Virginia Information Technologies Agency

Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Report and Plan

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Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Plan

The Commonwealth of Virginia launched information technology (IT) reforms in 2003 to improve IT investment management and oversight, increase information security and service reliability, leverage IT buying power, create greater transparency for IT spend and consolidate and centralize IT infrastructure operations and services. Following the creation of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA), the Commonwealth entered into the nation's largest IT public-private partnership with Northrop Grumman in 2005. The 10-year Partnership is in its third year of modernizing Virginia's IT infrastructure and standardizing services.

The scope, magnitude and speed of this transformational initiative also creates significant challenges and unprecedented levels of change in the areas of people, process and technology, ultimately impacting customer service and satisfaction. It is important to both measure how customers are acclimating to the changes and gather advice on how to make the transitions more satisfying. To address these needs, VITA implemented a Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Program to assess customer sentiment and to identify areas for improvement.

This program is composed of four phases and goals:

1. Customer Insight Survey: To collect and understand customer views regarding VITA's services
2. Customer Root Cause Sessions: To understand root causes of customer sentiment
3. Customer Action Plan Workshop: To develop a portfolio of ideas that will help enhance customer satisfaction
4. Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Report: To deliver an actionable plan that will guide VITA's customer satisfaction efforts in the near, mid and long-term

This document summarizes the results and actions to be taken. The comprehensive goals, strategies and tactics outlined in this report will assist VITA in enhancing near-term customer satisfaction, building and harnessing new capabilities in the middle-term, and realizing the Commonwealth's long-term vision.

Customer Insight Survey

The 2008 Customer Insight Survey was developed to assess customer opinions on the performance of VITA and the IT Infrastructure Partnership with Northrop Grumman. The survey asked customers to evaluate the current environment and project their future needs (To read the full print version of the survey please see the appendix.)

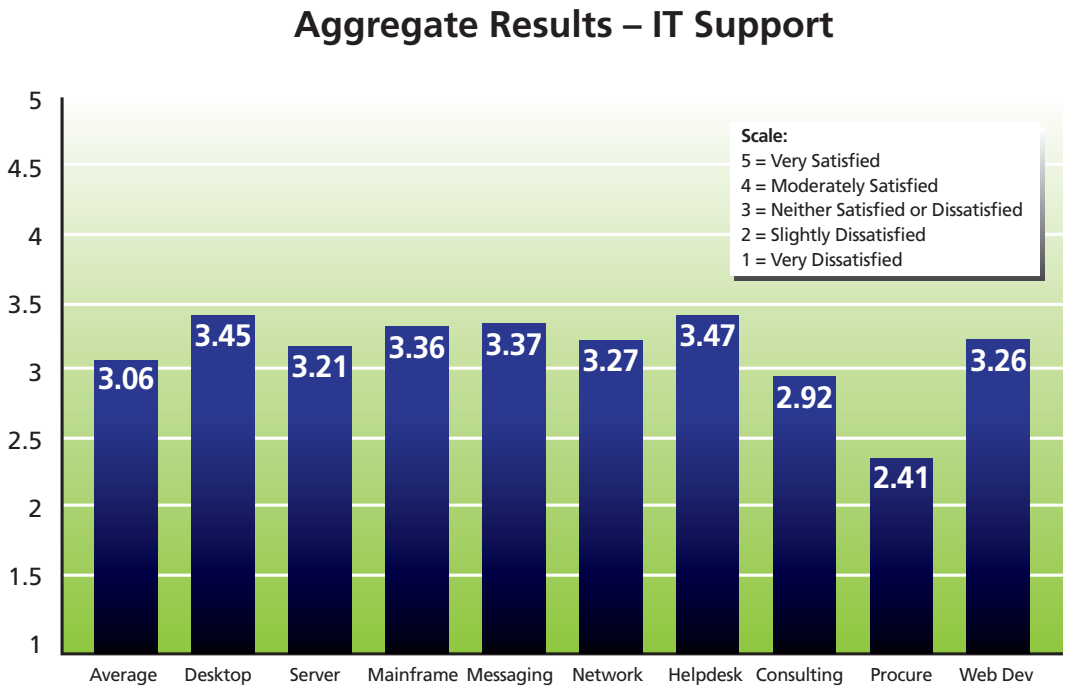
A survey invitation was sent to a list of customers selected at random, including executive branch agencies and localities and organizations utilizing E-911 and geographic information system (GIS) services. The survey was administered online for 10 days in April 2008. Of the 1,980 people invited to take the survey, 330 completed the survey for a survey completion rate of 16.7%.

The survey was composed of three categories: satisfaction with infrastructure services, satisfaction with VITA's ability to manage the customer relationship productively and demonstrate understanding of the customer's business, and the feasibility of partnering with customers on future services. Each category is described in detail below with an aggregate result.

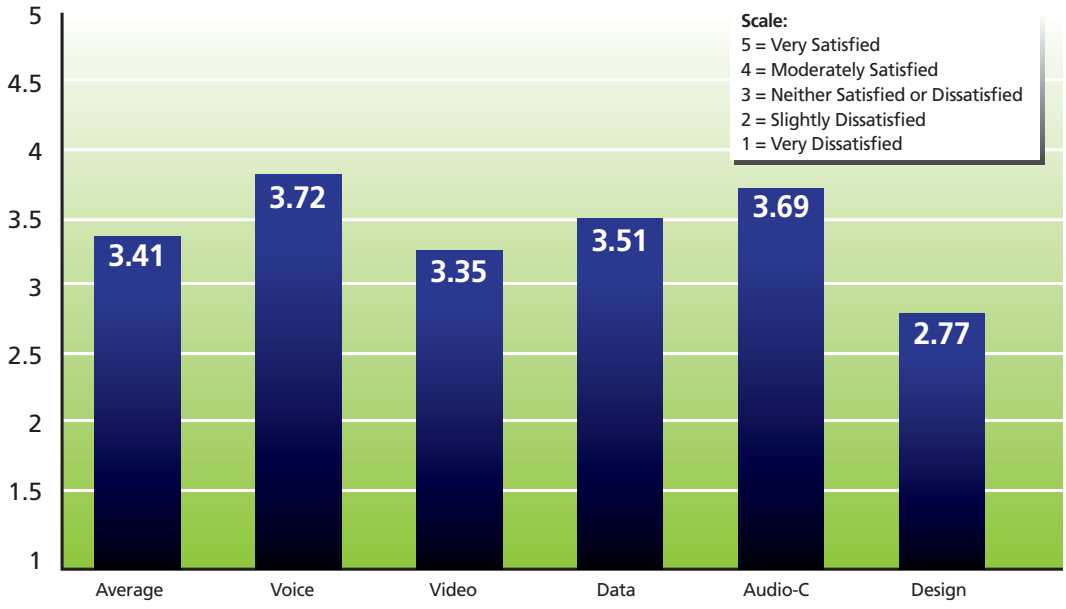
Satisfaction with Infrastructure Service Areas

The infrastructure service section assessed customer sentiment on how aligned VITA's services and IT infrastructure are with current needs, and whether those services are consistently meeting expectations. The categories of assessment were:

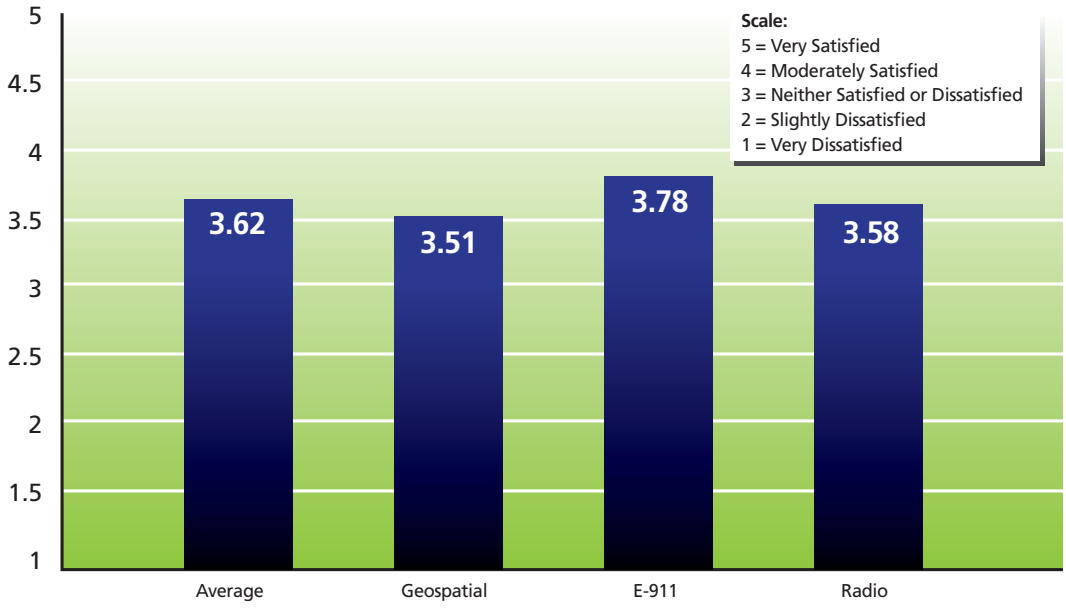
- IT support services: server, mainframe, messaging and directory, network connectivity, help desk, consulting, procurement, contracts and purchasing, Web site development
- Telecommunications services: voice services, video services, data services, audio conferencing services, design and engineering
- E-911 and GIS services: geospatial, enhanced 911, radio engineering
- Project management services: IT strategic planning/investment management, IT project oversight and consulting, IT standards and enterprise architecture
- Security services: incident handling, awareness and alerts, architecture, IT policy, standards and guidelines
- Open-text questions: to probe for ideas on improving services the survey taker ranked lower than a 3



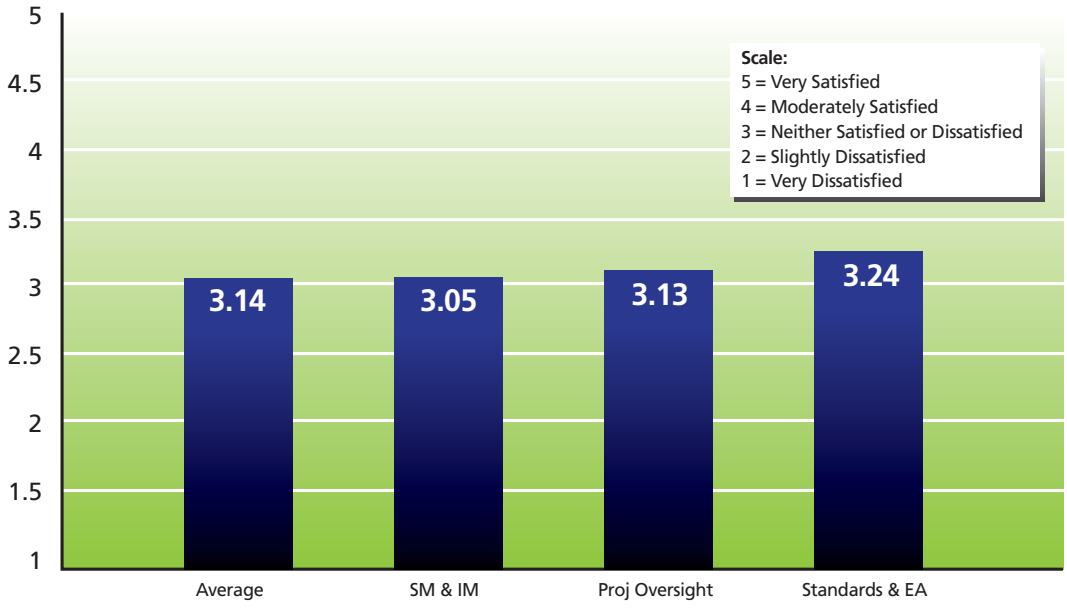
Aggregate Results – Telecommunications



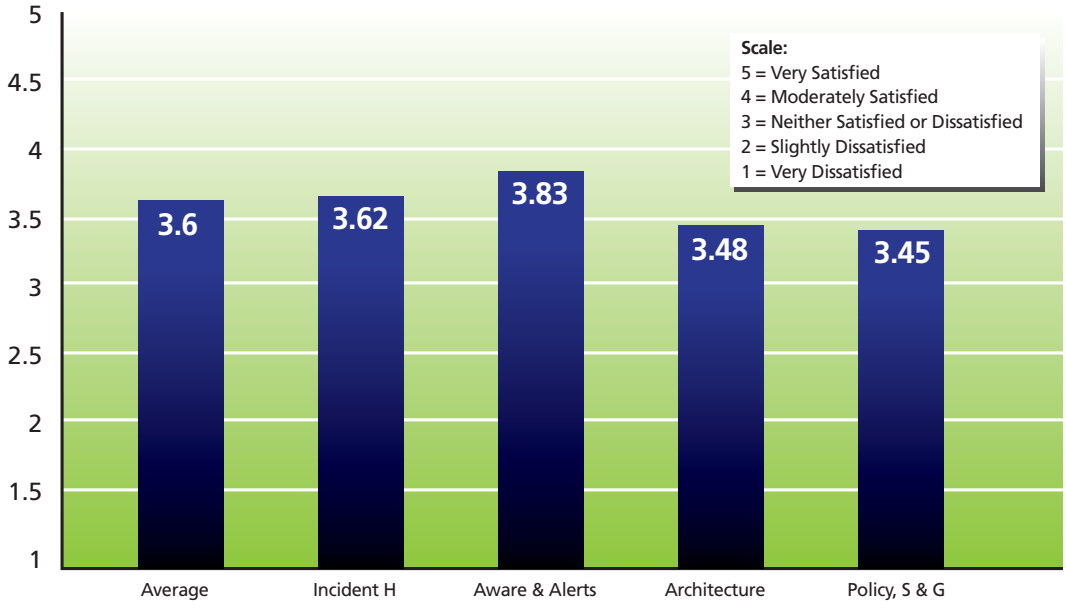
Aggregate Results – E-911 and GIS



Aggregate Results – Project Management



Aggregate Results – Security Services

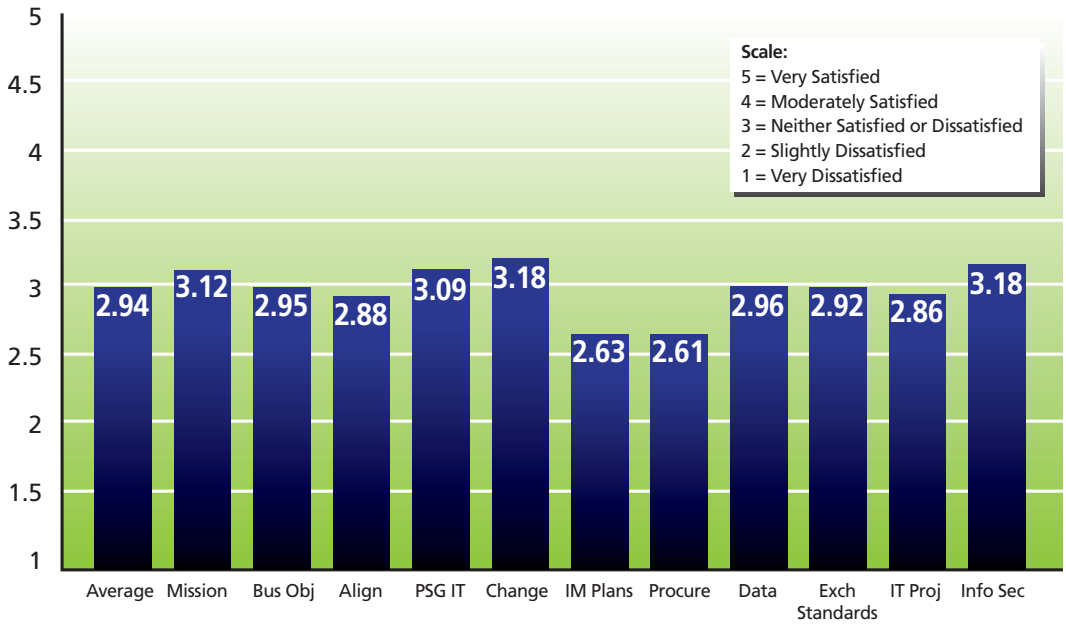


Satisfaction with Strategic Services

This section assessed customer sentiment on how well VITA is working with customers to plan and deliver services. The categories of assessment were:

- Understanding customers' mission and policy objectives
- Understanding customers' programmatic business objectives
- Aligning IT services/support with business objectives
- Policies, standards and guidelines for managing IT
- Communicating changes in policies, standards and guidelines
- Assisting in developing customers' information management plans
- Policies, standards and guidelines for procurement
- Statewide standards for electronic information exchange
- Statewide uniform technical/data standards for IT and related systems
- Assistance/support in developing customers' IT projects
- Expert guidance and oversight on information security issues

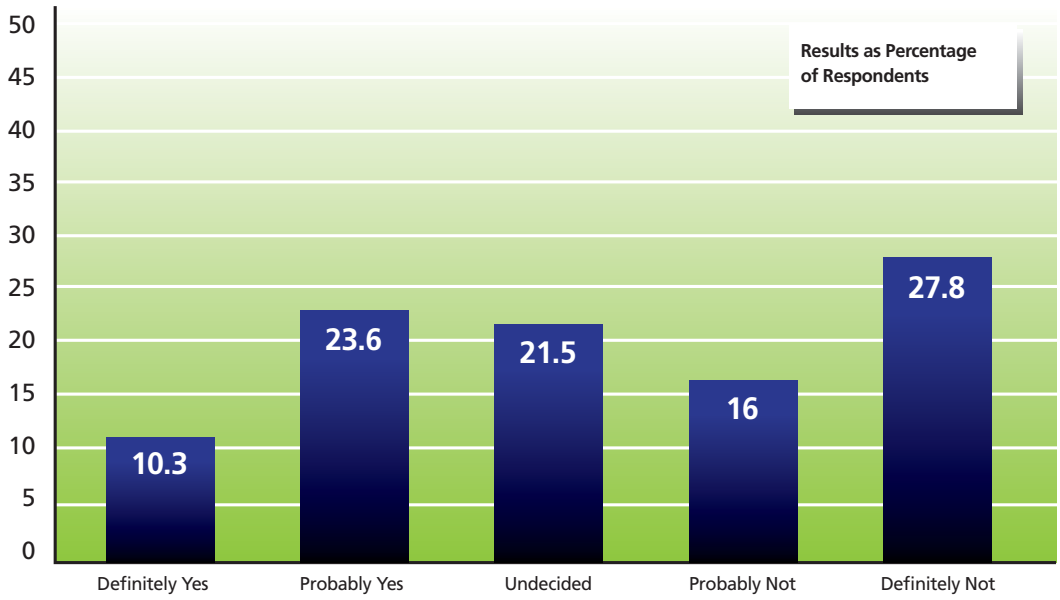
Aggregate Results – Strategic Services



Assessment of Willingness to Recommend

The last question covering current assessment probed for a customer's willingness to recommend services provided by VITA. Survey takers were asked; "Given your current experience with VITA, would you recommend VITA's services to a colleague?"

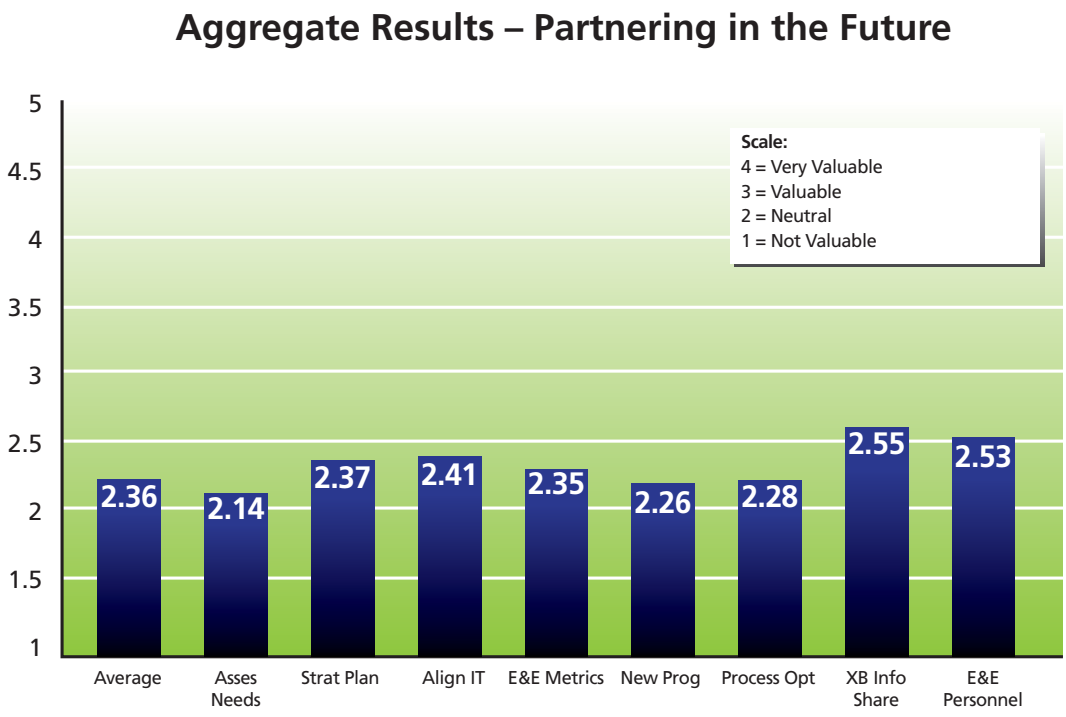
Would You Recommend VITA's Services to a Colleague?



Alignment of Future Needs and Services

This section focused on assessing the feasibility of enhanced partnering with customers in planning for future organizational needs and constituent services offerings. The categories of assessment were:

- Assessing citizen needs and current operating environments to help future policy needs, opportunities and risks
- Guidance and support to optimize the use of IT
- Aligning enterprise IT with customers' policy and program goals
- Harnessing information and data for metrics and benchmarking
- Assessing how IT can bring improvements in programs or enable new programs
- Leveraging IT to enable flexible and adaptable management and operational processes
- Developing information-sharing models that enable enhanced communication and partnerships
- Assessing how emerging technologies can help personnel work more efficiently and effectively and expand their capabilities
- Open-ended questions that address opportunities for future partnering



Customer Insight Survey Analysis

The 2008 Customer Insight Survey was administered approximately halfway through the three-year IT infrastructure transformation project portfolio, a timely opportunity to assess customer sentiment, probe for customer views on reality versus expectations and assess how customers are adapting to the new environment. Analysis of this survey was conducted in order to find the strategic insights that will help VITA and Northrop Grumman respond to the customer needs. The six strategic insights are:

1) **Improvement of Customer Satisfaction is Dependent on the Partnership's Ability to Maintain Current Operations while Building and Delivering New Capabilities**

   The biggest driver of customer dissatisfaction is the sentiment that current operations are suffering while the partnership is building new infrastructure and capabilities. Disruptions in agency business have direct impacts on the agency's ability to serve its constituents consistently and effectively. Additionally, customers believe that VITA and the partnership do not listen to or understand agency needs for current requirements and transformation-based requirements, thereby misaligning both near-term and long-term IT needs.

   The implementation of new services must be in line with customer needs. VITA and Northrop Grumman must work to improve core service delivery as a fundamental building block for enhanced customer support and satisfaction.

2) **Improvement of Customer Satisfaction is Dependent on Speed and Transparency of Execution**

   When customer ranking of IT infrastructure services is correlated with customer comments, there is a clear link between the speed and transparency of service delivery and satisfaction levels. Customer dissatisfaction is elevated when service implementation is slow AND there is a lack of communication around process, timelines and customer input. Customers consistently mentioned that they are more amenable to long cycle times and delays IF there is a high-level of communication and transparency around where the service (or product in the case of procurement) is in the queue and estimates as to when it will be operational.

   Through both face-to-face interaction and technology, VITA and Northrop Grumman should combine faster service delivery with clearer communication to customers on timelines and processes with faster service delivery, and measure and communicate successes regarding transition progress and customer service work.

3) **There is a Significant Variance in Satisfaction between Process-Oriented and Technical-Oriented Services**

   Customer satisfaction with VITA and the partnership's "technical" capabilities, such as desktop refresh, mainframe support, voice services, e-911, etc., generally is stable once a service is implemented. However, during and post transition, customer satisfaction with the "process-oriented" or "soft skill" areas, such as understanding agency business objectives, consulting, procurement and project management, is low. Many of the open-text comments revealed that customers believed they were not being heard and that processes were not aligned with their business needs.

   VITA and Northrop Grumman should prioritize communication and relationship building with customers when there is a high level of process-oriented activities in motion – such as when a customer is converting to a new infrastructure or implementing a new application. Successful communication around process-oriented work will build and sustain trust in the customer/VITA relationship.

4) There is Potential for Service Growth and Extension

VITA and the partnership have an opportunity to increase adoption of core services, deploy new services and perform strategic and advisory services. Forty-five percent of survey respondents requested more information on core services. In the open-text comments asking for areas in which customers have unmet needs, customers were interested in the development of information sharing methods, expansion of GIS capabilities, development of disaster recovery technologies and advice on how emerging technologies can help with agency effectiveness and efficiency. The value of strategic services would be ranked higher if there was more trust that VITA and the partnership first could improve core services. In the words of one customer, "I would like advice on using IT in strategic planning, but I have to know you can walk me through procurement advice first ..."

Moving forward, efforts should emphasize greater customer service, service execution and customer dialogue in order to actualize future growth.

5) There is Greater Satisfaction and Perceived Benefit among Small Organizations

There is a positive and notable variance in customer satisfaction among smaller agencies and localities. These groups generally report having experienced greater benefits from the enhanced technological infrastructure. Small agencies and localities also have greater satisfaction with "soft-skill" oriented services. Much of this is driven by a smaller set of services used by localities. Yet, these customers also are significantly more satisfied with VITA's and the partnership's understanding of their agency's mission and the alignment of IT with the agency's business needs.

There are replicable drivers of the satisfaction that small organizations and localities observe. VITA and Northrop Grumman should make an effort to apply these lessons to the larger customer set.

6) Customers are Actively Assessing Gains Relative to Losses

Analysis of customer rankings with customer comments suggests frustration with gains relative to losses during the transformation. Customers did not rank any of VITA's services above a 4 (moderately satisfied) on the scale of 1-5 and many core and advisory services are hovering in the mid-3 area. Broadly, this suggests that customers have a "wait-and-see" sentiment and need to see tangible improvements in both service design and execution. These results are indicative of the transformation under way – especially one the size and scope of the Virginia initiative – yet the partnership should take heed that customers must believe they are gaining more than they are losing.

In the future, VITA should accelerate and increase communication and change management efforts with customers to emphasize the long-term gains in customer and public value while also acknowledging current customer sentiment and issues.

Customer Council Root Cause Sessions

To gain a deeper understanding of the drivers of customer sentiment, a series of customer "deep dive" sessions were held in August 2008. The goal of these sessions was to find root causes of customer dissatisfaction and to generate ideas for service improvement.

Facilitated sessions were conducted with the Finance, Supply Chain, Security, Partnership, IT Investment and Small Agency Customer Councils. Each session was approximately 90 minutes, during which the facilitator highlighted a category of VITA work that generally was ranked as unsatisfactory by customers and was under the customer council's purview. The group then worked through exercises to determine what policies, processes and/or systems are driving customer dissatisfaction, and formulated ideas and principles that would help make the service better. Below are results from the root-cause sessions synthesized into four main action areas.

Customer Action Area One – Increase Transparency and Communication across VITA and the IT partnership:

There is a decided lack of trust in VITA and Northrop Grumman as a result of inconsistent communication about policies and processes and how those policies and processes are enacted. Compounding this, customers believe that they are not being heard when they advocate for enhancements or modifications to a policy, process or service. Customers also see a lack of communication and transparency between VITA and Northrop Grumman that exacerbates their sense of uncertainty that VITA and the partnership can deliver promised services.

Strategies and tactics identified by the customers to alleviate this issue include:

- Increase communication on how VITA and the partnership interact and the subsequent impacts on customers
- Improve customer visibility into service provision, policies and processes
- Ensure VITA and Northrop Grumman are sharing information and will communicate that information to customers using one voice
- Develop and implement systems that enable enhanced customer views into service and process timelines
- Ensure timely service delivery and maintain current operations while working toward transforming the infrastructure in the Commonwealth

Customer Action Area Two – Enhance Customer Facing Support:

Customers want consistent communication and, ideally, one point of contact for their primary issues. Customers say they receive conflicting and/or inconsistent information from VITA and Northrop Grumman and that their recommendations and concerns go into a "black box and disappear." Additionally, customers report VITA and the partnership do not understand their missions, business requirements and organizational goals. This lack of communication and understanding leads to misaligned service provision, and misunderstanding of business goals and milestones.

Strategies and tactics identified by the customers to alleviate this issue include:

- Provide one point of contact for customers' primary issues and ensure the supporting customer account team has accurate and timely information
- Increase the amount of communication with customers to better understand their mission and business goals
- Empower the customer account team to make decisions without having to seek approval from VITA and/or Northrop Grumman

Customer Action Area Three – Improve Process-Oriented Service Performance:

Customers generally are satisfied with services once they are implemented; however, they believe the enabling "soft process" areas, such as consulting, project management and procurement, are too complex and time consuming. Customers report that VITA and the partnership are forcing a "one-size fits all" approach for customers and that there isn't enough tailoring and flexibility embedded in policies and processes.

Strategies and tactics identified by the customers to alleviate this issue include:

- Simplify and improve key customer service processes to make them faster and more transparent
- Provide benchmarks and standards on key processes and improve communication on how well those are being met
- Align processes more succinctly with customer processes and timelines, and scale guidelines for areas such as project management to the size of the project

Customer Action Area Four – Reform Procurement and Pricing:

Customers generally believe that procurement is too complex and takes too long. This is exacerbated by the perception that once a request is put in motion, the customer has no information on where the procured product or service is in the process and when it will be implemented. While customers acknowledge the need for a standardized, secure infrastructure, they are frustrated with prices that they perceive as not in line with market-based prices and say pricing is too rigid.

Strategies and tactics identified by the customers to alleviate this issue include:

- Provide agility for customers in purchasing small and standardized items
- Increase speed of the procurement process and provide transparency throughout the process
- Provide clarity and more information, including the rationale for mark-ups and overhead, on pricing of products and services
- Provide more broad education on the value proposition of VITA and the partnership and how pricing will change over time

Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Workshop

As the third phase in the Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Program, a workshop was held to determine actions to be taken by VITA and the partnership to address customer concerns and to enhance customer satisfaction over time. Participants included the VITA executive team, the Northrop Grumman leadership team working on the VITA project and the Virginia Chief Applications Officer. The process used in the workshop was fourfold:

One – Generating Ideas to Respond to Customer Action Areas:

- Actions for increasing transparency and communication internally and externally
- Actions for enhancing customer-facing support
- Actions to improve process-oriented service performance
- Actions to reform procurement and pricing

Two – Assess the Impacts of Ideas on Objectives:

- Will the idea create value?
- Do we have the capacity to execute the idea?
- Do we have the support and resources necessary to execute the idea?
- What is the timeline to achieve the projected value?

Three – Assemble Action Items into Action Programs and Timelines:

- Near term – immediate to 10 months
- Mid term – 10 to 18 months
- Long term – 18 to 24 months

Four – Determine Measures to Gauge Success:

- Success for customers
- Success for VITA
- Success for Northrop Grumman
- Success for the Partnership as a whole

The portfolios of action items in the tables below summarize the ideas from the Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Workshop. Each Customer Action Area will be assigned an owner responsible for the development, implementation and measurement of actions.

Portfolio of Action Items Developed During the Workshop

Customer Action Area One
Increase Transparency and Communication across Partnership

Near Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
1. Provide Customer Account Team with priority decision rights within the Partnership and access to all necessary information for customers. 2. Develop and publish metrics on timelines for service provision. 3. Provide documentation on how key customer-facing processes work and general timelines for customers. 4. Bring all customer councils together for a meeting to share ideas and best practices.	1. Develop and implement a communication program that outlines the value proposition of VITA post-transformation.	1. Develop a customer relationship management (CRM) system that integrates help desk, request for service, procurement and project management into one interface. 2. Via the CRM system, establish a unique ID that enables customers to access the status of services in real time.

Customer Action Area Two
Enhance Customer-Facing Support

Near Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
1. Reorganize Customer Account Teams from Secretariat segmentation to agency size segmentation and realign support roles. 2. Integrate information via manual processes between Northrop Grumman and Customer Account Team.	1. Provide a deeper level of customer service training for customer support teams and within partnership. 2. Map skill sets and recruit right staff for customer account assignments.	1. Increase size and/or number of Customer Account Teams to meet a new ratio of support to agency. 2. Integrate customer support processes with comprehensive CRM system. 3. Develop CRM system and plan to link VITA and Northrop Grumman needs with longer-term Commonwealth needs.

Customer Action Area Three
Improve Process-Oriented Service Performance

Near Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
1. Develop and implement metrics and report on performance measures for process-intensive services. 2. Identify easiest to improve problems/processes for earliest action (those generating most customer frustration) and develop plan to reform them. 3. Publish/communicate help desk services, standards, timelines and escalation process and post to Web and elsewhere for customers.	1. Publish process and performance via the Web and publications such as Leadership Communique and Network News.	1. Offer streamlined project requirements, approval and oversight for projects that are smaller, less complex, and/or less innovative.

Customer Action Area Four
Reform Procurement and Pricing

Near Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
1. Analyze and communicate process standards and expectations -- especially time and cost for procurements. 2. Allow individual customers to identify where their requests are in the process via manual or electronic methods. 3. Clarify procurement rules and standards for in-scope and out-of -scope technologies. 4. Pre-order standard products and have them in stock for quick delivery and implementation.	1. Create ability for customers to order from on-line catalog of pre-approved products. 2. Enable agency flexibility in procurement for low-cost and non-critical/ non-enterprise technology products. 3. Expand and document service catalog to include all items, time to installation and price. 4. Provide customers direct access to status of request for services, procurement and project management.	1. Tie procurement process into CRM system in order to track procurements, Requests for Service and major/non-major project approvals in real time (similar to FedEx online capabilities). 2. Seek general fund resources to cover major/ non-major project approvals/oversight costs as "overhead" (as before) rather than as a user fees.

Summary and Next Steps

This document summarized results and actions to be taken by VITA and Northrop Grumman. The comprehensive goals, strategies and tactics outlined in this report will assist VITA in enhancing near-term customer satisfaction, building and harnessing new capabilities in the mid-term, and enabling the realization of the Commonwealth's long-term vision.

As VITA moves to activate this plan, there are important next steps to take, including:

Next Steps	Delivery Date
Deliver Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Plan and action items to the Information Technology Investment Board	October 2008
Establish an oversight committee composed of a subset of executive staff who attended the Customer Action Plan workshop	October 2008
Task Oversight Committee with assigning accountable owners to each action item in the Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Plan	November 2008
Action item Owners create work plan and underlying deliverables for each action item according to near-term, mid-term and long-term goals	November 2008
Deliver Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Plan and action items to the Agency IT Resources (AITR) Communication meeting	November 2008
Deliver Customer Satisfaction Enhancement Plan and action items to Customer Councils	November 2008
Implement a dashboard to monitor activities and results of the action items	December 1, 2008
Report progress to the Executive Evaluation and Governance Committee	January 2009

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