



AASHTO-RAC/TRB Summer Meeting

Attributes of A Successful Research Program:
Creating and Measuring Customer Satisfaction

July 17, 2013

*Linda Taylor, Director
MnDOT - Research Services*

Your Destination...Our Priority



What will be covered?

Research Program Overview

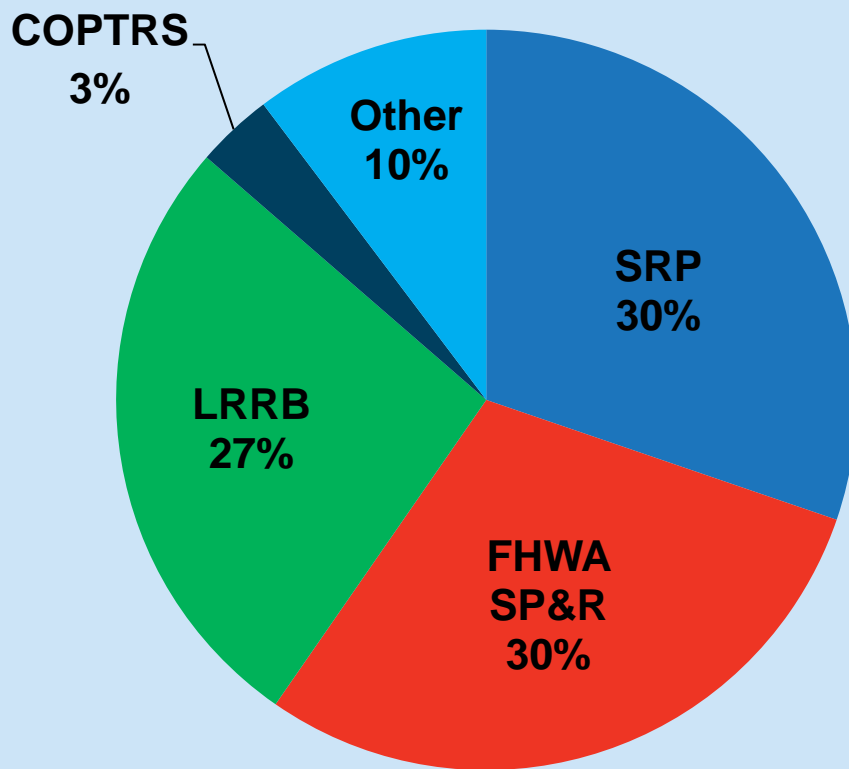
Measuring Customer Satisfaction

- How to ensure that the research program is focused on (and responsive to) customer needs.
- How to keep projects on schedule and on budget.
- How to measure customer satisfaction with individual projects and with the overall program.
- How to use customer feedback to improve the research program.
- How to maintain open and honest communications between researchers and customers.



How large is our Research Program?

FY2012 Research Funds by Funding Source



State Research Program (SRP):
\$3,284,000

FHWA State Planning and Research (SP&R) Part II: \$3,190,840

Local Road Research Board (LRRB):
\$2,902,378

Cooperative Program for Transportation Research and Studies:
\$363,000

Other: \$1,117,087



Who Conducts Research?

University Master Agreements

- University of Minnesota
- Texas A&M
- Montana State
- Iowa State



MN State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU)

Technical Research Assistance Program (TRAP)

Professional/Technical Contracts



How is your Research Program managed?

Governing Board: Transportation Research Innovation Group (TRIG)

14 voting members

- 10 Specialty Offices
- 4 Districts

2 non-voting members

- FHWA
- MN IT

RS support staff

- Research Engineer
- Finance & Contract Services
- Project Advisors

TRIG Representatives

MnDOT Specialty Offices

Environmental Stewardship
Bridges
Project Management and Technical Support
Traffic, Safety & Technology
Maintenance
Statewide Multimodal Planning
Materials & Road Research
Research Services
Policy, Analysis, Research & Innovation
Office of Transit

MnDOT Districts

District 3
Metro District
District 6
District 7

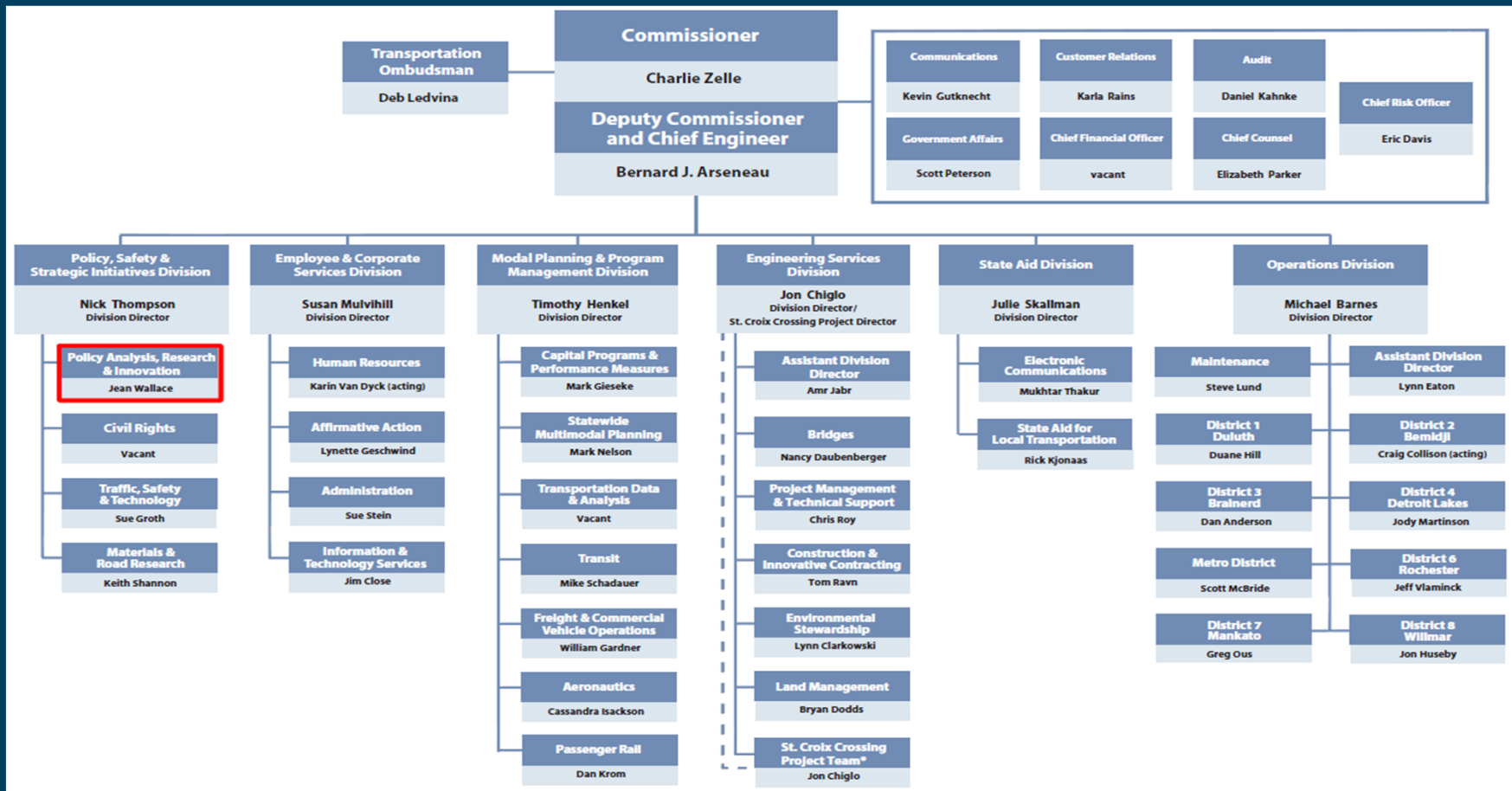
Other

* MN Information & Technology (IT) Services
*FHWA

** Denotes non-voting representative*



Where does research fit in the organization?



MnDOT Research Services: Four Areas to Serve You

Research Management

- Help you articulate your research needs
- Finalize your research work plans
- Manage your research project
- Implement the results

Finance & Contract Services

- Identify potential funding sources
- Assist with contract

Library Services

- Provide the right resources to answer your questions and keep you current in your field

Marketing & Communications

- Provide information and research results to transportation practitioners and the general public



RESEARCH SERVICES



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Marketing & Communications



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Research Management



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MnDOT Library



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- Literature searches, maintains website, produces new materials



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- Catalogs reports, assists new materials, reference questions



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- Literature searches, markets library



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- Periodicals and collections



Danae Ostroot, 651-366-3777
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- Interlibrary loans



Marilee Tuite, 651-366-3797
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- Reference work, literature searches

Research Financial Services



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Carole Wiese, 651-366-3788
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- Workplans, out of state travel requests, expense reports, food requests



Debbie Sinclair, 651-366-3746
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- Funding numbers, budget reports



Becky Lein, 651-366-3766
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- Workplans, purchase orders



Deb Fick, 651-366-3749
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- SPR quarterly reports and financial statements



Todd Marty, 651-366-3780
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- Administrative assistant

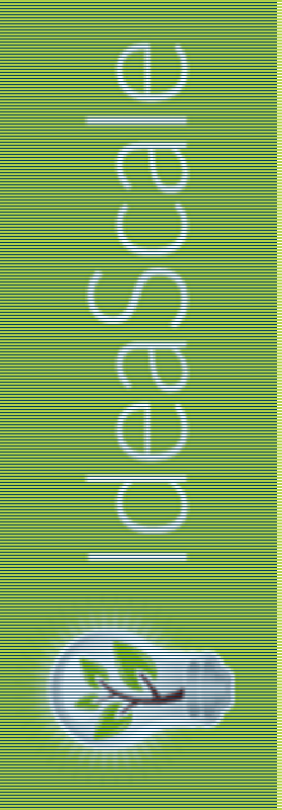
How to ensure that the Research Program is focused on customer needs

- ▶ Conducted surveys and interviewed our stakeholders on our products and services
- ▶ Solicit input from stakeholders through workshops
- ▶ MnDOT champion assigned to every research project
- ▶ Actively engage TRIG board members, research coordinators and stakeholders in program
- ▶ Ideascale to solicit and vet research needs



Stakeholder Involvement: User Input

MnDOT's Research Needs Gathering Website



Submit New Idea

Campaigns

All Ideas

1. Multimodal
2. Bridge, Structures & Hydraulics
3. Traffic, Safety & Geometrics
4. Maintenance Operations & Security
5. Policy, Planning & Land Management
6. Environment
7. Materials & Construction

Usage statistics

62 ideas posted

178 comments 540 votes 230 users

[View Our Top Contributors](#)

What we're discussing

bridges asphalt concrete

Browse Recent Ideas

Recent (40) Popular (40) No proposals - low priority (20) Non-academic (2) Tab not used (0)

I agree Feedback Score: **1**

7. MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTION »

Indefinite Quantity / Indefinite Delivery

Research Contact/Champion: Kevin Kosobud State or LRRB: State and LRRB Need Statement Number: 221 MnDOT Office: Construction and Innovative Construction MnDOT District: All

Indefinite Quantity / Indefinite Delivery is a new contracting tool which will provide rapid response to many construction items. These contracts ... more »

1 comment Submitted by Moderator 16 days ago

I agree Feedback Score: **1**

7. MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTION »

Risk Based Estimating

Research Contact/Champion: Jay Hietpas State or LRRB: State and LRRB Need Statement Number: 220 MnDOT Office: Construcion and Innovative Contracting MnDOT District: All

As MnDOT continues to explore new contracting methods, different approaches to estimating these projects are required. Risk based estimating ... more »

Add your comment Submitted by Moderator 16 days ago

I agree Feedback Score: **1**

2. BRIDGE, STRUCTURES & HYDRAULICS »



How to keep projects on schedule and on budget

Automated Research Tracking System (ARTS) database

- Automatic notification of tasks overdue & contract expiration dates
- Customized Reports (i.e., Contract Expiration Table)

TRIG Oversight

- Contract Amendment
- Accountability to TRIG if project is stalled or not under contract within six months
- Program Updates at each meeting .



How to keep projects on schedule and on budget

Quarterly meeting with Universities

Research Management Staff

- Advisors review work plan and schedule
- Prepare project work plans for processing
- Handle invoicing, PO's, agreements, amendments, etc.
- Manage partnership and interagency agreements
- Track deliverables and timelines



Contract Amendment

TRIG governing board will approve and/or make recommended next steps if:

- The original scope is expanded or changed significantly
- The amendment request exceeds 25% of the original contract or is greater than \$25,000
- Significant delays or unforeseen problems that have stagnated the project
- Nonperformance or plagiarism/copy write issues by the principle investigator



How to measure customer satisfaction with individual projects and the overall program

Programs:

- Feedback from customers - provide a way to provide feedback (customer surveys, formal and informal, etc.)
- Establish good working relationships with stakeholders throughout the department
- Track project implemented
- Quantify benefits associated with research
- Market success stories both internally & externally



How to measure customer satisfaction with individual projects and the overall program

Project:

- Research work plans are scoped & defined based on the desired customer outcome
- Timely completion of research projects (within time and budget)
- Research outcome - implementable or products customers can use (how much was implementable)
- Measurable savings (\$, lives, environment, aesthetic)
- Project Closeout and Evaluation

Area



How to use customer feedback to improve the Research Program

In-depth interviews => formulate key observations

Developed Marketing Plan

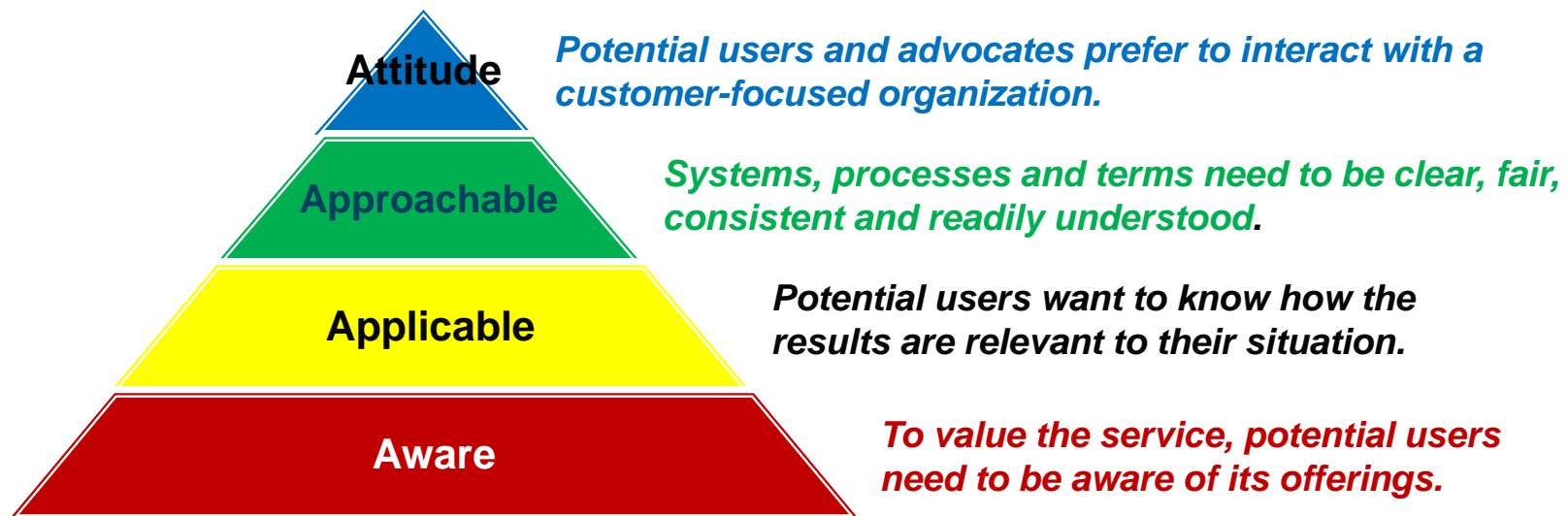
- Shared Vision with Stakeholders
- Created RS Values
- Collaboration efforts with other research partners
- Established Marketing & Communication Section
- Hired Marketing & Communication Manager

Created a TRIG Orientation Guide



Key Observations

- Overall, Research Services (RS) received high marks for competently fulfilling a valued administrative role in the research process.
- The research conducted through Research Services is respected for its contribution and quality.
- Leadership and several staff members were individually praised for their contributions. There was limited recognition of the group as a team.
- Several themes are apparent across the interviews that warrant substantial consideration in the measurement and planning process. Value-building opportunities center around '4A's':



How to use customer feedback to improve the research program

Publication Assessment => changed how we market our program

- Familiarization Tours
- Developed new brochure customer focused
- Right sizing our Annual Report
- Anchor core publications

Quantifying the Value of Research

- AASHTO-RAC Listserv survey



How to maintain open and honest communications between researchers and customers

Ideascale

Need Statements encourage researchers to connect with champion

New Marketing Plan focuses on customer needs (under development)

- Research newsletter “Accelerator”
- How to Guide for Contracting
- Customer friendly proposal system



Communicating Research Results

Website: mndot.gov/research

Products:

- Final Research Reports
- Technical Summaries
- Transportation Research Synthesis
- RS Annual Report
- RS At-A-Glance

Social Media:

- twitter.com/mndotresearch
- facebook.com/mndotresearch
- youtube.com/user/mndotresearch

Email List:

- linkedin.com (search for: "MnDOT Research")





*We look forward
to serving you...*

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Your Destination...Our Priority

