

April 10, 2000

MICHELE DENNY  
MANAGER, MARKETING TECHNOLOGY  
AND CHANNEL MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Corporate Call Management Program –  
Customer Satisfaction  
(Report Number DA-MA-00-001)

This report presents the results of our review of the Corporate Call Management Program performance (Project Number 99PA017DA000). This is the second of two reports issued on the Corporate Call Management Program.<sup>1</sup> The objective of our review was to determine if the Corporate Call Management Program has improved customer satisfaction.

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**Results in Brief**

We could not determine if the Corporate Call Management Program improved customer satisfaction because data was not available to compare fiscal year (FY) 1999 performance with previous years. Customer satisfaction data collected in FY 1999 was not comparable to previous years because the methodology used to measure customer satisfaction changed and the Postal Service's "Management Challenge" budget reduction initiative delayed customer surveys for part of the year. In addition, a baseline identifying the level of customer satisfaction with information received over the telephone had not been identified prior to establishing the Corporate Call Management Program.

At the time of our review, the program office was reassessing survey methodology and was preparing a new contract proposal to measure customer satisfaction and the quality of service at the call centers. Consequently, it may

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<sup>1</sup> Corporate Call Management (Report Number DA-AR-99-003), dated September 29, 1999.

not be practical to measure improvements in customer satisfaction until the program office collects a full year of survey data using a consistent format and methodology.

The Postal Service's "Management Challenge" initiative slowed the deployment schedule for the Corporate Call Management Program, significantly reducing the program's call volume and the number of post offices serviced. Management also eliminated customer satisfaction surveys for three accounting periods starting in March 1999 as part of the "Management Challenge" reductions. Computer-assisted telephone surveys were not conducted between March 27, 1999, and June 18, 1999, because the "Management Challenge" initiative reduced the Corporate Call Management Program's operational budget.

We offered management one suggestion to establish baseline performance metrics for measuring customer satisfaction. Management agreed with our suggestion and the actions taken and planned should correct the issue identified in this report.

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## Background

The primary goal of the Corporate Call Management Program is to improve the telephone experience for customers requesting information from their local post offices over the telephone. The program office uses event-based surveys and computer-assisted telephone surveys to measure customer satisfaction. The Customer Satisfaction Measurement, Consumer Affairs Office, administers the surveys.

Computer-assisted telephone customer satisfaction surveys with operator introduction are designed to measure the overall quality of service delivery. The computer-assisted telephone survey is a partially automated interviewing system that is designed to measure the customer's perception of the call experience, ease of use, and specific elements of service through the call center.

Event-based surveys evaluate the customer's experience and perception of using the call center and whether they received fulfillment at the local level for the service

requested. Surveys measure the customer's satisfaction with call experience for three types of calls; requests to hold mail, requests for redelivery, and service issues.

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**Objective, Scope, and Methodology**

This report is the second of two reports issued on the Corporate Call Management Program. The overall objective of this phase of our review was to determine whether the Corporate Call Management Program improved customer satisfaction.

In completing our review, we analyzed records, notes, surveys, reports, documents, and all material necessary to evaluate the Corporate Call Management Program. We interviewed Postal Service and contractor officials at the Postal Service Headquarters. We discussed our conclusions and observations with appropriate management officials and included their comments, where appropriate.

The review was conducted from May 1999 through April 2000, in accordance with the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, Quality Standards for Inspections.

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**Customer Satisfaction Surveys**

Customer satisfaction data was not comparable to previous periods because the format and methodology for collecting the data changed several times.

- In FY 1999 the computer-assisted telephone customer satisfaction survey was redesigned between December 5, 1998, and January 29, 1999.
- Between January 2, 1999, and January 29, 1999, no surveys were done because the program office was changing contractors.
- As part of the redesign, contractors at the national service centers are now required to call the telephone number of the individual that called the center and attempt to interview them. Prior to the redesign, customer service agents handling the call solicited customers to participate in the surveys.
- Between December 5, 1998, and January 1, 1999, customer satisfaction surveys were changed to allow computer generated automated call backs to phone

numbers of customers that had called the program requesting service. This procedure was changed between January 30, 1999, and February 26, 1999, because there was no assurance that the respondent answering the telephone was the individual that had placed the call. This change required an independent contractor at the national service center to ask respondents a series of questions to determine their reason for calling. The interviewer attempts to recruit the respondent to complete the interactive voice response portion of the survey. The interactive voice response portion of the survey asks six questions that measure the customer's satisfaction with specific elements of the service delivered through the call center.

Event-based surveys that were used in 1999 measured customer's satisfaction for three types of calls; requests to hold mail, requests for redelivery, and service issues. However, 90 percent of the calls received were for other purposes and were not included in the event-based surveys. These calls include requests for information for the package tracking system, change of address, ZIP Codes, rates, stamps by phone, hours, and locations. At the time of our review, the program office was reassessing both the computer-assisted telephone and the event-based surveys, and was preparing a new contract proposal for customer satisfaction surveys.

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**Management  
Challenge**

Telephone surveys were not conducted between March 27, 1999, and June 18, 1999, because the operational budget for the program was reduced in response to the Postal Service's "Management Challenge." In March 1999 the program office submitted justifications for the continuation of current contracts to the Consulting Services Review Committee, but computer-assisted telephone surveys were not funded or performed while approval from the Consulting Services Review Committee was obtained.

The "Management Challenge" initiative also slowed the Corporate Call Management Program's deployment schedule. As a result, the number of centers included in the customer satisfaction surveys changed several times during the fiscal year. Between September 12, 1998, and December 4, 1998, computer-assisted telephone surveys

only included calls to the Denver National Service Center. Beginning on December 5, 1998, telephone surveys included calls to the learning centers in Phoenix, Arizona; Tampa, Florida; and the seasonal site in Van Nuys, California. However, the learning centers were scheduled to be closed during the course of our review and the seasonal site at Van Nuys, California, only handled calls concerning ZIP Code information during Christmas and other peak seasons. As a result, we did not include these facilities in our assessment. Call volume from the Kansas City National Service Center was not added to the computer-assisted telephone survey until January 1999. The program's original implementation plan proposed building the program's entire infrastructure by the end of FY 1998. Six months after full implementation, all post offices serviced by the Corporate Call Management Program were to have been included in the network. However, the current implementation plans call for full implementation by FY 2003.

In addition, a baseline identifying the level of customer satisfaction with information received over the telephone had not been identified prior to establishing the program. The Decision Analysis Report for the deployment of Corporate Call Management Program said there was no baseline measure, which documents customer satisfaction associated with telephone contact with the Postal Service. Customer Satisfaction Measurement, Consumer Affairs conducted some general surveys that included few questions that related to customer satisfaction prior to the Corporate Call Management Program. However, survey questions focused on the customer's perception of calling the Postal Service at the local level not customer satisfaction with the call centers.

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**Suggestion**

The manager, Marketing Technology and Channel Management should establish baseline performance metrics for measuring customer satisfaction and use surveys to collect consistent performance data for assessing customer satisfaction.

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**Management's  
Comments**

Management agreed with the suggestion and stated that a one-year baseline was established for the Event Based Survey during the audit. However, management pointed out that the Office of Inspector General had not recognized that a one-year baseline was established for the Event Based Survey during the course of the audit. In addition, management stated that the one-year baseline for a computer assisted telephone survey will be established in a few months (July 2000).

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**Evaluation of  
Management's  
Comments**

Management's actions taken and planned are responsive to our suggestion.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff during the review. If you have any questions, please contact Tracy A. LaPoint, director, Developmental, or me at (703) 248-2300.

Robert L. Emmons  
Acting Assistant Inspector General  
for Performance

cc: Larry Van Ness  
John R. Gunnels

## APPENDIX. MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

Manager, Marketing Technology and Channel Management



March 24, 2000

RICHARD F. CHAMBERS

SUBJECT: Response to IG Draft Report DA-MA-00 CCM Customer Satisfaction Measurement

This letter responds to the February 25 draft report submitted to me concerning the customer satisfaction metrics within the Corporate Call Management (CCM) program.

I agree with your suggestion to establish baseline performance metrics for measuring customer satisfaction and to use survey instruments as a tool for the collection of performance data. Your suggestion seems to specifically target two survey instruments used by CCM each accounting period to measure customer satisfaction. These surveys are the Computer Assisted Telephone Survey (CATS) and the Event Based Survey.

Your draft report fails to recognize that a one-year baseline was established for the Event Based Survey during the course of the audit and that the CATS will have its one-year baseline established in a few months (AP11 FY00). The recommendation seems to paint a distorted picture of our progress by failing to recognize the majority of work suggested is already completed.

The following information is provided on both survey efforts to clarify both the intent of the instrument and the anticipated impact within a dynamic project like the call center.

### COMPUTER ASSISTED TELEPHONE SURVEY

The automated CATS is designed to collect customer satisfaction data on agent interaction and the overall delivery of the service at the USPS call centers. Respondents are recruited by telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewers and then are sent to the Interactive Voice Response part of the survey. It is important to note that the interviewers are employed by Gallup, the vendor currently responsible for conducting the CATS, and are in no way associated with the staffing vendors responsible for answering customer inquiries. By the close of AP11 of FY2000, the CCM initiative will have a one-year baseline of CATS customer satisfaction data.

The CATS results in two satisfaction measurements, one being the customer satisfaction index and the other being the customer satisfaction score. Throughout the life of the CCM initiative, it may be necessary for the program office to modify the questions that provide the customer satisfaction index to meet the ever-changing dynamics of the call center environment. We will continue to maintain the exact methodology for extrapolating the customer satisfaction score, so that we will continue to have a customer satisfaction baseline for CCM.

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**EVENT BASED SURVEY**

The purpose of the CCM Event Based Survey is the assessment of the customer experiences and perceptions of their interactions with the call centers. By focusing on the flows of transaction events and by collecting information about the nature and quality of those transactions soon after occurrence, this study evaluates the customer perception of (1) the overall process of calling the call center, and (2) receiving service fulfillment. The CCM initiative obtained a one-year baseline of Event Based customer satisfaction data by AP10 of FY99.

As with the CATS, there may be a need to change some of the questions within the Event Based Survey due to the ever-changing dynamics of the call center environment. We will continue to maintain the exact methodology for extrapolating satisfaction measurements with the call center process and the fulfillment process within the Event Based Survey.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

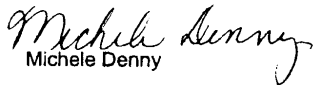
CCM has reviewed the OIG audit for commercially sensitive information that could potentially harm the United States Postal Service. It was determined that there is a significant amount of information contained in the report that could be commercially harmful for USPS.

CCM recommends that only the following areas of the report be shared with the FOIA requestor. These areas are listed below.

The primary goal of the CCM program is to improve the telephone experience for customers requesting information from their local post offices over the telephone. The program office uses event-based surveys and computer-assisted telephone surveys to measure customer satisfaction.

The manager, Marketing Technology and Channel Management, should establish baseline performance metrics for measuring customer satisfaction and use surveys to collect consistent performance data for assessing customer satisfaction.

Should you have any questions regarding the information contained within this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Larry Van Ness, Manager, Marketing Infrastructure at (703) 248-3434.

  
Michele Denny



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**Major Contributors to  
This Report**

