City of Westminster, CO

Performance Indicator

- **Overall internal customer satisfaction with general information technology services**

For FY 2006, the city of Westminster's information technology department reported that 90 percent of its customers rated the quality of general information technology services as excellent. (Good, fair, and poor were customers' other rating choices.) The mean and median proportions of customers providing an excellent rating in all other jurisdictions were 49 percent and 48 percent, respectively.

Recruit staff carefully

Westminster officials noted that careful screening for a strong customer service orientation in job candidates is one of the most important factors in ensuring good customer relations. Screening techniques include specific interview questions that are posed to job candidates related to the candidates' views and perceptions of customer service. Also, candidates participate in specific role-playing exercises during the interview that help to highlight interpersonal and customer service abilities.

Westminster staff noted that, although it is possible to teach the technical skills necessary to resolve customers' computer problems, it is much more difficult to teach empathy and congeniality—both of which contribute mightily to success in serving customers frustrated by misbehaving machines.

Incorporate customer feedback into employee evaluations

Westminster's information technology department has been seeking customer feedback regarding its customer service function since the early 1990s.

Each month, the department sends electronic surveys to 20 to 30 customers who received service during the month. The survey requests feedback about each customer's experience with the specific agent who provided assistance; the survey covers the areas of

- Communication
- Cooperation
- Technical knowledge
- Overall satisfaction.

This feedback is used in the individual performance evaluations of the customer service representatives. It is also used to help identify specific areas where each employee may need additional training (for example, on a specific software application, network monitoring, or customer interaction). Employees may also receive special recognition for outstanding service as reported through the customer survey program.

The customer survey results are also used in the aggregate to determine whether the department is hiring qualified people and providing adequate

Case Profile

Population:
109,671

Square miles:
34

Median household income:
$67,094

Form of government:
Council-manager

For additional information about the practices described in this case study, please contact David Puntenney, information technology director, at dpuntenn@ci.westminster.co.us or 303/658-2400, extension 2051.

levels of ongoing technical and interpersonal skill training for employees. Monthly results are posted in the department to help staff maintain focus on the importance of good customer service.

Report results to city officials each year

The department reports annually on this and other performance statistics to the city council and city manager, comparing the city's own performance from year to year and its performance with that of peer communities. The goal of these comparisons is to ensure continuous improvement. (For additional information about Westminster's annual performance-reporting process, please see the Westminster case study in Chapter 1: High Performance Management Practices earlier in this book.)