Print Form

NRCS Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Section Overview: Upon completion of this section, you will recognize processes that NRCS uses to collect customer input, review results of surveys, and learn of customer's perceptions.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)

https://my.nrcs.usda.gov/PortalStatic/Programs/American_Customer_Satisfaction_Index_Reports/2005_Customer_Satisfaction/2005_Conservation_Security_Program_ACSI_Survey.pdf

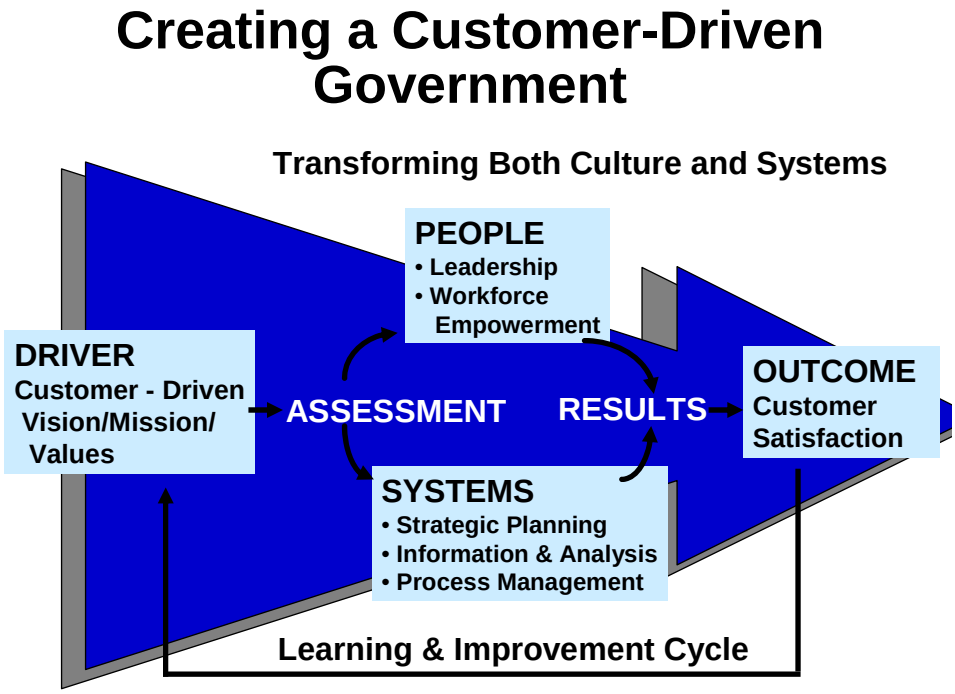
The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is the national indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services available to U.S. residents. It is the only uniform, cross-industry/government measure of customer satisfaction. Since 1994, the ACSI has measured satisfaction, its causes, and its effects, for seven economic sectors, 41 industries, more than 200 private sector companies, two types of local government services, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Internal Revenue Service. ACSI has measured more than 100 programs of federal government agencies since 1999. This allows benchmarking between the public and private sectors and provides information unique to each agency on how its activities that interface with the public affect the satisfaction of customers. The effects of satisfaction are estimated, in turn, on specific objectives (such as public trust).

The ACSI is produced through a partnership of the University of Michigan Business School, CFI Group, and the American Society for Quality.

Since 2001, ACSI has been used by NRCS to gauge customer satisfaction of our programs, our internal work processes and our people. The following NRCS programs have completed the ACSI evaluation process: CTA, EQIP, WHIP, CSP, NRI, PMC, WRP, and Soil Survey, as well as Technical Service Providers (TSPs).

The customer satisfaction index is an indicator of how well we are doing as an agency in meeting our customer's needs. NRCS enjoys a customer satisfaction index above the Federal Government average.

Time has shown us that even if a NRCS work process, or a program incentive needed improvement, the strongest indicators of how the public perceives us as an agency in meeting the their (the customer's) needs still remains our people, and the services we provide. As a new District Conservationist, this is an important aspect of your job and you should be aware of how customer perceptions influence your effectiveness.



CUSTOMER & EMPLOYEE SERVICE SURVEYS AND FEEDBACK

Executive Order 12862: Setting Customer Service Standards (September 1993)

All executive departments and agencies that provide significant services directly to the public shall provide those services in a manner that seeks to meet the customer service standard established herein and shall take the following actions:

1. Identify customers who are, or should be served by the agency;
2. Survey customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services;
3. Post service standards and measure results against them; Benchmark customer service performance against the best in business;
4. Survey front-line employees on barriers to, and ideas for, matching best in business;
5. Provide customers with choices in both the sources of services and the means of delivery; Make information, service, and complaint systems easily accessible; and Provide means to address customer complaints.

Customer and employee surveys

Surveys, interviews, and other assessments are used for many reasons:

- To find and act on the issues which lead to innovation, employee or customer turnover, or other key outcomes.
- To motivate and guide change efforts and identify the most promising opportunities for improvement.
- To record a baseline from which progress can be measured.
- To create a consensus on priorities or issues to be dealt with.
- To provide a two-way communication with employees or customers.

How to get customer feedback

The *ideal* way to get customer feedback is:

- Using interviews rather than paper or electronic surveys, because a human interviewer can gain more in-depth information while often achieving greater honesty
- Interviewing your customers and to explore perceptions and relative strengths and weaknesses
- Linking customer information with employee and operational information, to discover which internal issues directly affect customer satisfaction
- Interviewing customers constantly, with regular updates so that trends can be established and closely watched

Methods

The best way to stay in touch with customers is through personal phone calls or meetings, where that is possible.

Telephone interviews are a "second best" way to stay in touch.

Customer Focus: Top management needs to ensure that customer needs and expectations are determined, converted into requirements and fulfilled with the aim of enhancing customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction: As one of the measurements of the performance, you need to monitor information relating to customer perception as to whether the organization has fulfilled customer requirements.

Customer Results Measurement Area

1. **Customer Benefit**-Customer satisfaction levels and tangible impacts to customers as to results of the programs and services provided
2. **Service Coverage**-The extent to which the desired customer population is being served and the customers are using programs and services

3. **Timeliness & Responsiveness**-Time to respond to customer inquiries and requests and time to deliver programs and services
4. **Service Quality**-Quality from the customer's perspective and accuracy of responses to customer inquiries
5. **Service Accessibility**-Availability of products and services to customers and the extent of self-service options and automation

Customer Responses:

1. Not Applicable
2. Strongly Agree
3. Agree
4. Neutral
5. Disagree
6. Strongly Disagree

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Surveys- NRCS Programs and Services

This power point offers a quick overview of the American Customer Satisfaction Index Survey process for Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

NRCS Public website: **http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/FEATURE/survey/satisfaction.html**

My.nrcs-Accountability tab-Quality Improvements-Customer Satisfaction-Customer Satisfaction Reports https://my.nrcs.usda.gov/accountability.aspx

Activity: Review the 2007 Customer Satisfaction Survey for CTA. https://my.nrcs.usda.gov/PortalStatic/Programs/American_Customer_Satisfaction_Index_Reports/2007_Customer_Satisfaction/2007-CTA_Customer_Satisfaction_Survey.pdf

Questions:

1. What observations do you have after reviewing the survey?

2. What recommendations would you make to your STC?

3. Would you make any changes in your FO as a result of this survey?

Discuss your responses with your supervisor.

Optional Activity:

Take AgLearn Course "Sustaining Excellent Customer Service" CUST0126_SKILLSOFT

Summary: You should now be able to recognize the processes of obtaining customer input and of the existence of agency customer satisfaction surveys such as the 2007 CTA Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Section Completed

_____**Date**_____
District Conservationist Initials

_____**Date**_____
Supervisor Initials