



# TECHSUMMARY *March 2012*

State Project No. 736-99-1479 / LTRC Project No. 07-4SS

## Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Customer Service Process and Outcome Evaluation

### INTRODUCTION

In fiscally austere times, it is critical that the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) garner public support to gain the funding necessary to improve the transportation infrastructure in the state. DOTD must assure that every strategy aimed at meeting the needs of the citizens in the state is on the mark. This requires a continual loop of information that provides feedback on what is working and what inputs or processes need to be improved or changed.

Increasing emphasis on customer service is a key component of DOTD's focus on work efficiency, better management, and process improvement. Providing the highest level of customer service is a goal of DOTD's strategic plan. In order to achieve target goals, it is necessary to track progress and purposefully affect change over time. Collecting and analyzing empirical data will ensure the realization of goals in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

### OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this research was to assess DOTD customer satisfaction over time. In order to measure progress, a baseline measure needed to be established to benchmark the current level of customer satisfaction. By periodic assessment of customer satisfaction and comparison to the benchmark, appropriate action steps for improvement were developed.

### SCOPE

In order to establish baseline data for measuring progress in customer satisfaction, surveys of the motoring public were conducted over a three-year period (2007, 2008, and 2009).

### METHODOLOGY

To determine the level of customer satisfaction, a survey questionnaire was constructed and first used in 2007. The same survey, with minor modifications, was used in 2008 and 2009. One goal of this research was to assure that findings were representative of the general population. Representative subsets from a randomized list of 5000 phone numbers were selected for each of the surveys.

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The results from these surveys were remarkably similar, indicating consistency of opinion across the samples for each of the three years. In general, public opinion about DOTD was stable in terms of priorities, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction. Survey respondents most often recommended priorities of safety, congestion relief, faster road construction/repairs, and improved maintenance. Respondents were most satisfied with signs warning of construction and detours and were most dissatisfied with congestion and speed/efficiency of road repairs.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although daily interaction between Louisiana citizens and DOTD employees are somewhat limited by the service characteristics of the organization, there are methods for reducing the perceived gap. One method currently in use is the DOTD customer service department. One analysis from this project revealed that those who contacted DOTD had a greater level of confidence in the agency.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that DOTD continue to identify opportunities to brand itself so that those services perceived as helpful will be associated with the agency. DOTD may incrementally change its image by strategically reminding the public of the services it provides.

The popularity of the roadside assistance program is, in part, because DOTD is visible in that service. It is a service that travelers can see and perceive that someone is being helped. Maximizing the use of electronic communications, e.g. project updates by email or through the DOTD web site, will result in similar benefits.