

ODOT DMV Customer Based Performance Measures Survey

Summary of Survey Methodology and Results

by Stephen M. Johnson, Ph.D.

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OREGON SURVEY RESEARCH LABORATORY

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

EUGENE OR 97403-5245

541-346-0824

fax: 541-346-5026

Internet: OSRL@OREGON.UOREGON.EDU

World Wide Web: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~osrl>

Introduction

The Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicles Services (DMV) branch of the Oregon Department of Transportation provides a wide variety of services. As part of DMV's efforts to evaluate the quality of its services, DMV contracted with the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) to conduct research on how callers to the two DMV call centers assess the quality of the services they receive. Working closely with DMV representative Mark Brown, OSRL planned, pre-tested, and implemented a telephone survey of 401 recent callers. This report summarizes the survey methodology and results.

Survey Methodology

Survey Instrument

The broad goals of the survey were to obtain valid and reliable data on the quality of services provided to callers by the DMV call centers.

In designing the survey instrument, OSRL used a multi-path approach which included the following: reviewing a Portland State University class project draft survey, drawing from OSRL's survey archives and professional networks for questions related to DMV's needs, creating original survey questions with the assistance of DMV staff, and pre-testing individual questions and the entire survey.

The survey instrument was programmed into OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system and further pretested. A facsimile of the survey instrument is provided in Section 2 of this documentation. All interviews were completely anonymous, and human subjects approval was obtained.

Sample and Data Collection

Interviewer training was conducted on March 30, 1999; see Section 3 for interviewer instructions. Interviewing was conducted from 9:00 AM until 9:00 PM Monday through Sunday, until the target sample size of 400 was exceeded. Altogether, OSRL interviewers made 2,729 random telephone calls to complete 401 interviews between March 31 and April 8, 1999. Up to 20 calls were made to each valid telephone number. All callers who had called DMV on March 24, 1999 had an equal chance of being called. The net response rate was 72% and the refusal rate was 6%; see Section 4 for the sample and response rate report. The average length of the interviews was 9 minutes.

Survey sampling errors are calculated to assist data users in assessing how much confidence to place in a particular survey result. Large random samples, as in this study, reduce sampling error. Results for survey questions in which there is low variability also have less sampling error; for example, a variable with a 50/50 proportional split has wider confidence intervals than a variable with a 5/95 proportional split. For this study of 401, the sampling error, when the entire population of callers is used, is ± 5.0 percentage points on a variable with a 50/50 proportional split (at the 95% confidence level). For a variable with a 5/95 proportional split, the sampling error, for the entire population of callers is ± 2.0 percentage points.

Survey Results

The presentation of the survey results is organized around the following subject areas: why people call the DMV; general impressions about the agents at DMV Call Centers; telephone behavior and manners; effectiveness of call transfers; return calls from DMV; general impressions of the DMV Call Centers; differences between Call Centers; and demographic differences among respondents. Readers of this report may refer to the 35 banner-style tables in Section 6 for more detail. In the Banner Tables, the content is cross tabulated by a wide range of demographic information. The banner data include counts and percentages for each question overall, and counts and percentages for each row and column of the cross-tabulation. See Section 5 for instructions on how to read Banner Tables.

Why People Call the DMV Call Centers

Respondents were asked why they called DMV. Almost half of the respondents, 45% called for some form of driver information, primarily about licensing, reinstatement or testing. Another 38% called for vehicle information, almost half of whom were concerned about vehicle titles. In addition 6% called about accidents and 10% for a variety of miscellaneous reasons. For more information see Banner Tables 26 – 29 and the open-ended narratives responses in Section 7.

General Impressions about the Agents at DMV Call Centers

In general, callers to the DMV Call Centers were extremely satisfied with how their calls were handled. Respondents were asked about their agreement or disagreement with a wide variety of statements related to how the phone agent they talked with handled their call. These statements were about timeliness, knowledge of DMV laws and policies, ability to understand questions, ability to answer questions, and ability to make their answer understood. In all of these areas 90% or more of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement about the phone agent, indicating that that the phone agent had these positive attributes. Disagreement with these positive statements was generally only around 6%, with 1 – 2% of respondents unsure or unable to recall.

Telephone Behavior and Manners

Respondents were also asked about how the telephone agents behaved on the phone. Here too respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a series of positive statements about telephone behavior and manners. Much as with the previous set of statements, respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that the telephone agents exhibited excellent telephone behavior and manners. Over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that telephone agents responded with confidence, made them feel comfortable, treated them with respect, were willing to answer questions and solve problems, were helpful, efficient, and spoke with a pleasant tone of voice.

Effectiveness of Call Transfers

One third of all callers to the DMV Call Centers had to be transferred to specialists in order for their questions to be answered. Those respondents who had been transferred were questioned about how the initial phone agent handled the transfer. In almost all cases (94%) respondents reported that they were informed that they would be transferred. In about half the cases (48%) the initial agent stayed on the phone until the transfer was completed, although the number of agents who stayed on the phone might be higher since 22% of respondents were unsure if the initial agent stayed on the phone or not. Finally, almost all respondents thought the transfer was efficient (96%). See Banner Tables 5 - 8 for more detail.

Return Calls from DMV

In a small number of cases (13%) the DMV phone agent was not able to answer a question on the initial call and had to call back the person who made the inquiry. In most of these cases (69%) respondents felt that the telephone call backs were completed in a timely manner. However, respondents were not quite as pleased with the quality of the follow-up calls, with only 52% feeling that the necessary follow-up had been done, while 31% felt

that the necessary follow-up had not been done. See Banner Tables 9 & 10 for more information.

General Impressions of the DMV Call Centers

Respondents were asked three general questions about the DMV Call Centers. First, did the service they received exceed their expectations or not. Some 23% reported that their expectations had been exceeded, while another 70% reported that their expectations had been met. Only 6% felt that the DMV Call Centers had failed to meet their expectations.

Respondents were also asked about whether their opinion of DMV ability to provide customer service had changed. On this question 46% of respondents felt that their opinion of DMV's ability to provide customer service had improved. Another 46% reported that their opinion stayed the same, although it is quite possible that that opinion had been high to start with. Only 5% reported that their opinion had decreased.

Finally, respondents were asked if they would recommend the DMV call-in service to others. On this question there was no disagreement, with 94% of respondents replying that they would recommend the call-in service. See Banner Tables 30 – 32 for more information.

Differences between Call Centers

Currently DMV operates two separate Call Centers. One facility is inside a DMV office in Salem and the other facility is inside a women's correctional institute in Salem. The question has been raised about whether customers who call one center are more likely to have their questions answered and be satisfied with the service they receive than the callers to the alternative center. This survey shows that there are no significant differences between the responses of customers who use one center versus the other. For almost every question the differences between respondents who use the two different centers vary by only a percentage point or two, well within the margin of error for a survey of this size. The Banner Tables in Section 6 detail the differences between the two call centers for every question in the survey.

Demographic Differences among Respondents

Respondents were asked a small number of demographic questions in order to investigate if there was any differential treatment or perceptions that could be attached to age, gender ethnicity, or the reason people called DMV. No differences can be found between respondents based on age, ethnicity, or the reason for the call to DMV. However, there is a difference between female and male respondents. In almost every case female respondents had a higher opinion of how their calls were handled, the telephone agent, and

the DMV Call Centers. In general about 10% more women than men reported the highest level of agreement with the positive statements about the phone agents and the call service.

Conclusions

The results show that the DMV call centers are highly effective at providing quality customer service. Almost all respondents were satisfied with their experience of calling DMV and would recommend that others call DMV. DMV might be able to make slight improvements in some areas, such as more effectively handling call backs, but in general it would be hard to improve this service from the perspective of most callers.