

Customer Survey Integrity

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 25-129-R26 | September 15, 2026



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Highlights

Background

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act requires the U.S. Postal Service to submit annual customer satisfaction reports to the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC). To support this requirement, Postal Service personnel document and resolve customer service requests in the Customer 360 (C360) system, which triggers a customer satisfaction survey. This survey feedback underpins the required reporting. In fiscal year (FY) 2025, the Postal Service sent 5.5 million survey invitations and received 1.2 million responses.

What We Did

Our objective was to evaluate the Postal Service's approach to ensuring the integrity of C360 customer satisfaction survey results. We evaluated controls implemented after the Postal Service reported a scheme of manipulated surveys to our office. We also analyzed 40.2 million customer service requests and responses from FYs 2023 to 2025.

What We Found

The Postal Service's early adjustments were sufficient to address one scheme of survey manipulation, but more widespread manipulation continued. The Postal Service reported a 5 percent increase in customer satisfaction from FYs 2023 to 2025, driven, in part, by nationwide manipulation of C360 scores through two schemes, impacting over 124,000 of 3.8 million surveys (3.3 percent). Specifically, we found employees created fake issues so when they received the customer satisfaction survey at their personal email addresses, they could complete the surveys with favorable results. Secondly, we found a coordinated "booster" effort in one area where employees improperly entered normal interactions (like daily mail delivery) as customer issues to generate surveys that were then manipulated to inflate local C360 scores. Although management was aware of these schemes, it did not address the underlying culture driving score manipulation. Some employees faced pressure, at times, from supervisors who benefited from the misconduct. Additionally, we found weaknesses in policy, deterrence measures, and processes that allowed this misconduct to persist. Without corrective action, the integrity of C360 reporting will remain compromised, potentially exposing the Postal Service to fines by the PRC from uncorrected, inaccurate reporting.

Recommendations and Management's Comments

We made six recommendations aimed at addressing excessive pressures and improving its system and processes, and the Postal Service disagreed with all six recommendations. We will pursue the disagreement through the audit resolution process. Management's comments and our evaluation are at the end of each finding and recommendation, and management's comments can be reviewed in their entirety in [Appendix B](#).

Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

September 15, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR: MARC MCCRERY
VICE PRESIDENT, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

MICHAEL ELSTON
VICE PRESIDENT, LABOR RELATIONS

ELVIN MERCADO
CHIEF RETAIL & DELIVERY OFFICER & EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Amanda H. Stafford", is positioned above the "FROM:" field.

FROM: Amanda Stafford
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Retail, Marketing, & Supply Management

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Customer Survey Integrity (Report Number 25-129-R26)

This report presents the results of our audit of Customer Survey Integrity.

All recommendations require U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General's (OIG) concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. All recommendations should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendations can be closed.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesy provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Heidi Einsweiler, Director, Sales, Marketing, & International, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit and Response Management

Results

Introduction/Objective

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of Customer Survey Integrity (Project Number 25-129). Our objective was to evaluate the Postal Service's approach to ensuring the integrity of C360 customer satisfaction survey results. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about this audit.

Background

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act¹ requires the Postal Service to submit annual customer satisfaction reporting to the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC). To support this requirement, Postal Service personnel document and resolve customer issues in the Customer 360 (C360) system, which can trigger a customer satisfaction survey after the issue is resolved in C360. This survey feedback underpins the mandated reporting.

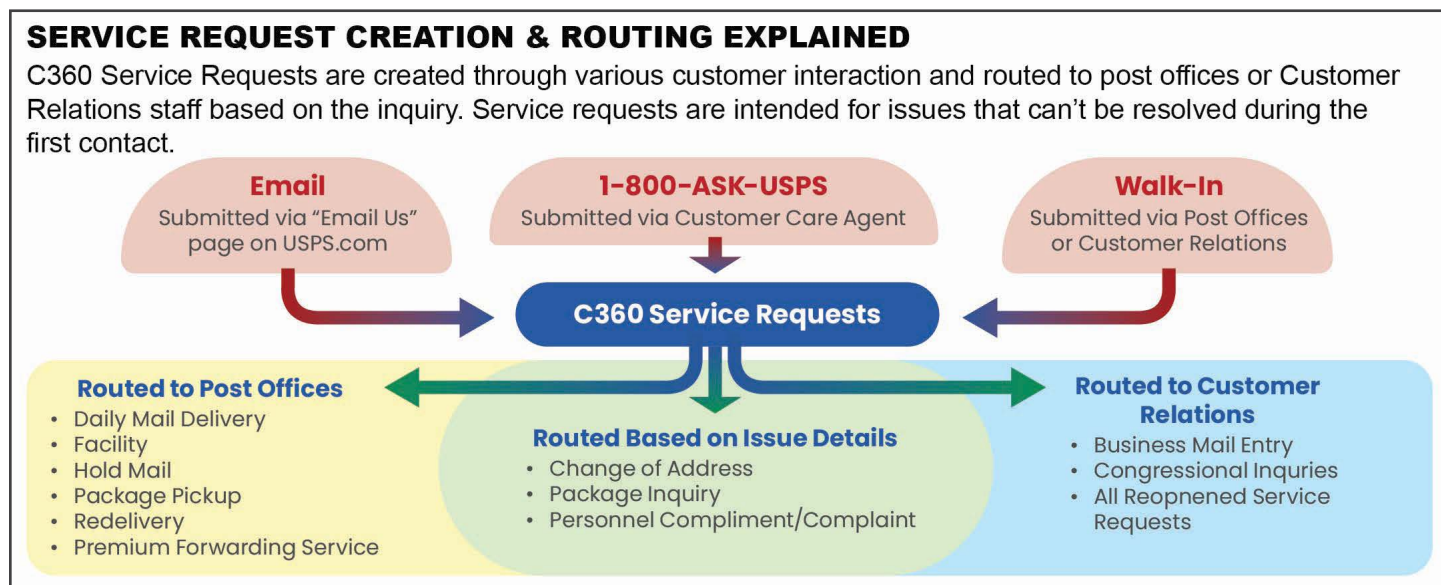
The Office of Customer Experience is responsible for overseeing the C360 system, establishing its

policies, helping resolve customer issues, and reporting customer satisfaction scores. During fiscal year (FY) 2025, the Postal Service recorded over 12.2 million C360 customer service requests, leading to 5.5 million invitations sent to customers to complete surveys so the Postal Service could learn more about the customer's experience, including their overall satisfaction. The Postal Service received roughly 1.2 million survey responses during FY 2025.

Customer Service Request Process

Customer issues or requests can be submitted via [usps.com](#), telephone, or in person at a postal facility and are logged as "Service Requests" in the C360 system. Telephone and [usps.com](#) requests are logged and routed to customer service employees at post offices within Retail & Delivery Operations or to Customer Relations staff within Customer Experience² for resolution, as shown in Figure 1. In-person (hereinafter "walk-in") requests should be logged only as a service request in C360 if they cannot be resolved during first contact.³

Figure 1. Customer Service Request Process



Source: OIG analysis of C360 Navigation Guide.

¹ 39 U.S.C. § 3652(a)(2)(B)(ii) requires annual reports to the commission, including a report for each market-dominant product providing: product information including volumes and "measures of the quality of service afforded by the Postal Service in connection with such product, including the degree of customer satisfaction with the service provided."

² The Office of Customer Relations, which reports to Customer Experience, advises Retail & Delivery Operations about the customer service request process and handles escalated service requests.

³ *Postal Operations Manual*, POM Issue 9, Chapter 16, Section 165.

When handling service requests, post offices or Customer Relations staff will follow up with customers usually by email, or phone if preferred. These employees can update customer profile details such as their email address and phone number at the request of the customer. After a service request is resolved, a satisfaction survey may be sent —mostly by email — or phone, if no email address is listed.⁴

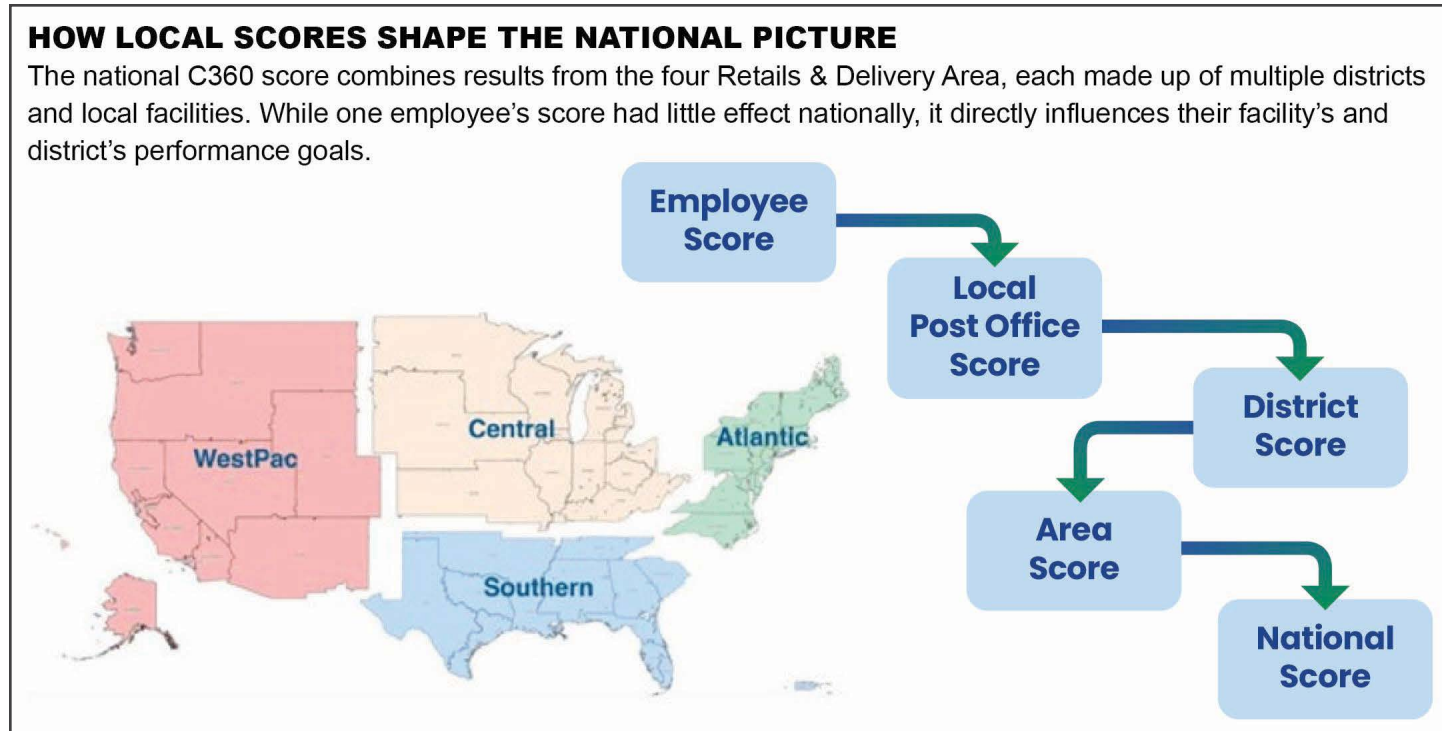
Customer Survey Feedback Measurement

Within Customer Experience, the Office of Customer Experience and Strategy (hereinafter “Customer Strategy”⁵) is responsible for overseeing the C360 system and establishing its policies. Customer Strategy gathers insights from the survey results to make strategic customer experience decisions. Through its C360 system, the Postal Service also establishes goals and metrics for successful resolution and overall customer satisfaction of service requests (hereinafter “C360 score”). In addition to required reporting to the PRC, these

outcomes inform performance evaluations and are one component of the National Performance Assessment (NPA).⁶ Collectively, NPA metrics are translated into scorecards⁷ used to monitor individual and nationwide performance and underpin the Pay-for-Performance Program to help determine executive and management annual salary increases and bonuses.

As employees address service requests and receive customer survey feedback scores from customers, each employee’s individual survey scores adds to the total score for their local post office. All the post office scores in a district are then combined to make one district score. Next, district scores are grouped together to form the score for one of the four Retail and Delivery areas as shown in Figure 2. Finally, the area scores are added up and comprise the Postal Service’s national C360 score, which is reported to the PRC.

Figure 2. Connecting Local Results to National Outcomes



Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service data.

⁴ The Postal Service does not send out multiple satisfaction surveys to a single customer within a 72-hour period.

⁵ Customer Strategy operates the C360 system and is responsible for back-end visibility and data analytics for the system.

⁶ The National Performance Assessment collects performance-related metrics — such as retail revenue, on-time Express Mail delivery, etc. — from source systems across the organization.

⁷ Scorecards provide enterprise-level performance scores, as well as a breakdown of performance by units. See Figure 2 for more details.

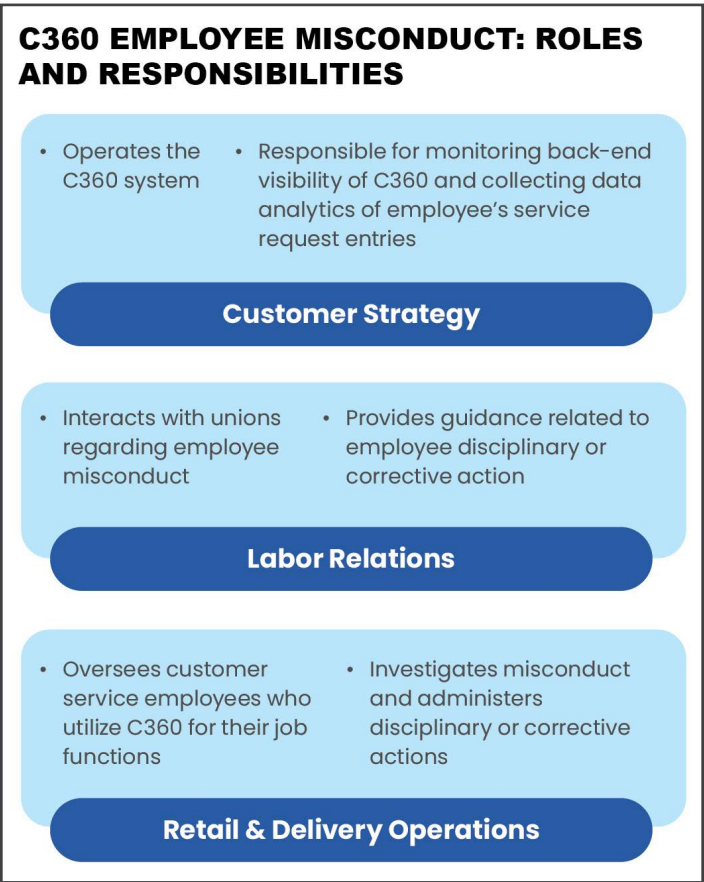
In addition to C360, the Postal Service tracks a variety of other customer experience surveys, such as surveys about delivery experience and overall satisfaction with the USPS.com website. Among the many surveys, the national C360 score has consistently been the lowest that the Postal Service tracks and reports annually. Between 2022 and 2025, satisfaction ratings for C360 ranged from 38.4 percent to 47.5 percent and only met targets in 2023.⁸ By comparison, other national customer experience scores ranged from 73 percent to 98 percent satisfaction in FY 2025.

To address these lower scores, in the FY 2024 Annual Compliance Report⁹ to the PRC, the Postal Service noted its plan to leverage best practices from high performing offices and share them across the country. In the 2025 USPS Annual Report to Congress, the Postal Service reiterated its dedication to high-quality service and outstanding customer experience, using these performance metrics to track progress.

Survey Falsification and Handling Misconduct

Beginning in 2024, the Postal Service identified misconduct related to employee efforts to manipulate C360 survey scores. Generally, three groups are responsible for handling C360 misconduct: Customer Strategy, Labor Relations, and Retail & Delivery Operations, as shown in Figure 3. Customer Strategy operates the C360 system, policies, and reporting. Labor Relations conducts fact-finding and advises about misconduct action. Retail & Delivery Operations provides oversight and corrective action for employees manipulating surveys in their reporting structure.

Figure 3. The Path of Shared Information



Source: USPS Blue Pages.

In FY 2024, Customer Relations identified an employee manipulating customer contact information for service requests to falsify surveys and boost satisfaction levels (see sidebar). Subsequently, Customer Strategy conducted an analysis to identify the extent of the issue by adding system tracking capabilities to begin monitoring this problem, revealing nationwide concerns with survey integrity.

8 Customer satisfaction target goals changed by year. For FYs 2022 and 2023, the target satisfaction goal was 40.05 percent; target goals were 46 percent in FY 2024 and 48.15 percent in FY 2025.
9 United States Postal Service FY 2024 Annual Compliance Report, Docket No. ACR2024, December 30, 2024.

After identifying nationwide activity, Customer Strategy added a red warning pop-up, alerting employees that changes to customer profiles should be made only at the request of customers. In addition, changing an email address in the system requires an employee to select a reason from a dropdown list to deter falsification. Also, Retail & Delivery Operations issued a Stand-Up Talk to inform employees about the importance of C360 integrity.¹⁰

In addition to those actions, Postal Service Ethics and Legal Compliance referred this issue to the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG). We initiated our audit in September 2025 to evaluate the Postal Service's approach to ensure the integrity of its C360 results, including whether Customer Strategy's response and adjustments following the initial identification of misconduct were sufficient to identify and deter future survey manipulation.

THE ORIGINAL SCHEME

A District level Manager in Customer Relations in District A was editing customer email addresses within C360 so the customer satisfaction survey would be sent to the manager rather than the customer. For example, this manager made nearly 800 edits to customer email addresses in eleven days.

Over the course of six months in FY 2024, the manager completed 2,589 positive C360 customer satisfaction surveys.

This manager resigned after being placed on administrative leave while the Postal Service conducted their investigation.

None of these surveys were removed from the Local, Area, or National score reports to the PRC, despite confirmation that the results were falsified.

¹⁰ On March 14, 2024, Customer Relations leadership met with staff to discuss the importance of C360 personal account data integrity as that data feeds the survey process. Separately, on May 15, 2024, Retail & Delivery Operations issued a Stand-Up talk requiring post office employee acknowledgment, stating the importance of integrity within the C360 system and that any breach of trust is unacceptable, and swift and corrective action would be taken — up to and including removal.

Finding #1: Customer Survey Manipulation Ongoing and Uncorrected

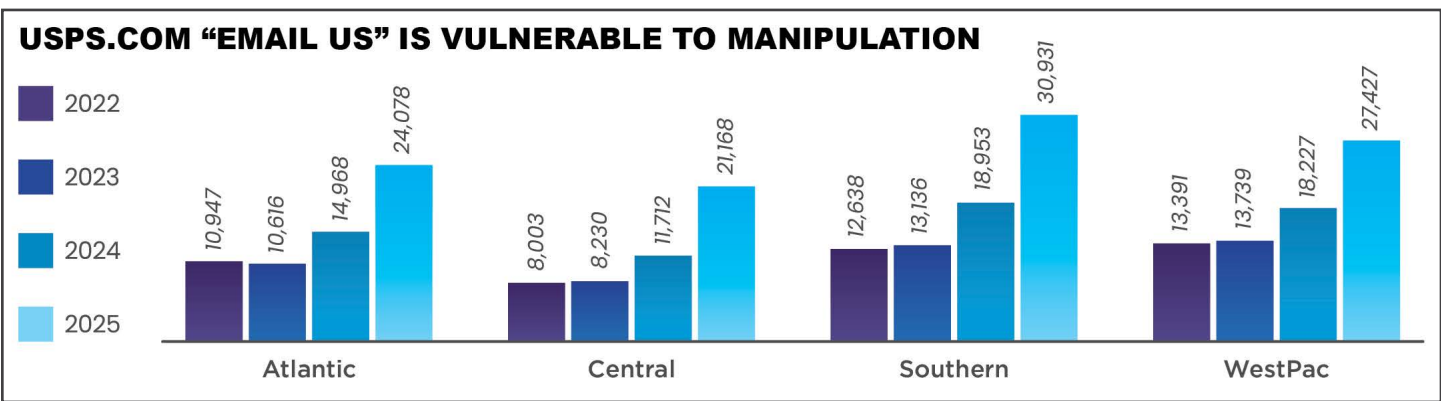
While Customer Experience’s response and system adjustments were sufficient to address an initial scheme, more widespread survey manipulation continued. The 5 percent increase in customer satisfaction that the Postal Service reported between FYs 2023 to 2025 was driven, in part, by nationwide manipulation of C360 survey scores, impacting over 124,000 (3.3 percent) out of 3.8 million surveys. Survey manipulation stemmed from two schemes – nationwide exploitation of the USPS “Email Us” option and a coordinated “booster” effort in one area. Together, these schemes helped raise local and district scores during this period, with one Post Office increasing its score by more than 21 percent through these schemes.

Nationwide Exploitation of USPS “Email Us” Option
We identified roughly 119,000 surveys linked to service requests with clear indicators of being falsified by employees posing as customers to increase C360 customer satisfaction scores through the “Email Us” option on usps.com.¹¹ By creating fake customers with real delivery addresses and tying their personal email addresses to the requests, Postal Service employees improperly submitted requests that were assigned to their specific postal facility in C360 to address, which then generated a customer survey to take

“The 5 percent increase in customer satisfaction that the Postal Service reported between FYs 2023 to 2025 was driven, in part, by nationwide manipulation of C360 survey scores, impacting over 124,000 (3.3 percent) out of 3.8 million surveys.”

themselves. We found this ongoing, targeted scheme exploited several categories of service request types. One category that was most significantly exploited originating from “Email Us” was facility service requests, which are intended to alert the Postal Service to issues with lobby appearance, wait times, mail collection, PO Boxes, retail transactions, passport services, forms/supplies, or troubles with equipment, among other issues. Facility service requests increased by 130 percent nationwide from FYs 2022 to 2025, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. FYs 2022 - 2025 Increase in “Email Us” Facility Service Requests



Source: OIG analysis of C360 data.

¹¹ We identified 2.2 million “Email Us” survey submissions from FY 2023 to FY 2025 and then applied factors established by the Postal Service, as well as the OIG, to determine a population of surveys that could be at risk. These factors included duration taken to complete the survey, reported service issue type, ratings of satisfied or highly satisfied. To narrow this population to surveys that were likely to be falsified, we identified high risk indicators and counted surveys with one or more indicators. High risk indicators included duplicate emails on multiple accounts, a minute or less to take the survey, recurring IP addresses, vulnerable service request types, repetitive comment usage, instances where the highest satisfaction rating was given without accompanying comments, and where the corresponding service request was resolved within a day.

Regional “Booster Campaign”

Second, we found that Postal Service employees in the WestPac Area participated in a regional “booster campaign” to increase local C360 survey scores by improperly submitting service requests that were resolved at first contact. From FY 2023 through FY 2025, employees manipulated C360 scores by creating nearly 22,000 “walk-in” and local phone service requests that did not require customer follow-up — generating about 5,200 unauthorized surveys. Employees were improperly entering resolved customer interactions —

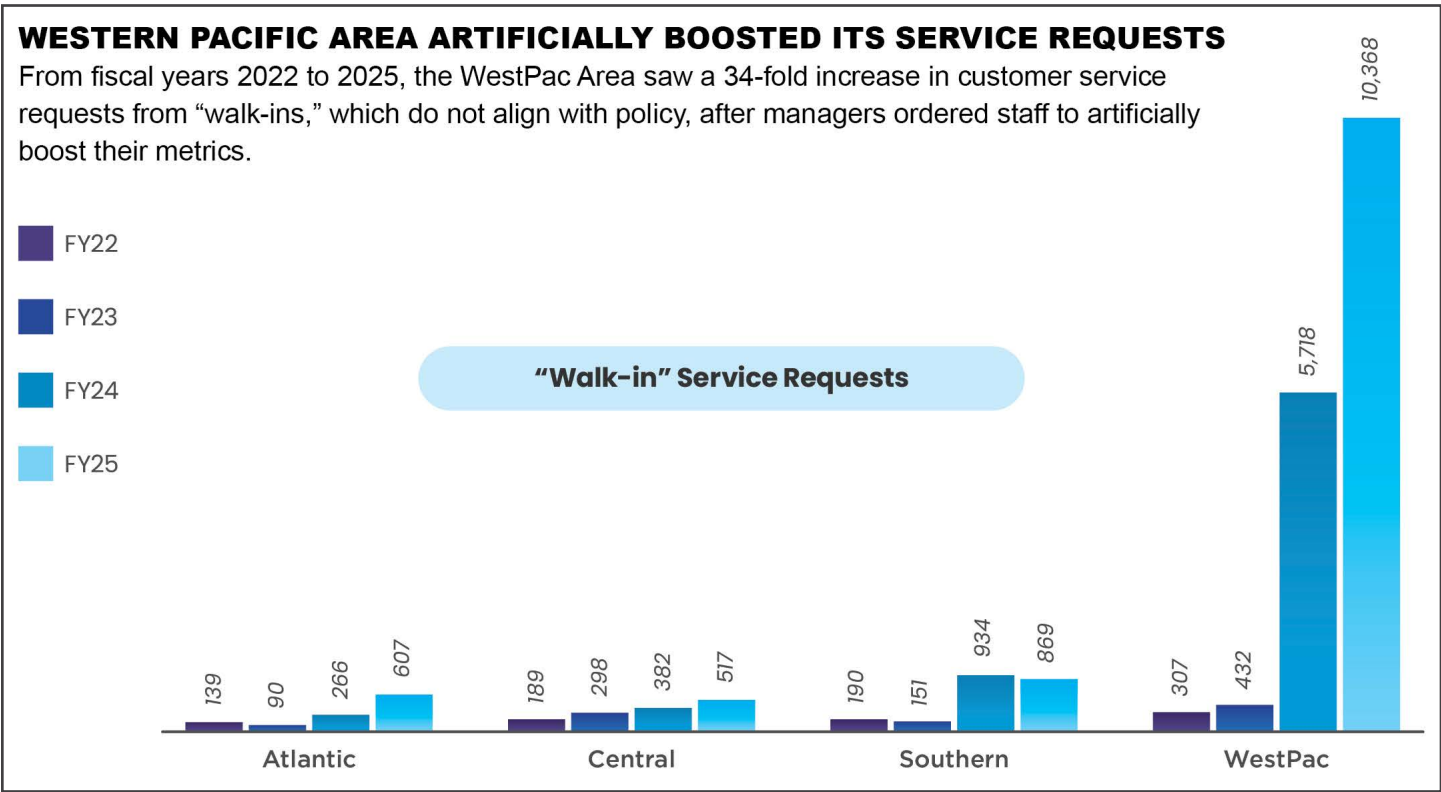
“During the “booster campaign,” we found that specifically, the number of “walk-in” service requests increased by about 3,200 percent from FY 2022 to FY 2025.”

such as simply retrieving a customer’s mail — as C360 service requests, even though no follow-up was needed and doing so violated policy.

Although the intent of the “booster campaign” was a way for smaller post offices to record more

customer interactions, employees focused primarily on adding positive customer interactions to “capture credit” and boost lagging scores. We identified two separate post offices in the same district that raised their scores by nearly 10 percent through this scheme alone. During the “booster campaign,” we found that specifically, the number of “walk-in” service requests increased by about 3,200 percent from FY 2022 to FY 2025, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. FYs 2022 to 2025 Changes to Walk-in Service Request by Area



Source: OIG analysis of C360 data.

After reporting our early findings to the Postal Service in February 2026, Customer Experience held internal discussions and briefings about discouraging this activity. Afterward, we identified that the number of high-risk walk-in requests dropped.

Culture of Pressuring Employees and Misconduct

We found that the C360 score manipulation resulted from a culture of pressure to meet performance targets and insufficient focus on holistically addressing misconduct.

Pressure to Boost C360 Scores

Excessive pressure to raise customer satisfaction scores created a culture that led to widespread manipulation. In the WestPac Area, we found that leadership set artificial, unrealistic targets, sent constant reminders, and tracked daily status of C360 results, creating an environment where altering surveys became routine. Particularly, while the national C360 satisfaction goal was 48.2 percent, WestPac Area leadership imposed a 65 percent target, pushing managers to generate “boosters” to inflate scores. One postmaster even persistently directed employees to generate 4-5 “boosters” per day (see sidebar) and local management monitored these closely to track the direct one-for-one gains. The Postal Service sets national goals, and

management should prevent areas and districts from implementing artificial, unrealistic targets.

Beyond WestPac, we found nationwide score manipulation and pressure that persisted because Customer Experience did not implement changes to make survey scores more reflective of

response quality — a step that would have disrupted managers from tracking one-for-one gains tied with falsified surveys. For example, surveys completed in under a minute without comments are weighted less than those with thoughtful responses and feedback. Although the Postal Service designed the NPA system to help monitor and improve performance, managers used it to directly link gains between surveys and scores, and pressure staff into manipulating scores to help achieve targets and earn certain levels of performance pay. While not every employee was involved in this activity, we identified at least 83 postmasters, managers, and supervisors who directly manipulated scores and, in some cases, also directed their employees to do the same. Through its own investigations, the Postal Service also found two managers and seven Customer Service supervisors who manipulated customer contact information to falsify surveys in the Southern, WestPac, and Atlantic Areas.

Customer Experience, working with its survey contractor, explored revising the C360 scoring system so that higher-quality responses — for example, surveys where customers spent more time or provided detailed comments — would have a greater influence on overall scores. The contractor

“We found that the C360 score manipulation resulted from a culture of pressure to meet performance targets and insufficient focus on holistically addressing misconduct.”

THE BOOSTER TRAINER & ENFORCER

In District B, a District level Manager in Customer Relations gave trainings “to boost your score.” One employee reported that a Postmaster sent “hundreds of emails” directing staff to complete multiple boosters daily, stressing that adding in-person boosters were not optional and that the district “must be in the 52-55 percent [C360 score] to be in the ...game.”

A subordinate said they completed the boosters to stop the Postmaster’s emails and believed the behavior was acceptable because it was encouraged by the district.

None of these surveys were removed from the Local, Area, or National score reports to the PRC. Neither the district-level manager nor the Postmaster have been investigated by Labor Relations, and both received performance bonuses for FY 2024.

also identified signs of manipulation, like surveys completed in unrealistically short timeframes. Using these quality indicators would make the results more representative and prevent management from tracking one-for-one gains from manipulated surveys. Customer Experience was still evaluating these options during our audit.

USPS Did Not Holistically Address Misconduct

Although the Postal Service was aware of multiple schemes throughout the country, management did not take holistic action to end the activity or address misconduct. Customer Experience did take action to deter an initial scheme of employees editing customer information, resulting in a decline in that activity, and developed a dashboard to monitor suspicious activity. However, nationwide manipulation continued throughout FY 2023 through FY 2025 in the form of “boosters” and Email Us exploitation because of Customer Experience’s oversight shortfalls and the need for an escalation process for C360 misconduct between the three primary groups responsible — Customer Experience, Labor Relations, and Retail & Delivery Operations.

Customer Experience’s Oversight Shortfalls

Two offices within Customer Experience did not effectively coordinate to drive appropriate business rules around C360 surveys. First, Customer Relations inaccurately advised Retail & Delivery Operations staff about the policy for “walk-in” and local phone service requests, which should only be logged as a service request in C360 if they cannot be resolved during first contact. Specifically, Customer Relations helped develop the “booster” campaign and provided training slides to some Retail & Delivery Operations staff for implementation. However, Customer Strategy jointly owns the related policy with Customer Experience and confirmed that “boosters” violated policy. Even when Customer Strategy was made aware of the ongoing “booster” campaign in November 2024, which it acknowledged was against the stated policy, it did not take actions to clarify the policy and work with its counterparts in Customer Relations to end the campaign until after we advised them of our findings in February 2026.

Second, while Customer Strategy took early steps to add system enhancements and deterrents related to the original scheme and a dashboard for monitoring, it did not develop additional deterrents despite identifying repeat offenders over the next two years. As the C360 system owner, Customer Strategy has the authority to establish deterrents, including policy clarification and system controls, to temporarily or permanently suspend access for these repeat offenders.

Holistic Escalation Process

Additionally, the Postal Service lacked a formal escalation process for documenting, escalating, and addressing misconduct between the three primary groups with shared responsibility for addressing the problem. As part of a formal escalation process, the Postal Service should:

- **Centrally Document Suspected Misconduct and Escalate When Necessary.** Customer Relations staff identified issues, including misconduct schemes and repeat offenders, and verbally communicated them to local Retail & Delivery Operations leadership, who did not consistently act. By centrally documenting repeat offenders, suspected misconduct schemes, and developing codified escalation procedures, all three groups would have a process to ensure misconduct allegations are taken seriously and resolved.
- **Establish Criteria to Referring Misconduct to Labor Relations Referrals and Recommendations.** There was no clear guideline for deciding when local management should investigate misconduct or refer the matter to Labor Relations, even when management could benefit from related bonuses. Additionally, there was no criteria for Labor Relations to offer corrective action recommendations. Also, local management did not follow up or apply corrective action consistently. For example, Labor Relations referred to local management multiple cases where individuals admitted to using their email addresses to receive and take surveys, but

management did not consistently implement corrective action despite the misconduct.

- **Report Investigations and Corrective Action to Customer Experience.** Labor Relations was not required to formally report investigative outcomes to Customer Experience. Local management also was not required to share its C360 misconduct determinations or corrective action. This lack of communication meant Customer Experience often had no awareness of confirmed misconduct. Going forward, Labor Relations and local management within Retail & Delivery Operations should report all C360 investigative results and corrective action determinations to Customer Experience.
- **Conduct Ongoing Impact Analyses to Remove Fraudulent Surveys.** Customer Experience conducted an initial “impact analysis” and determined the original scheme impacted local but not nationwide C360 scores. By November 2024, it was aware of additional schemes but did not receive investigative outcomes and corrective action. As a result, it could not confirm the extent of fraud and was unable to perform another impact analysis. As Customer Experience receives confirmation of additional C360 misconduct, it should conduct ongoing impact analyses to remove fraudulent surveys and assess how future manipulation affects C360 scores.

Ongoing performance pressure and unaddressed misconduct created an environment where score manipulation became routine, compromising customer data and the integrity of the C360 results. As a result, reported C360 scores are not fully reliable and may not reflect actual customer sentiment. For example, a manager in Customer Relations self-completed enough manipulated customer surveys to raise their district’s C360 score by over four percentage points — enough to push the district to

meet the FY 2024 performance goal through fraud.¹² Accordingly, we referred these issues to OIG’s Office of Investigations for additional review.

Inaccurate PRC Reporting

As a result of the inaction to address the ongoing score manipulation, the Postal Service’s C360 reporting to the PRC is not accurate. Customer Experience did not correct its C360 submission to the PRC in subsequent annual reports because investigative outcomes were not shared by local management. By developing a holistic escalation process (noted above), Customer Experience will be able to identify any needed changes to its C360 scores and determine if those changes warrant resubmission to the PRC. Customer Experience should begin taking steps to evaluate the full extent of “Email Us” and “Booster Campaign” manipulation, culminating with a revised impact analysis. This impact analysis should be used to submit revised scores to the PRC.

Customer Experience’s initial action was sufficient to address one scheme, but continuous monitoring and proactiveness will be necessary as new schemes are introduced and changed. Years of manipulation related to other schemes created a culture within the Postal Service that accepted, and at times promoted, fraudulent survey practices. Without stronger controls, C360 scores will continue to be vulnerable and may not reflect real customer satisfaction. This undermines management’s ability to distinguish legitimate best practices from fraudulent activity

“As a result of the inaction to address the ongoing score manipulation, the Postal Service’s C360 reporting to the PRC is not accurate.”

¹² The Postal Service’s bonuses are tied to national NPA scorecard results, with service requests and C360 contributing to multiple categories. Any effect on bonuses from FY 2023 to FY 2025 depends on the Postal Service’s determination of whether high-risk surveys were manipulated. One Postmaster explained that there are very few categories on the scorecard that are within employee control to impact positively and noted the C360 as one of those categories. During our audit, we found staff who likely engaged in misconduct known to the Postal Service and yet received bonuses or promotions, but we could not confirm whether those bonuses would have been awarded without the fraudulent surveys.

and to identify true service issues. If these issues persist, customers may lose confidence and reduce their use of Postal Service products. In addition, knowingly submitting falsified performance results creates statutory and ethical risks under the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, including possible fines or increased oversight from the PRC.

Recommendation #1:

We recommend the **Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President** issue guidance instructing Area Vice Presidents and District Management not to issue artificial, unrealistic performance goals.

Recommendation #2:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, evaluate its current Customer 360 scoring system and implement scoring system changes to address pressure to manipulate survey scores, including specifically evaluating fraud or quality indicators.

Recommendation #3:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, monitor booster activity during the upcoming year and take action to address if booster activity increases.

Recommendation #4:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, in coordination with the **Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President**, establish deterrents, including rules and system controls to temporarily or permanently suspend Customer 360 system access to address known, repeat offenders.

Recommendation #5:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, in coordination with the **Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President** and the **Vice President, Labor Relations**, develop a holistic escalation process

for documenting, escalating, and addressing suspected misconduct schemes, including:

- Centrally documenting and escalating suspected schemes and repeat offenders;
- Establishing criteria for when Customer Experience should refer potential Customer 360 misconduct involving multiple employees to Labor Relations to evaluate if a fact-finding is appropriate;
- Formally reporting misconduct findings for all Customer 360 allegations; and
- Conducting ongoing impact analyses to remove scores determined to be fraudulent.

Recommendation #6:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, examine and update their survey impact analysis to include all suspected fraudulent surveys and report updated Customer 360 scores for fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025 to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Postal Service Response

Management disagreed with the finding and recommendations 1 through 6.

Management stated that it supports continued efforts to strengthen controls and identify questionable activity. However, it believes the report omitted relevant context that may lead to incorrect conclusions, including corrective actions, ownership of the C360 policy, the timing of the booster campaign termination, C360 integrity training, and the timing of the development and test phases of its survey trend dashboard. Additionally, management stated that it notified OIG and requested assistance in March 2024, but OIG denied its request.

Management further stated that the 119,000 Email Us surveys labeled high-risk were not substantiated, inconsistently explained, and could not be replicated. It believes that OIG's methodology generated false positives;

overstated severity; and misrepresented the impact on customer sentiment, satisfaction scores, and personnel incentives. Management stated that the OIG denied its request for the data files identifying the high-risk surveys. It further disagreed that removing these surveys would significantly affect the NPA corporate scorecard and estimated that the C360 score would have increased by 4.15 percent from FY 2023 through FY 2025. Management disagrees that the rise in Facility Service Requests was tied to fraudulent activity and questioned whether OIG reviewed all relevant USPS-provided information.

Finally, management disagreed that it set artificial satisfaction goals that pressured employees, instead setting localized targets for locations already achieving satisfaction scores higher than NPA targets. It asserted that survey fraud is not ongoing or unaddressed, citing actions such as pattern-detection tools, leadership follow-up, corrective measures, C360 system controls, and stand-up talks reinforcing survey integrity.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated that the report does not show that area vice presidents or district leadership issued artificial performance goals. It believes the report focuses on isolated allegations and does not justify nationwide guidance.

Regarding recommendation 2, management disagreed but stated that it will continue working with the current vendor to evaluate existing detection tools and continue using its existing dashboard to identify questionable surveys and take action.

Regarding recommendation 3, management noted that booster activity was halted. However, management stated that it will continue monitoring in-person service requests for the next year and share relevant findings with area vice presidents and district management.

Regarding recommendation 4, management stated that the Postal Service already has policies

and procedures for local leadership to address employee misconduct with restrictions or suspensions of access to C360, and a separate disciplinary framework is not needed.

Regarding recommendation 5, management stated that headquarters sets policy, training, and guidance, while the responsibility for addressing individual misconduct is handled by local management. It further stated that centralized reporting is overly broad and should rely on existing processes. The Postal Service believes assigning responsibility to Labor Relations would be inconsistent with its role and does not support forming a separate investigative or reporting structure within Customer Experience that would duplicate existing Labor Relations and management processes.

Regarding recommendation 6, management stated that it cannot replicate OIG's count of high-risk surveys. Management said its dashboard identified 3,688 potentially fraudulent surveys in FY 2025 and agreed to remove fraudulent surveys from scoring, which would reduce its composite by 0.16 percentage points with no impact on the NPA Corporate Scorecard. For FY 2024, management agreed to remove 2,500 surveys (0.11 percentage points) from the original scheme of manipulating customer contact information but stated that revisiting FY 2023 and FY 2024 surveys would not provide timely feedback or materially change the C360 score reported to the PRC.

OIG Evaluation

We consider management's comments unresponsive to recommendations 1 through 6 and will pursue the disagreements through the audit resolution process.

Regarding the finding, the Postal Service disagreed with the OIG's methodology and could not replicate it, and stated the OIG denied it access to the data. However, the OIG used Postal Service data, and the audit team provided detailed descriptions of the filters it applied

to that data in writing, including in this report. Additionally, the Postal Service applied similar filters as the OIG's when conducting its own analysis of WestPac Area surveys during the first two quarters of FY 2026 to identify and remove surveys that it deemed likely fraudulent. That analysis identified 126 employees, 116 of which were flagged by the OIG for high-risk surveys during prior years. These results not only support the soundness of the OIG's methodology, but they also demonstrate that training and ad hoc efforts during that time were helpful — but insufficient — to curb a growing trend of manipulation. We acknowledge the Postal Service's recent methodology development and survey removal and support expanding it to all Areas on an ongoing basis to strengthen customer survey integrity.

The OIG strongly disagrees with the Postal Service's characterization that we denied assistance when the Postal Service referred a complaint to our Office of Investigations. Investigators reviewed the complaint and referred the administrative issues back to the Postal Service to take administrative action, while also referring the topic to the Office of Audit for an evaluation of any systemic weaknesses. We conducted this audit because of that referral, and as the number of employees involved in survey manipulation expanded, we referred these issues back to the Office of Investigations. This report provides our assistance to the Postal Service through recommendations that address the weaknesses we identified, in accordance with our policies and procedures.

Regarding recommendation 1, while localized targets can be appropriate, the OIG disagrees that the target WestPac established was "localized" or realistic, as it was applied broadly across all units in the area, which spans 13 states, and was 16.8 percent higher than the national target. Some units may perform above expectations, but OIG and Postal Service data identified WestPac as having a significant

concentration of manipulated surveys across its 13 districts.

Regarding recommendations 2 and 3, while management disagreed, it provided a plan directly responsive to the recommendations and did not provide target implementation dates. We will pursue the full plans and obtain implementation dates for these actions through the audit resolution process.

Regarding recommendation 4, while policies and procedures may exist to address C360 system misconduct, we maintain that Customer Experience — the C360 system owner — should also be empowered to act, as Postal Service staff repeatedly said that local management did not take timely or effective action, allowing misconduct to continue with no recourse.

Regarding recommendation 5, despite existing processes that management described, it did not effectively communicate whether issues were addressed or share outcomes related to C360 misconduct across departments. The OIG recommendation aims to augment existing processes by increasing accountability toward consistently addressing misconduct and enhancing communication about the outcomes to improve transparency.

Regarding recommendation 6, with respect to the burden of a time-intensive analysis, the Postal Service completed its FY 2026 WestPac Area analysis within weeks of receiving our results, demonstrating that timely evaluations are feasible. More broadly, our work represents the initial step in uncovering fraud — some of which the Postal Service has already acknowledged — and it is essential that the Postal Service perform a full review to determine the scale and impact of that fraud on its public reporting and performance bonuses at the unit, district, and area levels. The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act requires accurate public reporting to the PRC, and management has acknowledged the need to

amend its reporting for fraud that it previously identified but continued to report inaccurately. The OIG maintains that to fully comply and meet its legal obligations, the Postal Service must comprehensively evaluate and update C360 scores across all fiscal years, enabling management to identify genuine service issues that support continued customer use of Postal Service products.

Looking Forward

Goal setting plays a vital role in strengthening organizational health and supporting the Postal Service's long-term success. Leadership can continue to advance the organization's mission by developing goals that reflect its core purpose, including those focused on customer service. Aligning reward-based performance measures with meaningful outcomes can motivate employees to pursue genuine and lasting customer service improvements. Additionally, establishing customer-centric goals that prioritize effective resolution of service issues and pain points can enhance overall customer satisfaction and improve the customer experience.

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Appendix A: Additional Information

Scope and Methodology

Our audit scope focused on the integrity of C360 survey results for FY 2022 through FY 2025. Our scope is limited to identifying the extent of customer survey manipulation, as well as actions that management has taken to address the misconduct that was perpetuated within C360. To accomplish our objective, we:

- Obtained and reviewed documentation on Postal Service policies, procedures, and training related to the C360 system and C360 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.
- Reviewed corrective action that was given following the investigation.
- Reviewed C360 edits by Postal Service employees and data related to C360 customer surveys extracted by the audit team.
- Interviewed Postal Service officials responsible for the C360 system, the Customer Satisfaction survey collection system, and corrective action.
- Reviewed and analyzed applicable laws and regulations.
- Reviewed past USPS OIG audit work.
- Analyzed 47.5 million service requests and 5.3 million survey responses to determine the number of service requests and subsequent surveys that did not follow policy or warrant further investigation.

We conducted this performance audit from September 2025 through September 2026 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls as we considered necessary under the circumstances. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit

objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on August 11, 2026, and included its comments where appropriate.

In planning and conducting the audit, we obtained an understanding of Customer Survey control structure to help determine the nature, timing, and extent of our audit procedures. We reviewed the management controls for overseeing the program and mitigating associated risks. Additionally, we assessed the internal control components and underlying principles, and we determined that the following five components were significant to our audit objective: Control Environment, Risk Assessment, Control Activities, Information and Communication, and Monitoring.

We developed audit work to ensure that we assessed these controls. Based on the work performed, we identified internal control deficiencies related to Control Environments, Control Activities, Information and Communication, and Monitoring that were significant within the context of our objectives. Our recommendations, if implemented, should correct the weaknesses we identified.

We assessed the reliability of customer survey data by consulting with knowledgeable Postal Service personnel and conducting a variety of tests to ensure data quality. These included comparing email edit activities to corresponding C360 customer accounts and service requests, evaluating national and regional C360 service request data, and analyzing survey data relationships between data elements for patterns of falsification. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Prior Audit Coverage

Report Title	Objective	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact
Postal Service Customer Experience Delivery Surveys	Our objective was to evaluate the Delivery Survey process for residential customers and small and medium businesses and to identify opportunities for improvement.	23-033-R23	September 27, 2023	\$74,933
Passport Application Acceptance Operations	Our objective was to assess the U.S. Postal Service's passport application acceptance operations and identify opportunities for improvement.	21-056-R21	August 9, 2021	\$0
U.S. Postal Service Customer Complaint Process	To review how USPS handles residential customer complaints, including cases where customers may be experiencing repeated service issues.	GAO-21-465	May 25, 2021	N/A

Appendix B: Management's Comments



September 1, 2026

LAURA LOZON
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: *Customer Survey Integrity (25-129 Draft)*

Thank you for providing the United States Postal Service (Postal Service) with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the draft audit report, *Customer Survey Integrity, Project 25-129*.

Management appreciates the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) review of the Customer 360 (C360) survey process including its review of certain C360 service request (SR) elements. Management strongly disagrees with the single finding in the OIG's report and all related recommendations as currently written. However, Management fully supports continued efforts to examine opportunities to strengthen controls and identify questionable survey activity.

Despite Management's transparency during the audit process from September 2025 through July 2026, and the provision of additional data to the OIG related to actions taken by the Postal Service to date, the OIG omitted the following relevant facts from their report:

- The Postal Service originally notified the OIG in March 2024 about employees changing email addresses within a complaint record and requested assistance from the OIG, but the request was denied.
- While the report mentions some corrective action being taken after the 2024 investigations, it fails to notate the Postal Service, from February 2025 to date, continued to research questionable patterns and these matters have been presented to Area/District leadership and resulted in corrective actions being administered.
- The OIG report references several times that Customer Experience & Strategy owns C360 policy, which is incorrect. While Customer Experience and Strategy manages the technology platform, the policies are determined by the various stakeholder groups and system access is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor.
- Customer Experience & Strategy identified high volumes of in-person created service requests prior to the OIG audit and circulated trend reports to Customer Relations for further follow-up. This identification later resulted in the review and termination of the booster campaign in WestPac. The OIG report suggests the Postal Service took no action on in-person related service requests until the OIG shared their findings.

- Between August 2025 and November 2025, in-person training was administered to approximately 20,000 employees. Part of the instructor-led training topics covered the need to maintain integrity within the C360 application which helps to ensure the integrity of the survey process.
- The report mentions Management developed an internal survey trend dashboard but fails to mention it was developed and tested between February 2025 and February 2026 to ensure it was not identifying false positive results. This dashboard collates information from C360 and the surveys to identify questionable patterns. For increased transparency, the Postal Service shared access to this dashboard with the OIG in February 2026.

Without this material information, the OIG's report could lead readers to incorrect conclusions surrounding the Postal Service's handling of suspicious C360 surveys, the impact of such surveys on overall customer satisfaction, and that prior to the audit, the OIG had no knowledge or information about these issues.

The 119,000 Email Us surveys deemed high risk by the OIG stands as a key point within the report and serves as the basis for the OIG's singular finding and related recommendations. The OIG, however, failed to substantiate the accuracy of this data. Throughout the pre-exit process, the Postal Service requested several times that the OIG provide data and/or information sufficient for the Postal Service to validate this volume of identified surveys. OIG, then, provided inconsistent responses regarding the criteria and thresholds used to identify the 119,000 Email Us surveys as high risk between FY 2023 and FY 2025. To date, the Postal Service has been unable to replicate the OIG's findings and disagrees with the filtering protocols utilized by the OIG, among other things. The OIG filtered data in 2 ways. The first was to identify all surveys associated with SRs with an Email Us Origin, had a top two box score, were taken in under two minutes and were for SR types that routed to either local post offices or consumer affairs offices. From this universe of surveys, the OIG then applied a single additional filter to identify a survey as high-risk. The additional filters looked at individual criteria such as surveys taken in under one minute, surveys with no verbatim comments, surveys with repetitive verbatim comments, and surveys taken from the same email address two or more times across three years. Management disagrees that applying a single additional filter qualifies a survey as high risk; for example, a favorable survey with no verbatim comment, taken in a short time resulting from an SR created on the website does not necessarily mean that the survey is high-risk. Therefore, OIG's methodology is likely to have identified a high volume of false positive results. Furthermore, the OIG denied Management's request for the data files used by the OIG to identify the high-risk surveys. This appears contrary to the recommendations in the report which request the Postal Service to identify high risk surveys and, if confirmed fraudulent, remove them from the CX results in the Postal Service's reports to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

While Management has never disputed that questionable surveys exist, as evidenced by the Postal Service's correspondence with the OIG in March 2024 about these matters, Management disagrees that the severity of this issue reaches the volumes reported by the OIG. Management continues to disagree with the OIG's conclusion that the possible

presence of questionable surveys materially impacts overall customer sentiment, that gains seen across customer satisfaction from FY 2023 through FY 2025 are due to questionable surveys, and that Postal Service personnel benefited monetarily from these surveys.

In its report, the OIG failed to provide calculations to demonstrate what the C360 Survey OSAT score would have been if all the surveys that the OIG flagged as high risk were confirmed as fraudulent and removed from the final tabulation. The Postal Service has completed this analysis to illustrate the impacts using OIG's worst-case scenario:

- FY 2023 – removing 24,500 surveys would have changed the C360 Survey OSAT score from 42.21 percent to 41.14 percent.
 - As shared with the OIG, this decrease in C360 Survey OSAT score would have resulted in no change to the National Performance Assessment (NPA) corporate scorecard achievement.
- FY 2024 – removing 47,500 surveys would have changed the C360 Survey OSAT score from 46.29 percent to 44.21 percent.
 - As shared with the OIG, this decrease in C360 Survey OSAT score would have resulted in no change to the NPA corporate scorecard achievement.
- FY 2025 – removing 47,000 surveys would have changed the C360 Survey OSAT score from 47.45 percent to 45.29 percent.
 - As shared with the OIG, this decrease in C360 Survey OSAT score would have resulted in no change to the NPA corporate scorecard achievement.

Even with these removed surveys, from FY 2023 through FY 2025, the Postal Service would have realized a 4.15 percent increase in the C360 Survey OSAT score. Therefore, Management disagrees with OIG's contention that the possible presence of questionable surveys materially impacts overall customer sentiment. Additionally, Management completed an analysis to determine any potential impact on NPA metrics at the National level of removing all the OIG high-risk surveys. This analysis shows that there would not have been any change to the corporate scorecard achievement due to the low influence of C360 surveys on the overall scorecard (C360 surveys are 20 percent of the Customer Satisfaction (CX) Composite and the CX Composite is 5 percent of the Corporate Scorecard). It is important to note that Management could not complete such similar analysis at the Area/District and Manager, Post Office Operations levels because the OIG refused to share the data to identify the 119,000 high-risk surveys submitted through Email Us.

Specific to the Email Us website, the OIG's report noted the increase in Facility-related service requests. Management disagrees with the OIG's conclusion that the increases in Facility SRs were due to fraudulent activity. The Postal Service provided the OIG with detailed information explaining the increases in this service request type and that similar increases were seen for SR volumes which originated from the customer care centers. It is unclear whether the OIG reviewed and evaluated this additional information, but it is not addressed in OIG's report.

The OIG's report also mischaracterizes the Postal Service as setting artificial and unrealistic satisfaction goals which pressured employees across the country to engage in questionable behaviors. Localized satisfaction targets may be set higher for locations already achieving satisfaction scores higher than the NPA targets. Management requested additional contextual references from the OIG in reference to these claims. However, the OIG refused to share responsive information which would have allowed the Postal Service to review and analyze these assertions.

In conclusion, Management disagrees with OIG's finding that customer survey fraud was ongoing and uncorrected. Since 2024 when questionable surveys were first discovered by the Postal Service, the Postal Service has taken actions to, among other things:

- identify questionable survey completion patterns including developing a research tool to help identify such patterns;
- follow-up appropriately with Area/District leadership;
- administer corrective actions;
- implement system controls within C360; and
- administer stand-up talks and training to help reinforce the need to maintain C360 system and survey integrity.

The following are specific comments and responses to the six recommendations in the OIG's report:

Recommendation 1:

We recommend the **Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President** issue guidance instructing Area Vice Presidents and District Management not to issue artificial, unrealistic performance goals.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management disagrees with this recommendation as written.

The report does not establish that Area Vice Presidents or District Management issued artificial or unrealistic performance goals. Rather, the draft appears to focus on individual allegations or concerns regarding Customer 360 activities. Those allegations should not automatically be attributed to broader performance expectations established by field leadership. Accordingly, Management does not believe nationwide guidance directed at Area Vice Presidents and District Management is warranted nor supported by the audit evidence.

Target Implementation Date:

N/A

Responsible Official:

N/A

Recommendation 2:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, evaluate its current Customer 360 scoring system and implement scoring system changes to address pressure to manipulate survey scores, including specifically evaluating fraud or quality indicators.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management disagrees with this recommendation as written.

While Management agrees to continue working with its current vendor to evaluate existing tools to identify indicators, any new tools would need to be thoroughly tested prior to implementation to ensure they do not block legitimate surveys. In the meantime, Management will continue to use the internally developed survey trend dashboard to identify questionable survey patterns and take appropriate action. These management controls are existing and ongoing, not in response to this audit.

Target Implementation Date:

N/A

Responsible Official:

N/A

Recommendation 3:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, monitor booster activity during the upcoming year and take action to address if booster activity increases.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management disagrees with this recommendation as written.

The booster activity was halted during FY 2026. Management will, however, continue to monitor in-person SR volumes over the next year and will share, as appropriate, any findings with Area Vice Presidents and/or District Management.

Target Implementation Date:

N/A

Responsible Official:

N/A

Recommendation 4:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, in coordination with the **Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President**, establish deterrents, including rules and system controls to temporarily or permanently suspend Customer 360 system access to address known, repeat offenders.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management disagrees with this recommendation as written.

The Postal Service already maintains established policies and procedures to address employee misconduct at all levels which cover the C360 system. Corrective action, including restrictions or suspension of C360 access when appropriate, is determined and carried out by local leadership based on the facts and circumstances of the individual case. Management therefore does not believe a separate C360-specific disciplinary framework is necessary.

Target Implementation Date:

N/A

Responsible Official:

N/A

Recommendation 5:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, in coordination with the **Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President** and the **Vice President, Labor Relations**, develop a holistic escalation process for documenting, escalating, and addressing suspected misconduct schemes, including:

- Centrally documenting and escalating suspected schemes and repeat offenders;
- Establishing criteria for when Customer Experience should refer potential Customer 360 misconduct involving multiple employees to Labor Relations to evaluate if a fact-finding is appropriate;
- Formally reporting misconduct findings for all Customer 360 allegations; and
- Conducting ongoing impact analyses to remove scores determined to be fraudulent.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management disagrees with this recommendation as written.

Headquarters' role is to establish policy, provide training and guidance, and set expectations for compliance. Responsibility for reviewing and addressing individual allegations of employee misconduct rests with the appropriate functional management organization, consistent with established policies and processes. The recommendation assigns responsibilities to Labor Relations that are inconsistent with its role. Labor Relations does not generally conduct internal investigations of employee misconduct or establish criteria based solely on the number of employees involved. Labor Relations may provide guidance or become involved when circumstances warrant, but the responsible management organization retains primary responsibility for reviewing any allegations and determining appropriate action.

A centralized requirement to formally report investigative and corrective-action outcomes for all C360 survey-related allegations is overly broad. Allegations may be unsubstantiated, involve different types of conduct, and/or raise privacy and employee-relations considerations. C360 survey-related allegations should be handled through

existing investigative and management processes rather than creating a separate nationwide investigative and reporting structure specifically for C360 matters.

Ultimately, Management does not support establishing a separate investigative or reporting structure within Customer Experience that could duplicate or conflict with established Labor Relations and management processes.

Target Implementation Date:

N/A

Responsible Official:

N/A

Recommendation 6:

We recommend the **Vice President, Customer Experience**, examine and update their survey impact analysis to include all suspected fraudulent surveys and report updated Customer 360 scores for fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025 to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management disagrees with this recommendation as written.

As explained above, the Postal Service is unable to replicate the number of surveys that the OIG identified as high-risk, which appears to be the basis for this recommendation.

Using the internally developed research dashboard to review FY 2025 C360 survey data, the Postal Service identified 3,688 surveys as potentially fraudulent. This volume of surveys, even if all are ultimately determined to be invalid and removed, will not yield a significantly different score for C360 survey results for FY 2025 or for the FY 2025 CX Composite. Removing these surveys would adjust the C360 survey score for FY 2025 from 47.45 percent to 47.29 percent (a decrease of 0.16 percentage points). This decrease would not impact the NPA Corporate Scorecard.

In reference to the FY 2024 survey data, the Postal Service could agree to remove from scoring the approximately 2,500 C360 surveys identified in the original case that triggered the FY 2024 investigations. Removing these surveys from scoring would adjust the C360 survey score for FY 2024 from 46.29 percent to 46.18 percent (a decrease of 0.11 percentage points). This decrease would not impact the NPA Corporate Scorecard.

For the FY 2025 data, the Postal Service could agree to complete the analysis and investigation process with the intent of removing any identified fraudulent surveys from scoring.

However, OIG's recommendation to extend this analysis to all C360 survey data for FY 2023 and FY 2024 is overly broad and would not result in timely feedback to administer

corrective action resulting from any results obtained during the lengthy and time-intensive investigative and analysis process, nor would this be likely to produce materially different scores for the C360 survey or the CX Composite from what the Postal Service has already reported to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Target Implementation Date:

N/A

Responsible Official:

N/A

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Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Executive Vice President

cc: Corporate Audit & Response Management

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