

Measuring Customer Satisfaction in the Division of Stormwater Management

John T. Corn, Gwinnett County, GA

Our Mission: Our mission in Stormwater Management is to provide the customer with excellent stormwater service at the best possible value.

Understanding the Need: A genuine understanding of customers' needs and expectations is a key component of delivering service that satisfies customers. The Division of Stormwater Management desires to have a strong customer satisfaction reputation and should pursue this level of understanding through customer feedback forms and direct phone contact. To improve performance, managers need to apply the insights generated from such activities when making decisions about program offerings. Furthermore, it is critical that this information be disseminated to all pertinent personnel to help front-line supervisors make smart decisions when interacting with customers. Division personnel should clearly communicate what their customers can expect from the Division as well as the customers' obligations and responsibilities. Naturally, these expectations must reflect the standards set forth in the services' offered policy.

Encouraging Feedback: A telling indicator of an organization's service culture is how its leaders respond to complaints. Most dissatisfied customers never complain directly, instead they simply tell others about their bad experience. Encouraging customer feedback can help the Division understand their customers' expectations and address problems quickly.

Description of Proposed Program: Prior to commencement of each stormwater construction project, a construction manager will communicate with each affected customer to review the scope of the project. This will include, but not be limited to, landscape areas to be disturbed, time line of project, restoration of affected areas, and answer all questions of concern by the customer. Following completion of the project, the affected customers will be invited to provide feedback, via a phone survey, written survey, or web site, on their experience with the county crews or contractors who worked on the project. A metric will measure the percentage of responses that answered 'excellent or good' and will therefore measure the customer's satisfaction with the finished drainage project. All responses answering 'poor or needs improvement' will be addressed immediately and timely corrections will be made to address the customer's concerns. These responses will be calculated in the metric to indicate where improvements in workmanship are required. The metric goal for responses answering 'good' or excellent is 80%.

Desired Results: A comprehensive customer satisfaction program can lead to improvements in efficiency and effectiveness, as well as increase citizens' trust in the Division. The customer satisfaction survey will help the division better understand its' customers needs. In addition, a customer survey program can provide specific, actionable data to guide service improvement efforts. Furthermore, suggestions from customers also introduce fresh ideas to the Division's processes.

Quantitative Results: When a customer receives excellent or good customer service during the project, there will be no follow-up trips to correct inferior workmanship, thereby saving the Division operating costs in fuel and improving the productivity of the maintenance crews. Annual savings to the Division in fuel and lost productivity is estimated to be \$40,000.00.

Community Results: The community will perceive a reaction that they are being listened to and appreciated. They will also appreciate why they are paying their stormwater fee.

Division Results: Customer satisfaction is a priority for the Stormwater Division. Since implementing this program, the Stormwater Division has achieved a 'good' and 'excellent' rating matrix of 95.8%.