

PN-ACD-124
78554

BUILDING EQUITY AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

(BEEP) PROJECT

Contract NO 504-0107-C-00-6201-00

REPORT

ON

TWO CUSTOMER CARE WORKSHOPS

FOR

MINISTRY OF TRADE, TOURISM & INDUSTRY

&

GUYANA NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

May - June, 1997

Submitted to Daniel Wallace
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June 17 1997

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MTT&I - Ministry of Trade, Tourism & Industry
GNBS - Guyana National Bureau of Standards

1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This training for the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry and the Guyana National Bureau of Standards, forms part of a BEEP Consultancy

"Provisional services to the general public and the private sector is a major component of the Ministry's mission. At "points of contact" between staff and the public, both personally and by phone, are employees and supervisors with little or no exposure to effective methods of dealing with the public. As a result, the Ministry's professional image and ability to deliver services is negatively affected. Staff within both the divisions and agencies would benefit from effective communications and the adoption of a 'consumer service' approach to the public."

2. SCOPE OF WORK

“ The Consultant will

- (a) Assess the need for specific aspects of communication and customer service training through observation and interviews with members of the staff
- (b) Prepare a training design for the workshop sessions
- (c) Conduct the workshops
- (d) Assist the Consumer Affairs Division and the GNBS with the design of a system of receiving, recording, channelling and follow-up complaints
- (e) Provide training to the hot line staff in interacting with the public and responding to complaints ”

(Please refer to p 25)

3. SUMMARY OF DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY Prior to Workshop

Prior to beginning the workshop, I arranged brief one-on-one sessions with 33 persons in the Ministry and Bureau. This was essentially to find out

- what people's jobs were
- how they felt they were contributing to the objectives of the Ministry or Bureau
- what their concerns were,
and
- what were their expectations of this consultancy

This was an immensely useful exercise which enabled me to give specific focus to the workshop on Customer Care (dealing with the Internal and the External customer)

There seems to be a tremendous amount of talent and goodwill unexplored in the Ministry. Many are anxious to do a better job despite their poor salaries. Many long to be appreciated for the efforts they are making. They want to work in a happier more pleasing environment - an environment with a little less stress. Many are aware of the physical effects of too much office stress and want to avoid these. The Internal Customers are crying out for attention in order that they may be in a position to deliver a higher quality product.

Below are some of the significant statements made by staff members during the survey

"There is an absence of teamwork"

"We are working at half-strength. There are many vacancies"

"Morale in the organisation is very low"

"We are definitely not presenting the right image either internally or to the public"

"Our Seniors at the top need to see eye-to-eye for the good of the Ministry"

"We need a Ministry Newsletter as this will assist organisation climate"

"There is an absence of supervisory skills"

"There are instances when members disagree with each other loudly in front of members of the public"

"There is an absence of internal security"
Cabinets have no locks Desk drawers have no locks
There are few working fans
Some lights take 15 mins to come on"

"Our internal physical environment needs some attention
There are not enough chairs, chairs have broken handles or torn upholstery
This is not a customer friendly place"

"Our external physical environment at the Ministry is a cause for grave concern Outside our windows are stacks of broken cabinets, old desks, chairs, fans, tables, book cupboards - all in a state of disrepair and piled one on top the other"

"Does the staff really understand Quality Service?
I do not think so"

"Do we know what the consumer really wants?"

"There is a scarcity of People Skills within the Ministry"

"There are persons with a great deal of technical ability,
but no People Skills"

"There is need for the projection of a positive image"

"There is need to stress with the Heads of Departments that
what is learnt in this workshop should not just be filed, but
implemented"

"Supervisors ought to set the example Often they do not"

"Many of us regret the disunity in the Ministry"

"We do not seem to understand our roles"

"I am concerned about the attitude of those persons who hide
information from colleagues, because it will make them feel and
look better than their colleagues"

"This Ministry is not moving on "

"We seem ill-equipped to handle Consumer Affairs It cannot
be done by persuasion only We need legislation It cannot
continue to be the voluntary programme it was "

"We need to move to the next stage of compelling people to
listen to us"

"I am concerned about our inability to take persons to Court
The matters must first go to the A G 's Chambers and there it
takes a long time In the interim, consumers go behind our
backs and pay money to solve or end the matter "

"Our staff relations are very poor"

"There are not enough inter-departmental links/communication"

"There are many problems with front-line staff"

"Many are not trained to do the jobs they are doing"

"Internal communication in the Ministry is poor. It came up at the last retreat but nothing has been done yet."

"There are many proposals on paper, but little action to date"

"There are not enough meetings for us to share. We need to know what is happening in other divisions"

"There are too many inter and intra divisional conflicts"

"We need much help with interpersonal relations"

"There is not enough liaison with our superiors"

"We need to appreciate each other more"

"Many of us are too stressed out but no one is even noticing"

"There is too much conflict in this Ministry - more than our share and it is affecting the morale and the performance of the staff and ultimately the external customer. It is cascading down and the Junior staff is aware of it too"

"New staff is not introduced around the Ministry"

"I am concerned about the attitude of the Accounts staff"

"I am concerned about the lack of standards in the Ministry"

"Loud gossiping and congregating in the Ministry is affecting our image"

"Some persons in this Ministry do not speak to each other"

"Several of us need an attitude change"

"I am concerned about the lack of technical training for the Bureau staff"

"We are employing at the Bureau a group that is just out of school On-going training is therefore a necessity"

"There is not enough formalization of Bureau procedures"

"There is not enough on-going training at the Bureau"

"We need to adhere to the systems we have in place both at the Ministry and at the Bureau"

"We need to practice basic management techniques"

"At the Bureau, we need testing facilities"

"Lines of authority/Chain of Command often ignored at the Bureau This diminishes the authority of the Supervisor"

"There is lack of professionalism among staff"

4. OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING WORKSHOP

"To sensitize employees about what would enhance the quality of the day-to-day relations between staff member and staff member and staff member and customer thus enabling the provision of superior service to all customers, Internal and External"

Anticipated Output

That after Training

- (a) participants would demonstrate the behaviour of a customer-focussed organisation
- (b) participants would answer the telephone using improved telephone techniques and manners
- (c) participants would demonstrate in their day -to-day relations with each other and with visitors, improved interpersonal relations and improved office etiquette

5. NAMES & DESIGNATION OF PERSONS TRAINED

CUSTOMER CARE WORKSHOP

MINISTRY OF TRADE TOURISM & INDUSTRY

AND

GUYANA NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

BATCH NO. I

DATE & DURATION: Fri May 16 9 - 12 noon, Mon. May 19 9 - 12 noon
and Tues May 20 9 - 12 noon

NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>NAMES</u>	<u>DESIGNATIONS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
1 Shellone Reynolds	Technical Assistant	MTT&I
2. Avonie Lekha	Registry Sup (ag)	"
3 Willet Hamilton	Trade Consultant (ag)	"
4. Rowena Figueira	Accountant	"
5 Joseph Cumberbatch	Snr, Consumers Aff Off	"
6 Jormonica Walcott	Foreign Trade Off (ag)	"
7 Clifford Zammett	Snr Foreign Trade Off (ag)	"
8 Karen Primo	Receptionist	GNBS
9 Adrian Balgobin	Inspector	"
10 Tracy Ann Seaforth	Asst to PRO/Clerk	"
11 Othneil Greene	Inspector	"
12 Shailendra Rai	Inspector	"
13 Claudette Haynes	Snr Personnel Officer	MTT & I
14 Debra Gill	Information Asst	GNBS
15 Minerva Inverary	Information Asst	GNBS

/ 16.

16	Abigail Daniels	Licensing Clerk	MTT& I
17	Susheelwantie Ramnauth		GNBS
18	Margaret Frank	Stenographer	GNBS
19	Paul Wharton	Director Consumer Affairs	MTT & I
20	Kim Valentine	Snr For Trade Officer	MTT & I
21	June Hyman	Confidential Sec (ag)	MTT & I
22	Sharon David	Development Analyst	"
23	Vanessa de Leon	Typist Clerk	GNBS

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6. DETAILS OF WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

7. WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The workshop was highly participatory. The Consultant avoided the lecture presentation mode. Very brief lecturettes were given for concept guidance. We drew on each other's experiences to illustrate or clarify theories and behaviours and to underscore "Lessons to be learnt".

There was a Questionnaire, syndicate work and presentations by various group leaders.

Participants benefitted much from several handouts provided.

EVALUATION

- CUSTOMER CARE WORKSHOP

8. SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE RESPONSES given by Participants - Batches I and II.

Question 1:

Were the Workshop objectives achieved?
All participants said YES

Question 2:

Which part of the programme was most useful to you?
Several persons gave more than one response

6 said "Needs of the Internal Customer"
10 said "Telephone Techniques"
6 said "Self-confidence - Self Esteem"
7 said "All Sections of the programme"
3 said "Commitment and Non Commitment to shared values"
6 said "Characteristics of Customer-focussed Organisation"
2 said "Who is a Supervisor?"
4 said "Group Exercises"
8 said "Personality Characteristics"
3 said "Core Values"
5 said "Customer Care"
3 said "Role of Front-Line staff"
2 said "Office Etiquette"
5 said "The Internal and the External Customer"

- 4 said *"Dealing with complainants"*
- 2 said *"Physical environment"*

Question 3:

In what way will this workshop help to improve the image of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry and the Guyana National Bureau of Standards?

- *"This workshop was very good. It has motivated staff to improve their daily operations"*
- *"Members of staff need to practice the techniques learnt"*
- *"We now know what we need to do to change our physical environment"*
- *"We should now be able to communicate more clearly"*
- *"We have learnt how to deal more courteously with the customers - internally and externally"*
- *"This workshop has made members of staff more aware of their duties and obligations not only to themselves but also to the Ministry and to the public. This workshop should make them more capable of serving the public"*
- *"The reception customers receive would be of a higher quality because of the knowledge the entire staff gained from the workshop"*
- *"The staff at the Guyana National Bureau of Standards would answer the telephone more efficiently"*
- *"It would help us only if all that was said at the workshop is"*

put into practice"

- "We now know what is the right way to do things"
- "Front-line staff would be better equipped to demonstrate the customer-focussed attitude"
- "We have been made conscious of undesirable attitudes which we have been exhibiting that need to be changed"
- "We now have valuable information on "Customer Care"
- "This workshop has helped us to be more customer-focussed and to have a caring nature when dealing with customers"
- "This workshop will improve the image of IRD if all levels of staff participate. Maybe at the end of it, our team spirit will be built"
- "The staff of the Bureau who attended this workshop will now be able to adopt a different approach when dealing with customers and answering the telephone"
- "This workshop has trained and equipped only some members of staff to be more efficient and polite. They ought therefore to put these into practice and thus enhance the image of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry. We are now customer-oriented."
- "The physical surroundings of the Bureau will be worked on. Staff will have better attitudes to their work and to the organisation thereby improving the image of the organisation."
- "Staff will be able to relate courteously to Customers on the telephone and in person, thereby improving the image of the Bureau of Standards"

- *"With resources, this workshop can mean a lot to this Ministry. The co-operation and assistance of the rest of the staff and Administrative Officers are vital"*
- *"The Ministry should internalize the core values, the participants suggested"*

Question 4

What follow-up action would you like to see in order to ensure that positive changes in customer service take place at the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry and at the Guyana National Bureau of Standards?

- *There should be a one-day Workshop for all staff in the last quarter of 1997 to treat with the areas covered in this workshop. It will be a refresher course for those who have done the workshop"*
- *Take measures to enhance your offices, if they are unattractive"*
- *"I'd like to see a clock in the lobby area of MTT&I, a Directory Board and an Events Board. I'd also like to see all staff as part of this programme. Everyone needs to know what was done on the programme if they are to participate in our recovery exercises. I'd also like to see employee welfare given some more attention"*
- *"I'd like to see the lobby area at MTT&T made more attractive. I'd also like to see a similar workshop such as the one we did, conducted for Top Management so that they can work hand in hand with us for improvements in the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry"*
- *"There should be an emphasis on Dress Code. The way staff is attired does influence the image the public has of the organization."*

- "The physical surroundings of MTT&I are very untidy. Some work should be done in this area"
- "I would like to see more Unity in the Ministry of Trade. There should also be wider participation in these training programmes"
- "All Senior staff at the GNBS should do this workshop. It is very useful for all staff and will help us as a team to work on improving standards at the Bureau". There is no 'Team' at GNBS"
- "I'd like to see the Reception area at the Bureau developed. It is embarrassing to have persons talk badly about the place where you work. It is the first place the member of the public sees when he/she arrives"
- "I think Ms Sinclair, you should be asked to come and train other staff in Customer Care, Telephone Courtesy and Office etiquette"
- "Staff who were at the workshop should talk to other staff who were not at the workshop and encourage them to change their ways, attitudes, etc"
- "These programmes should be run on a regular basis"
- "The topic 'Characteristics of a Customer-focussed organisation' should be run for the entire staff at GNBS"
- "I think that GNBS should spend some resources on making the organisation more customer-oriented"
- "Programmes of this type should be held for Senior functionaries at the Ministry of Trade so that they get exposed to what we were exposed to - acceptable patterns of behaviour in a customer-focussed organisation"

- "I would like to see committees set up immediately for our customer-focussed projects"
 - "I'd like to see less politics in our efforts to enhance our Ministry"
 - "I would like to see the implementation of Core Values that were listed during the workshop"
 - "More internal activities that would encourage staff members to interact on a cordial basis"
 - "An evaluation be done to assess the level of improved performance after a period of time "
 - "A workshop on "Supervisory Management"'"
 - "Quick action on CFP - on Customer-focus Project"
 - "I would like to see us all valued by our Seniors as important staff of the Ministry and the Bureau regardless of our level"
- "I would like Senior Management to give its full blessing to the implementation of a Customer Care programme in the Ministry"

Question 5•

Any other Comments on the Workshop?

- "The Workshop was well organized"
- "Time was well-managed in conducting a programme of this nature"
- "This was a great learning experience I hope to be part of a lot more in the future"

MTT&I & GNBS

9 Participants Views on•

What prevents you as an employee from offering to the public a higher quality of service?

- 1 "The staff needs training in all areas Training is not a priority in this Ministry"
- 2 "Our security guards need training They are the first point of contact when the public visits"
- 3 "We are not clear on our functions"
- 4 "The reception area at the Bureau of Standards is unattractive Some work needs to be done to make it more customer-friendly"
- 5 "There are no directional signs at the Ministry of Trade, no events board to help the customer"

- 6 "There is poor office communication. The staff feels alienated when activities are being organized around them and they are left out. This influences our attitude to service"
- 7 "Feedback is not given to the Receptionist commending or correcting her"
- 8 "Generally, among all staff, weaknesses need to be recognized, discussed and corrected"
- 9 "There is no unity and no team work at the Ministry of Trade"
- 10 "There is an absence of customer orientation at the Senior level"
- 11 "There is inadequate staffing so customers do not receive prompt service"
- 12 "There are inadequate facilities for customer comfort, internal and external customer"
- 13 "Some employees are very discourteous. They fail to report their absence from work and are habitually absent"

10: Some General comments on the workshop made by participants and some suggestions as to the type of follow-up action they would like to see.

- *"Frequent checks should be made by the consultant to see if adequate systems have been put in place"*
- *"I would like to see progress at the Ministry before I leave on retirement"*
- *Programmes like these should be held for staff at all levels including senior managers so that they understand the concept of the Internal Customer. They are the ones to set the example for others to follow"*
- *"A workshop like this should be held for all the staff of GNBS"*
- *"As a result of "CFP" the physical environment would be encouraging and conducive to work in"*
- *"I will like to see everyone practicing everything we have done during this training workshop"*
- *"Be polite to junior staff despite their designations"*
- *"I have learnt a great deal"*
- *"This is the first time that I ever got sent on a workshop in the Ministry and I hope that we would have many more workshops for staff"*
- *"I committed 80% of the errors that demonstrated non-commitment. I was very uncomfortable"*

- *"More social activities are needed in the Ministry"*
- *"Do an evaluation after a period of time to assess the level of improved performance"*
- *I think that the workshop has achieved its objective. I have learnt a lot and am sure all those who participated will say they are the wiser. However, I do strongly urge that recommendations that all senior managers and the P S give their full blessing to the implementation of a CFP in the Ministry"*
- *"Head and Junior staff should work hand in hand to make the Ministry of Trade a better place to be in"*
- *"I would like to see unity in the Ministry"*
- *"Time was managed well in conducting a programme of this nature"*
- *"There is no team-work at the Bureau. There should be a programme for the entire bureau staff"*
- *"This programme should be run on a regular basis and heads and senior management must assist and co-operate with the junior staff to improve the image of the Ministry"*
- *"A separate session for all on the characteristics of a customer-focussed organisation"*

**11: Vision Statement for the Public Service
arising from Commonwealth Secretariat
Strategy Workshop
for Permanent Secretaries
held in May, 1997 at Ogle.**

Permanent Secretaries decided on the following

"By the year 2007, the Guyana Public Service would be a Customer-driven institution acting as facilitator to develop a relationship with its social partners to provide quality service for all"

This was used on the Customer Care Workshop to indicate the relevance of what we were doing. The leaders of the Public Service were thinking the same way and had gone as far as highlighting Customer Care and High Quality Service in a Vision for the Public Service

12. Practical Project Arising from Training Workshop on Customer Care

Narrative

A donation of \$2,000 (G) is being given to each of the two Workshop Groups at MTT&I and by NBS to begin a micro project to improve the organisation's Customer Care Programme

The participants have named the project

"CFP - \$2,000 initiative"

CFP is Customer Focus Programme

The workshop participants (subject to the approval of the Permanent Secretary)

- are to decide what specifically will be done i.e. the nature of the project
- will do what needs to be done
- will deliver the required product on July 16, 1997

	MTT&I	GNBS
Project Manager	Claudette Haynes	Karen Primo
Finance Manager	Avome Lekha	Minerva Inverary

There was heightened interest in the practical workshop project. I look forward to seeing the product on July 16, 1997

13 Consultant's Comments and Recommendations

13.1 Status of Scope of Work

SCOPE OF WORK

STATUS AT JUNE 12

The Consultant will

- | | | |
|---|--|------------------|
| 1 | Assess the need for specific aspects of communication and customer service training through observation and interviews with members of the staff | Completed |
| 2 | Prepare a training design for the workshop sessions | Completed |
| 3 | Conduct the workshops | Completed |
| 4 | Assist the Consumer Affairs Division and the GNBS with the design of a system of receiving, recording, channelling and follow-up complaints | Completed |
| 5 | Provide training to the hot-line staff in interacting with the public and responding to complaints | Completed |

13.2 I enjoyed imparting this knowledge just as much as the participants enjoyed receiving it. There was a high level of participation in all aspects of the programme and much enthusiasm was shown for the practical workshop project, both on the part of MT&T and that of the GNBS. Both groups were very receptive indeed.

Attendance during the training programme was good.

Adequate physical arrangements were also made for the sessions. It was a strain while we were in the board room downstairs downstairs trying to compete with the generator next door, but we managed in the end to make ourselves heard and understood.

13.3 Recommendations

13.3.1 There needs to be a consciousness of the needs of the Internal as well as the External Customer. Some small corrective measures if taken can go a far way towards building morale.

13.3.2 The views of the participants on

- (a) what prevents them from offering a high Quality of Service
- (b) the evaluation form especially Questions should be taken seriously and action taken where appropriate

13.3.3 There seems to be an unusually large number of officers "acting". This can affect office morale. Some attention needs to be paid to this with a view to seeking confirmation where appropriate.

13.3.4 There needs to be a strategic approach to Human Resource Development in the Ministry. Many skill gaps became obvious during my interactions with the staff of these two groups. However, there seems to be no concerted plan to deal with the Training aspect of HRD. I suggest that IDCE be approached to do in-house English upgrading classes - part of one-day per week. IDCE is doing this type of programme for many other agencies.

13.4 The Ministry needs to revisit its Mission Statement for appropriateness and its ability to energize staff.

- 13 5 The Ministry and the Bureau need to develop a "Vision Statement" and to make it available to all departments and divisions
- 13 6 The Ministry needs to re-examine its internal communications strategies Regular and relevant office communication is critical to a healthy office climate
- 13 7 There needs to be a Training Needs Assessment done to identify skill gaps and specify the competencies needed to achieve the Ministry's objectives
- 13 8 There should be on-going programmes of Training for the staff of the Ministry and the Bureau
- 13 9 There should be an "Upgrade Your Management Skills" programme for supervisors
- 13 10 That Senior management should lend support to the practical workshop project in the Ministry/Bureau Apart from being a morale booster, it promises to build team spirit as it utilizes their ideas and their innovativeness for the benefit of the organization

Joyce Sinclair
June 17 1997