

Customer Service Motion Survey

Report No. 95-08 -- Report Summary

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Council passed Motion No. 8740 in August 1992, requesting King County departments to establish customer service components in their operations. The Council affirmed in its Motion that confidence of the public, who support County operations with their tax dollars and user charges, is partially dependent on prompt and courteous service. Thus, the Motion urges County agencies to implement operational measures to improve their interaction and response to customer needs.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of implementation of Motion No. 8740, commonly known as the Customer Service Motion, in the operations of County departments, divisions, and sections or units which have direct dealings with the general public.

The study was limited to sending questionnaire survey forms to County agencies that were identified as providing service to or having direct dealings with the general public, and reviewing and tabulating the survey responses. Audit staff also reviewed records provided by agencies to support their responses to the questionnaire.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

The results of the survey indicated that responding agencies had significantly implemented in their operations five of the eight (or 63%) service components identified in Council Motion No. 8740. County agencies, however, still need to improve their implementation of these other service components: maintain master complaint log; post customer service and complaint procedures in an obvious location at their offices; and transmit to the Council copies of materials prepared in the implementation of the Customer Service Motion.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding III-1. County agencies generally had implemented some measures that the customer service motion required to improve their interaction with the general public and be more responsive to customers needs.

Agencies' responses indicated that some service components, as enumerated in the Customer Service Motion, were significantly implemented in their operations as of the third quarter of 1994. These were:

- Individuals were designated in their offices to oversee the customer service function.
- Training and seminars on customer service or dealing effectively with the public were provided to employees who regularly deal with the general public.
- Policies and procedures were developed on how to deal with the public and how questions and complaints are handled.
- Employees were encouraged to identify and help solve any barriers to good customer service.
- Recognized employees' excellence in providing customer service.

Finding III-2. County agencies providing services directly to the general public need to improve their compliance with the customer service motion.

The survey responses indicated County agencies were deficient in implementing in their operations some service components of the Customer Service Motion. These were:

- Maintenance of a master complaint log. The complaint log is an office record on which to record the name of the customer-complainant, date when the complaint was received, nature of the complaint, the person taking the complaint, and the staff assigned to handle the complaint.
- Informational bulletins regarding the agency's customer service and complaint procedures are posted in an obvious location at their offices, or are accessible and available at the office reception counters.
- Copies of materials prepared in the implementation of the Customer Service Motion are transmitted to the Council on September 1st of each year.

The study recommended that the Executive departments, divisions, and sections or units which are providing services directly to the public should fully implement the requirements of the Council Motion No. 8740. The County Executive should require and coordinate the transmittal to the Council copies of materials prepared by County agencies pursuant to the requirements of Council Motion No. 8740 by September 1st of each year.

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