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“Because Knowing Beats Guessing”

GUILFORD CO TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY SERVICES SURVEY **AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Although this list is not exhaustive, here are some of the items from your recent survey that we thought were interesting and/or important. Please review the entire report, and read from your many written comments to gain additional insight.

For private sector clients, we typically suggest a target average of 5.5 or better for satisfaction statements using the 7-point scale. Scores lower below the target do not necessarily indicate a problem, but should be considered as areas for potential improvement. For local governments, however, achieving a rating of 5.5 is often difficult; most average closer to 5.2. One reason for this difficulty might be that unlike most organizations in the private sector, a government usually keeps (rather than loses) most of their “unhappy customers”.

Passenger and Caregiver Surveys

Items of Note:

- Passenger and Caregiver Surveys were mailed out on March 21 and were received through April 11. There was a good response to the survey, with 217 surveys returned of approximately 1105 delivered. This is a 19.6% response rate.
- About 73% of respondents said that they ride the van or minibus. About 21% receive bus tickets.
- About 24% of respondents were caregivers while about 76% were the actual service recipients.
- About 79% of riders ride for medical care, 12% to go to work, about 9% to go to a Senior center / Nutrition site, and about 8% for adult day care.
- When riders were asked about their priorities, the top item selected was “Arriving on time”. The second most often selected item was “Courteous / helpful drivers”.
- 62% of respondents said that the service recipient was “Very dependent” on the service.
- 58% of respondents said that the service recipient had a “Physical or visual” disability, while 32% had a “Mental or emotional” disability.
- We found a number of significant differences of opinion, based on certain background questions. For example, we found that Service Recipients gave typically higher ratings for *driver helpfulness* and *safety* than did Caregivers.
- The highest rated satisfaction statements were:

S27	The fees for this service are reasonable. (Highest rated item)
S23	The drivers drive safely.
S26	I feel secure when riding in the vehicle.
S20	The drivers are courteous.

- The lowest rated satisfaction statements were:

S28	When bad weather causes schedule changes, the notification process is adequate.
S12	The dispatch operators answer the phone in a timely manner.
S6	The reservation operators answer the phone in a timely manner.
S18	The drivers arrive when expected. (Lowest rated satisfaction item)

* An evaluation of the highest and lowest responses highlighted above located on page 4.

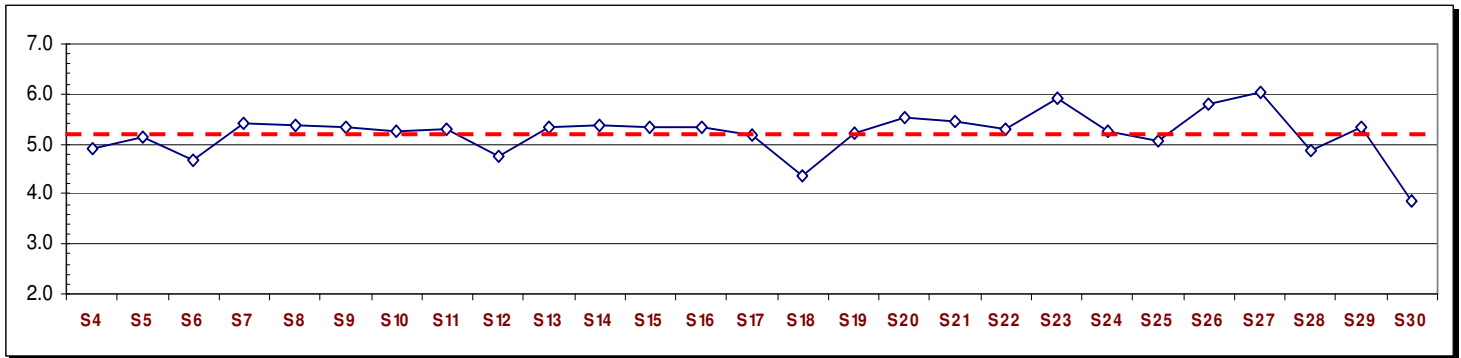
All Statements in One Table (All Respondents)

Most of these average ratings are well into the positive range, while still showing some room for improvement. For private sector clients, we typically suggest a target average of 5.5 or better for satisfaction statements. Scores lower below the target do not necessarily indicate a problem, but should be considered as areas for potential improvement. For local governments, however, achieving a rating of 5.5 is often difficult; most average closer to 5.2. One reason for this difficulty might be that unlike most organizations in the private sector, a government usually keeps (rather than loses) most of their “unhappy customers”.

	Statements <small>S Means “Statement”; 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree</small>	Valid N <small>(Number Responding)</small>	Mean <small>(Average Rating)</small>	Median <small>(Middlemost Score)</small>
S27	The fees for this service are reasonable.	150	6.02	7.0
S23	The drivers drive safely.	184	5.92	7.0
S26	I feel secure when riding in the vehicle.	181	5.81	7.0
S20	The drivers are courteous.	188	5.53	6.0
S21	The drivers are helpful in getting passengers <i>in and out of the vehicle</i> .	184	5.43	6.0
S7	The reservation operators are courteous.	202	5.41	6.0
S8	The reservation operators are professional.	200	5.38	6.0
S14	The dispatch operators are professional.	201	5.36	6.0
S15	The dispatch operators are helpful.	203	5.33	6.0
S9	The reservation operators are helpful.	203	5.32	6.0
S13	The dispatch operators are courteous.	199	5.32	6.0
S16	The dispatch operators are knowledgeable.	197	5.32	6.0
S29	I would recommend Guilford Co. Trans. & Mobility Services to others.	197	5.32	6.0
S22	The drivers are helpful in getting passengers <i>to and from the door</i> .	183	5.30	6.0
S11	The reservation operators are accurate in their work.	198	5.28	6.0
S10	The reservation operators are knowledgeable.	199	5.27	6.0
S24	In general, Guilford Co. Transportation & Mobility Services is responsive to my needs.	193	5.25	6.0
S17	The dispatch operators are accurate in their work.	199	5.20	6.0
S19	The drivers are professional in their appearance.	185	5.20	6.0
S5	In general, Transportation & Mobility Services is good to work with.	201	5.14	5.0
S25	In general, Guilford Co. Transportation & Mobility Services resolves problems in a timely manner.	183	5.06	6.0
S4	Overall, I am satisfied with Guilford Co. Transportation & Mobility Services.	211	4.89	5.0
S28	When bad weather causes schedule changes, the notification process is adequate (Media and web site)	161	4.87	5.0
S12	The dispatch operators answer the phone in a timely manner.	201	4.75	5.0
S6	The reservation operators answer the phone in a timely manner.	206	4.66	5.0
S18	The drivers arrive when expected.	194	4.36	5.0
S30	For passengers that pay a fare: I would prefer a bus ticket or bus pass as opposed to being billed.	99	3.86	4.0

Satisfaction Plot of All Questions

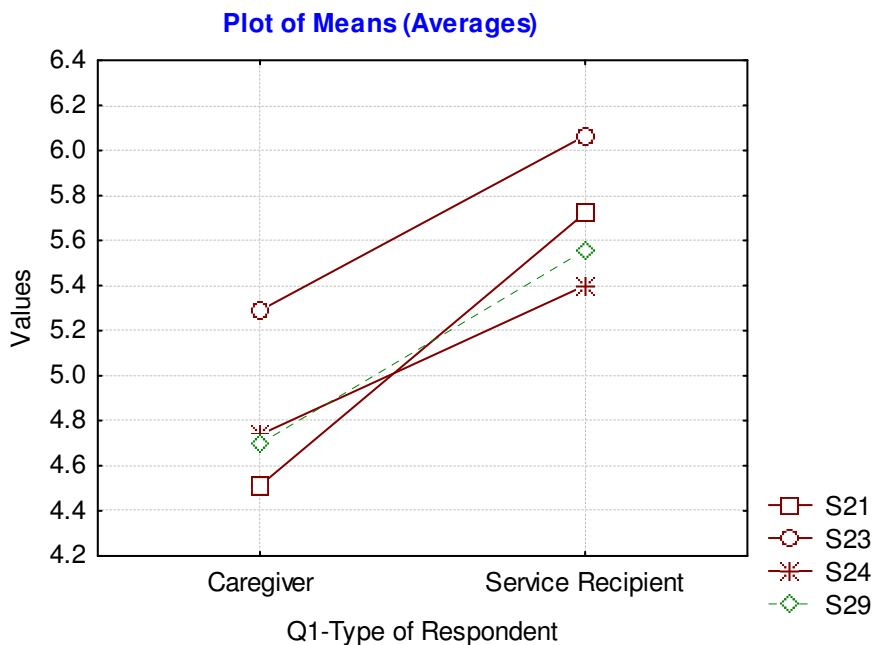
As mentioned earlier, 5.2 (---) is the average result expected for local governments.



We thought this was interesting as we compared differences based on their answer to:

Which best describes you? (Caregiver or Service Recipient)

- As shown below, four statements had statistically significant differences based on how they would describe themselves among the choices of Caregiver or Service Recipient. Caregivers tended to give lower ratings than did the actual Service Recipients.



Statements	
S21	The drivers are helpful in getting passengers <i>in and out of the vehicle</i> .
S23	The drivers drive safely.
S24	In general, Guilford Co. Transportation & Mobility Services is responsive to my needs.
S29	I would recommend Guilford Co. Trans. & Mobility Services to others.

Agency Survey

Items of Note:

- The surveys were mailed on June 2nd and respondents were given until June 20th. (The survey said the 13th but the respondents were given an extra week).
- There was a good response to the survey, with 21 surveys returned of approximately 52 delivered. This is a 40% response rate.
- The highest rated satisfaction statements were:

S13	The drivers appear to drive safely.
S5	The reservation operators are good at their work
S9	The drivers are professional in their appearance.
S8	The drivers are courteous.
S11	The drivers are helpful at getting passengers in and out of the vehicle.
S12	The drivers are helpful at getting passengers to and from the door.

- The lowest rated satisfaction statements were:

S1	Overall, I am satisfied with Guilford Co. Transportation & Mobility Services.
S7	The dispatch operators are good at their work.
S10	The drivers arrive at my location when expected.
S3	The amount of time passengers actually spend on the vehicles is reasonable.
S6	The dispatch operators answer the phone in a timely manner.

- From reading the comments and looking at the ratings, it appears that some opportunities for improvement lie with the Dispatch operations and the issue of the Drivers arriving when needed or expected.
- Using correlation analysis, we found a number of significant predictors of general satisfaction items. These should provide assistance in setting priorities for the future. (Refer to the full report.)

All Statements Ranked Highest to Lowest from the Agency Survey

	Statements	Valid N (Number Responding)	Mean (Average Rating)	Median (Middlemost Score)	Std. Dev. (Amount of Variability)
	S Means "Statement"; 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree				
S13	The drivers appear to drive safely.	20	5.30	5.0	1.26
S5	The reservation operators are good at their work	20	4.95	5.0	1.32
S9	The drivers are professional in their appearance.	21	4.95	5.0	1.43
S8	The drivers are courteous.	21	4.86	5.0	2.06
S11	The drivers are helpful at getting passengers in and out of the vehicle.	20	4.85	4.5	1.63
S12	The drivers are helpful at getting passengers to and from the door.	20	4.85	5.0	1.69
S14	Guilford Co. Transportation & Mobility Services responds well when needs / problems arise.	21	4.76	5.0	1.76
S15	I would recommend Guilford Co. Transportation & Mobility Services to others who may need their services.	21	4.76	5.0	2.00
S2	In general, Transportation & Mobility Services is good to do work with.	20	4.45	5.0	1.70
S4	The reservation operators answer the phone in a timely manner.	20	4.35	4.5	1.76
S1	Overall, I am satisfied with Guilford Co. Transportation & Mobility Services.	21	4.19	4.0	1.57
S7	The dispatch operators are good at their work.	19	4.17	4.0	1.34
S10	The drivers arrive at my location when expected.	21	3.62	3.0	1.80
S3	The amount of time passengers actually spend on the vehicles is reasonable.	20	3.50	3.5	1.64
S6	The dispatch operators answer the phone in a timely manner.	19	3.32	4.0	1.67

Evaluation of Highest and Lowest Responses

High Rankings

Fees / Fare are reasonable.

Currently the service is free to low income persons and individuals 60 years old or older. All others pay a \$1.60 one-way fare. Fees have not increased in over 5 years. To be efficient the county needs to move away from its current monthly billing system and purchased tickets process. The responses to this question indicate that the county may need further study and rider involvement and feedback before switching from billing to ticketing.

Drivers drive safely, are courteous and professional.

Passengers feel secure when riding in the vehicle.

Despite past issues with driver turn over, as a group the drivers received the highest marks. Drivers have the greatest contact with the passengers and frequently form a special bond with them. It is not uncommon for a rider to request a specific driver. In terms of evaluating overall system performance, responses related to driver safety should be second only to on-time performance responses. Driver receive one-week of class room training and two-weeks on the road training.

Reservation operators are good at their work.

Reservation operators are the first point of contact for most passengers and a primary point of contact for agencies. They are cross-trained and handle a variety of responsibilities. Agencies rely on the reservationist for accurate information, timely request and application processing and honest responses on the daily service responses.

Low Rankings

When bad weather causes schedule changes, the notification process is adequate.

TAMS has an inclement weather procedure. There are several types of notification provided. There is a notice posted on the home page of the county's web site. WFMY – Channel 2 and WGHP – Channel 8 are contacted and notices are displayed on their web sites and posted on their channel's scrolling inclement weather notices. Two agencies contact the transportation director to determine the status of service for the day. Both the TAMS' office and MV Transportation's dispatch office are staffed as early as 5:00am in the case of MV, weather permitting. During the collection of data for the survey, TAMS began an email update system that includes 39 agencies benefiting from the service. This system is used to communicate system delays and will be used for incremental weather notices in the future. Also the regional technology project that TAMS is participating in includes a automated phone system that will implemented in the future.

Recommendation: Better communicate to passengers the existing means for inclement weather notices. Pose the question again in 2009 and see if the email update system has any effect. Continue to expand methods of notification to include wireless notification and automated phone calling.

Dispatch operators answer the phone in a timely manner and are good at their work.

Reservation operators answer the phone in a timely manner.

TAMS, where the reservationists are located, implemented an Automated Call Distribution phone system on June 9, 2008. Now all calls are answered and placed in a queue to be answered by the next available reservationist. Prior to that, if all reservationists were busy the phone simply rang until it was answered.

Recommendation: Pose the question again in 2009 and see if the ACD phone system has improved the passenger's satisfaction. Work with MV Transportation, where the dispatch operators are located, to improve the responsiveness in the dispatch office.

Drivers arrive when expected.

On-time performance is a key indicator of the quality of the service. The contractual benchmark is a 95% on-time rating. In the months leading up to the survey, the system experienced a significant driver shortage and the on-time rating fell several percentage points below 95%. During the survey period, the on-time performance percent rose back to 95%. It should be noted that at 800 trips per day, with 95% of the trips on time, 40 were not on time. Another possible factor is possible confusion on the passenger's part as to what is considered on-time. Prior to December

2007 there was a 30-minute window. That window changed to a 20-20 window. While TAMS indicated passengers were informed of the change, the responses may have been given due to confusion over the 20-20 window. Responses to this question were the passenger's perception of whether or not the driver arrived on time, not whether they arrived within the 20-20 window.

Recommendation: TAMS should provide clear communication and expectations for being on time. The goal should be 100% but there are numerous factors that make demand-response transportation unpredictable. This question should be rephrased and asked again in 2009.

Passengers spend too much time on the vehicles.

The system does not have a contractual standard for the amount of time a passenger spends on a vehicle. The scheduler uses one hour as a guide. There are numerous causes for the time length of a trip, such as traffic, distance of the trip, remoteness of the pickup or drop-off. However, many passengers have physical disabilities that make long trips difficult.

Recommendation: TAMS should provide closely monitor length on time on vehicle and develop a contract standard. This could result in the additional of additional resources or simply better scheduling. This question should be asked again in 2009.

We hope this information will help you make good decisions. If you have any questions at any time, please let me know. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Tollie Mitchell, Program Director
Insight Research, Inc.