

Customer Service

NOAA's Strategic Plan calls for a citizen-centered, performance driven organization. NOAA's new Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) requires all programs to be customer driven, and to have measurable outcomes.

In FY 04, OCWWS plans to foster a culture of active customer involvement through the following activities:

- ✓ Developing a customer service plan
- ✓ Listening to NWS partners
- ✓ Managing customer relations
- ✓ Managing service change
- ✓ Notify customers of service change
- ✓ Gaging customer satisfaction

Vision

Satisfied customers through quality service leadership.

Mission

To lead the NWS effort to sustain and enhance climate, water, and weather services; to establish NWS operational requirements; to evaluate customer satisfaction; and to train the workforce.

Developing a Customer Service Plan

OCWWS contracted the Center for Organizational Excellence (COE) to develop a coherent, overarching customer service plan. Their 2004 analysis, which will cover all NWS customer activities, should be completed in the first quarter of FY 04.

Listening to NWS Partners

OCWWS participates in several partner forums, the Family of Services (FOS) meeting, and the annual NWS Partners meeting. From these meetings we've learned our partners want more frequent communication, and more involvement in planning future NWS products and services. We value this feedback. In response, OCWWS is attempting to increase ongoing dialogue, conducting two NWS Partner meetings annually, and initiating conference calls with partners.

Managing Customer Relations

In the past, there was no management of NWS responses to customer requests. This caused customer complaints, inconsistent message delivery, and an inability to get questions to the appropriate authority.

In 2003, OCWWS Director and Chief Information Officer (CIO) invested in Customer Relations Management (CRM) software for directing requests to appropriate authorities and for tracking responses. OCWWS is now piloting this software. If feedback is positive, the CRM software use will be expanded.

Managing Service Change

We will manage service change to ensure services meet customer needs of the private hydrometeorological community, and inform the community of our plans in advance. In 2004, policies and instructions for a new requirements process will be issued and a revised National Weather Service Instruction (NWSI) 10-102 for new experimental products will be published.

Notifying Customers of Service Changes

Customers need considerable advance knowledge of service changes so they can develop their software properly.

A draft of NWS Policy Directive (NWS PD) 10-1805, Service Change Notification, was sent to 300 customers in April, 2003. The Commercial Weather Services Association (CWSA) requested greater advance notification. This directive has since been revised and circulated again for NWS concurrence.

“The NSIP is a good step toward making the NWS a more transparent and understandable organization. By condensing all of the NWS programs down into a series of understandable initiatives, NWS partners can make firm decisions about their own next steps.”

Jim Block
*Chief Meteorological Officer,
Meteorlogix*

Gauging Customer Satisfaction

OCWWS contracted with the Federal Consulting Group to conduct surveys of prominent customer groups. Each survey results in a Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) comparing results with other government agencies. Survey results can provide insight into how to improve customer satisfaction. The surveys collected information on the level

of customer satisfaction with current NWS products and services. It is the first step in establishing a continual customer feedback process. Surveys were completed for emergency managers, the media, and the aviation communities. In addition, a CSI survey for marine services was issued in September. The results of this last survey will be available in the first quarter of FY 04.

Emergency Managers

The NWS score (80) was considerably higher than the Federal agency average (70). While 77 percent of the respondents did not use automated techniques to process NWS information, many wanted graphical information, including Geographic Information System (GIS) based displays. Almost 90 percent of the respondents identified themselves as having responsibilities for counties or cities, so it is likely the lack of automation is due to budget limitations. A web-based dissemination process would address this finding.

Media

The NWS score (76) was higher than the Federal agency average (70). Timely, graphical information was of considerable interest to this audience. Use of hydrologic information was limited, but graphical Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (AHPS) products should address this concern. For more information on AHPS, see the Hydrology Services section of this publication.

Aviation

CSI scores for Pilots and Dispatchers (77) were higher than the Federal agency average (70). Components receiving the highest scores were Customer Support, Product Delivery,

and Information Utility. Accuracy was scored lower, but with a relatively high impact, identifying areas where small improvements could result in greater customer satisfaction.

Next Steps

- ✓ Individual comments from the surveys will be further analyzed and summarized.
- ✓ Follow up at appropriate intervals by re-surveying, to ascertain changes in customer satisfaction with product and service changes. Regular customer satisfaction surveys can serve as a valuable adjunct to traditional performance measures (such as warning lead time and probability of detection). Indeed, the surveys may provide additional insights on how the NWS works together to deliver services.
- ✓ Use results of customer satisfaction surveys to support budget requests for service improvements.
- ✓ Four additional surveys will be administered in FY 04. Topics may include a general public survey or surveys on users of climate, digital observations, or hydrological services.

Milestones by Quarter

1st Quarter

- Delivered Customer Service Plan by COE. (Milestone met, 1st quarter)
- Released Results of Marine CSI survey. (Milestone met, 1st quarter)

2nd Quarter

- Finalized plans for for FY '04 CSI surveys. (Milestone met, 2nd quarter)
- Conducted Partners Workshop at American Meteorological Society (AMS) annual meeting. (Milestone met, 2nd quarter)

3rd Quarter

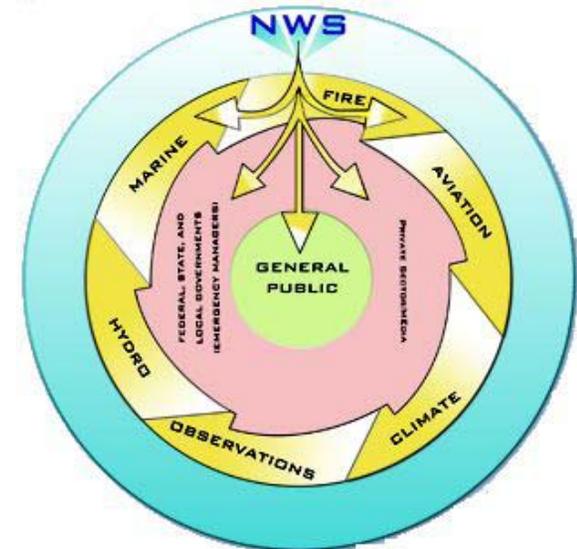
- Hold holds Partners Workshop in Washington, D.C. (Milestone met, 3rd quarter)

4th Quarter

- Release CSI survey for general public.
- Adoption of Customer Service Plan by NWS
- Released Hydrology or digital CSI Surveys to target audience.

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NWS Partner and Customer Model