to alienate citizens from government.

Improvements to service delivery systems are important. They must be built on a solid foundation of core values and roles. Ironically, the public are less attached to the federal government as a delivery agent. As governments begin to row less and steer more they must ensure that they preserve the core roles that the public sees as crucial — guardian-protector (of public interest); partner-broker (coordinating different sectors/players); goal-setting (in cooperation with other players); and economic steward. New alternative service delivery systems must approach the client in recognition of these core roles for the federal government.

5.10 Further Suggestions

Turning to the more specific problems of service delivery it is possible to offer some more specific recommendations:

(i) The overall service culture needs a major shake-up. The system needs to be shocked out of its current state of complacency and resignation. The ubiquitous image of excellent performance (given constraints) has become a comfortable illusion. Coupled with an exaggerated sense of public hostility this work ideology is preventing recognition of the severity of the problem.

(ii) The service problems are systemic in nature and will require a radical transformation of organizational culture and delivery technologies. It is important to recall that the study shows the most alarming service shortfalls are in the areas of red tape, timeliness, openness and results. These problems are reflective of the current culture of the bureaucracy and possess enormous organizational inertia. We suggest broadening the virtuous circle of innovation, formal service planning and measurement, and openness. Top-down leadership and stressing the value and power of individual employees are also crucial elements of this transformation. Corrections to flagging employee self-esteem, and a sense of possible progress to measurable goals are part of the solution.

(iii) Benchmarking and monitoring of service performance is essential. Vague nostrums about service commitment and performance are unhelpful. This study provides a reasonable (global) benchmark of current performance levels. The government should use this as a foundation for charting improvements in service performance. These performance reports should be shared with staff and the public. They

should include a real diagnostic capacity to identify causes of both poor and distinguished performance.

(iv)   The government should initiate a high profile youth internship program. There are a number of compelling reasons for doing so. First, there is alarming evidence of youth disconnection from the federal government. A youth hiring program will help redress the current demographic skew to greying survivors. Young federal employees can bring vitality and innovation, technological agility and a more credible perspective on the problems of younger Canadians. Younger Canadians brought in sizable numbers will help in shocking the system out of some of its inertia and antiquated delivery systems. Younger workers are also cheaper and contain greater representation of key equity groups. It also will render federal appeals to corporate conscience in youth hiring more credible.

APPENDIX A

Details of Survey Methodology

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DETAILS OF SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The field work for this survey was comprised of 1,202 interviews with federal public servants and 701 interviews with clients of federal government. This appendix provides a description of the field logistics and response-rates.

A.1 Survey of Public Servants

Ekos assembled at team of 24 interviewers. Their training included a review of the sampling procedure, the survey questionnaire items, as well as telephone interviewing techniques and survey adminstration procedures relevant to the study.

Up to four call-backs were made to each public servant in the sample for whom initial attempts at contact were unsuccessful (but for whom we understood the telephone number was correct). Each number was given a "rest" of at least three hours before a second contact was attempted. The subsequent calls were made on separate days. Appointments were made with potential respondents who expressed a wish to participate at a more convenient time.

The survey spanned a 17-day period, between February 5th and March 12th, 1996. The interview required 21 minutes on average to complete. Daily records were kept of all calls made, whether successful (i.e., interview completed or appointment made), or not. A supervisor was on hand at all times to monitor the progress of all work including interviewer performance, contact records and data quality. The supervisor was also available to address any concerns of the respondents. In order to assure respondents of the legitimacy of the survey, the supervisor provided contact names and telephone numbers for each of the participating departments so that a respondent could confirm the study, if he/she wished. The supervisor reported directly to the survey manager on a daily basis.

Table A.1 provides details of the disposition of the sample, including attrition and the functional sample. Reasons for attrition include: invalid numbers (numbers not in service ory employees for whom no telephone number could be found); ineligible respondents (those who fell outside the sampling criteria); strata

filled (the quota definition was filled); and others (duplicate numbers or persons deemed unable to complete the survey because of language difficulties). Attrition amounted to 63 per cent of the initial sample. The remaining functional sample is comprised of completions and non-completions (incomplete interviews, not reached, unavailable for duration of survey, refusals, etc.). The response-rate for the survey (i.e., proportion of completions in the functional sample) was 49 per cent.

TABLE A.1
Public Servant Survey: Sample Disposition and Response-Rate

Disposition	Results
Total Sample	6,534
Attrition	
Invalid number	2,892
Ineligible respondents (spend less than 25% of their time with clients)	567
No longer employed with the Government	161
Strata filled	453
Other	18
Total Attrition	4,091
Functional Sample	2,443
Completions	1,202
Non-Completions	
Contact unavailable	114
Require communication from their department before responding	28
Not reached	908
Unable to spend 20 minutes on phone answering survey	64
Refusals	127
Total Non-Completions	1,241
Response-Rate	49 %

Annex A (presented at the end of this appendix) provides a listing of the public service job codes classified as front line staff, middle managers and senior managers for purposes of the survey.

A.2 Survey of Clients/General Public

Ekos assembled at team of 44 interviewers. Many of these were the same individuals working on the public servant portion of the study. Training included a review of the sampling procedure and the survey questionnaire items.

Up to four call-backs were made to each person in the sample (i.e., household resident or organization representative) for whom initial attempts at contact were unsuccessful (but for whom we understood the telephone number was correct). The survey spanned a 25-day period, between February 26th and March 22nd, 1996. The interview required 21 minutes on average to complete. All sampling tracking procedures decribed for the public servant survey also applied to the client survey component.

Table A.2 provides details of the disposition of the sample. Reasons for attrition include: invalid numbers (numbers not in service); ineligible respondents (government organizations, private citizens who were not 18 years of age or not a resident of Canada, or companies not located in Canada); strata filled (the quota definition was filled); random public household numbers that were not followed-up with full call-back procedures because the final sample target had been attained; persons deemed unable to complete the survey because of language difficulties; and others (duplicate numbers). Attrition totalled 58 per cent of the initial sample. The remaining functional sample is comprised of completions and non-completions (incomplete interviews, person not reached on final follow-up, unavailable for duration of survey, refusals, etc.). The response-rate for the client survey was 21 per cent. While this is considerably lower than the public servant response-rate, it is not unusually low for this type of survey.

TABLE A.2
Client Survey: Sample Disposition and Response-Rate

Disposition	Results
Total Sample	8,163
Attrition	
Invalid number	1,609
Ineligible respondents	498
Not followed-up	2,292
Language difficulties	234
Strata filled	97
Other	15
Total Attrition	4,745
Functional Sample	3,418
Completions	701
Non-Completions	
Contact unavailable	229
Incomplete survey	9
Not reached	487
Refusals	1,992
Total Non-Completions	2,717
Response-Rate	21%