

Western takes steps to improve customer service

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Last month, the results of customer satisfaction surveys administered to power customers across Western’s service territory earlier this year were presented to senior managers (see May 1 *Closed Circuit* article). While the results showed overall that Western is meeting its customers needs, specific recommendations were identified for each region by the employee team that developed, administered and analyzed survey results. “Our overall satisfaction ratings ranged from 3.9 to 4.6 on a five-point scale,” said **Simmons Buntin**, survey team lead from the Power Marketing Support office in the CSO. “This tells us that generally customers are pretty well satisfied with our products and services. But they also offered a number of specific suggestions on how we can improve our ways of doing business.”

Overall process recommendations compiled by the team included sharing survey results with customers and letting them know what specific actions will be taken in response to the feedback gained from the survey.

Senior managers approved these overall recommendations and tasked the team to prepare the reports to the customers. Each region was also tasked to develop an action plan to address the specific needs identified in the data from the surveys.

“Rather than sending customers a thick report filled with lots of numbers and analysis, we decided to prepare customized reports that provide a summary of the responses for that specific region,” explained Buntin. Each report provides a brief summary of the survey process used in that region, outlines response rates and offers some general information about the level of customer satisfaction.

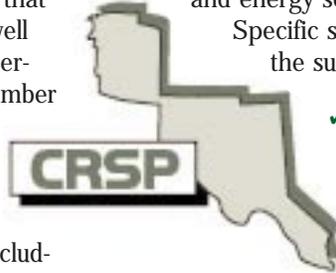
Detailed information includes a listing of areas where customers want to see improvement and ideas customers provided for new products and services. The reports also highlight what customers believe

Western is doing well and offer specific commitments we are making to respond to customer comments expressed in the survey. Summary ratings are also included in the results summaries.

“The survey process gave us a chance to identify in a more structured way what we’re doing well in terms of customer satisfaction and what we need to improve on,” said **Bob Fullerton**, senior manager champion for the effort. “Now our task is to develop responses and implement them so we can maintain or improve our customers’ satisfaction with Western as a provider of power and energy services.”

Specific steps being taken in response to the survey include:

- ✓ addressing customer concerns about more accurate and faster billing for CRSP power by the DSW and RM regions.
- ✓ increasing the number of visits, informational meetings and telephone contacts with customers.
- ✓ ensuring all customers are aware of various opportunities to be involved with Western.
- ✓ continuing to seek feedback from customers on ways we can improve products and services.

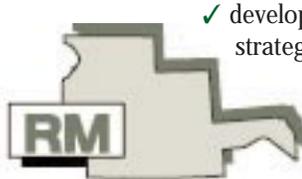


- ✓ ensuring further customer feedback opportunities through meetings such as the annual customer meeting, provide new products and services, and operate more efficiently. All of us need to work together to help Western meet these challenges.



- ✓ providing customer service and related training to customer representatives to ensure that DSW responds expeditiously and appropriately to customer concerns.

- ✓ establishing a tracking system to ensure that customer queries are responded to in a timely manner.
- ✓ strengthening Western's relationship with the Bureau of Reclamation to meet customer needs.
- ✓ working within Operations, Power Marketing and Finance to make modifications to customer power bills to improve understandability and accuracy.



- ✓ develop and implement strategies to deal with customer service problems immediately.

✓ developing a directory of services that can be shared with customers.

✓ letting customers know metering data is available on request.

✓ continuing to share information and to interact with customers on issues as they arise.



- ✓ strengthening Western's relationship with Reclamation to meet customer needs.

✓ finding ways to improve customer service by scheduling more customer site visits and involve customers in Western's business processes.

✓ developing a more formal training program for customer service representatives.

✓ providing responses to customers explaining why we are unable to fulfill certain requests during decisionmaking processes for marketing power and services.



✓ working with customers to reduce the composite power rate to 15 mills by 2002.

✓ work with individual customers to find ways to make specific improvements requested.

✓ developing ways to link customers so they can share information focusing on innovative technologies.

✓ continuing support for the region's Energy Services customer focus group which ensures customer needs for communications, workshops and technical assistance are being met.

Copies of survey summaries sent to customers or the more detailed report are available from senior managers.