Procurement – Grants and Cooperative Agreements Survey Results

NSSC Baseline Customer Satisfaction Surveys

January 10, 2006

Contents

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Introduction

Introduction

Background

◆ The NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) is preparing to launch in March 2006

◆ Services will be transitioning from all ten NASA centers to the NSSC in the areas of:

— Financial Management

— Human Resources

— Procurement

— Information Technology

◆ The NSSC wants to understand satisfaction with current service delivery for those services that will transition to the NSSC in fiscal year 2006

Objectives

◆ To measure customer perceptions of current service delivery

◆ To establish a baseline for performance that the NSSC can use to measure itself against after the transition of services

◆ To understand customer perceptions of the importance and usage patterns of services

◆ To set a standard for ongoing measurement of customer satisfaction

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Introduction – About the Surveys

◆ The NSSC Baseline Customer Satisfaction Surveys are customer assessments of the centers' current service quality for services that will transition to the NSSC in fiscal year 2006

◆ Separate surveys were deployed across seven areas

— Financial Management

— Human Resources

— Procurement – 1102 Certification and Training Coordination

— Procurement – Agency Bankcard Program Coordination

— Procurement – Agency Contracting

— Procurement – Grants and Cooperative Agreements

— Procurement – Intern Program Logistics

◆ Most questions use a five-point response scale

◆ ScottMadden utilized a web-based methodology to administer the survey

◆ Respondents were asked to identify their center, Mission Directorate or Mission Support area, grade level, and length of employment with NASA

◆ The surveys opened on November 8, 2005 and were closed at the end of business, December 2, 2005; reminders were sent on November 16 to those invitees who had not responded

◆ Separate invitations were sent for each of the seven surveys

◆ At the close of the survey, 1,129 responses were obtained representing a 23% response rate across all surveys *(response rates for each survey are shown on the next page)*

◆ Names of respondents are confidential and will not be shared with the NSSC

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Introduction – About the Surveys (Cont'd)

The following table shows the number of invitations sent and responses received for each of the surveys:

Functional Area	Survey	# Invited*	# Responded	Response Rate	Margin of Error with 90% Confidence Level
FM	Financial Management	1646	285	17%	4.8%
HR	Human Resources	3184	804	25%	2.8%
PR	Agency Bankcard Program Coordination	10	8	80%	13.7%
PR	1102 Certification and Training Coordination	9	5	56%	27.4%
PR	Procurement Intern Program Logistics	14	7	50%	24.1%
PR	Grants/Cooperative Agreements	77	18	23%	17.7%
PR	Agency Contracting	10	2	20%	54.8%
Overall		4950	1129	23%	

[yellow] = statistically significant at 90% confidence level

Note: Response rates for the Procurement surveys are not large enough to meet traditionally desired levels of statistical significance. However, results provide directional guidance for the NSSC and should be used for that purpose. Margins of error on Procurement surveys are generally higher because of the small size of the customer populations.

* Excludes "undeliverable" email addresses

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Introduction – About the Analysis

◆ The analysis is focused on establishing the baseline. In future years, further analysis should be performed to determine changes from the baseline

◆ For purposes of this analysis, all unanswered and "NA" responses are excluded from the percentages and means. This provides a truer picture of the results than if these items were included

◆ Demographic differences in satisfaction were examined for the Human Resources and Financial Management surveys, and those breakdowns, with interesting results, are included in the reports. Demographic differences were not examined for the Procurement surveys because of the low number of participants

◆ Personal references in the verbatim comments are omitted. Typographical errors and spelling errors are corrected in the comments

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Summary of Findings

◆ Overall satisfaction is generally positive with 60% of respondents giving favorable ratings, however, nearly 30% are not satisfied. The percent favorable for overall satisfaction is average compared to the other NSSC baseline surveys

◆ Customers gave the **highest ratings** (measured by mean) to:
  — Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are consistently courteous
  — Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel follow through on the commitments they make
  — The Grants/Cooperative Agreements service meets the requirements of my position

◆ Customers gave the **lowest ratings** (measured by mean) to:
  — Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel tell me exactly when services will be performed
  — Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel have efficient processes to deliver services
  — Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel deliver error-free services

◆ While all respondents agree that the Grants/Cooperative Agreements service is either "somewhat" or "very" important, the perceptions of performance are quite mixed

◆ Customers believe the most important objective for Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel should be "perform services accurately"

◆ Efforts to improve in the following areas would result in the greatest payoff for Grants/Cooperative Agreements customers
  — Communicating turnaround time for service
  — Having efficient processes to deliver services
  — General performance on processing of grants/cooperative agreements

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Summary of Findings (Cont'd)

◆ Key themes from verbatim comments

— The most common areas suggested for improvement are:

- Communication during the process

- Responsiveness/timeliness of processing grants/cooperative agreements

— Comments about level of satisfaction focus on:

- Some positive experiences and impressions

- The complexity of the process/system

— Additional comments include a range of topics including opinions of procurement, the new accounting systems, and the location selection for the NSSC

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Conclusions

◆ Perceptions on the performance of the Grants/Cooperative Agreements process are quite mixed

◆ Timeliness and communicating turnaround times represent a key area of improvement for Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel

◆ There are opportunities for improvement in simplifying or streamlining the current process

Implications for the NSSC

◆ Maintain high performance levels for customer focus and follow-through on commitments

◆ Investigate opportunities to improve and streamline the process

◆ Investigate improvements for

— Timeliness of service delivery

— Communicating turnaround times

— Accuracy of service

◆ Monitor customer feedback closely since perceptions of current performance are mixed

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Grants/Cooperative Agreements Baseline Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Survey Demographics

Eighteen Grants and Cooperative Agreements customers responded to the survey, representing a 23% response rate. The following charts show the demographic breakdown for these customers.

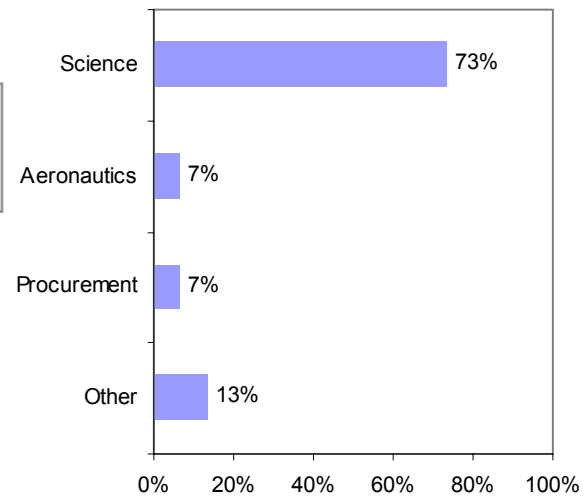**Please indicate the Center with which you are currently associated.**

DFRC	12%
GSFC	12%
HQ	53%
SSC	24%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
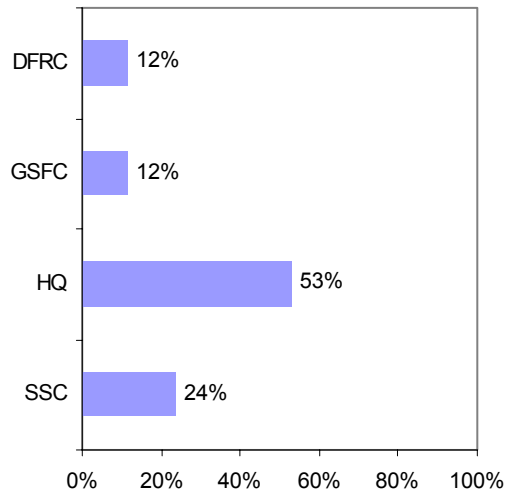
Please indicate the Mission Directorate or Mission Support area in which you work.

Responses for "Other" include Education and Propulsion Testing
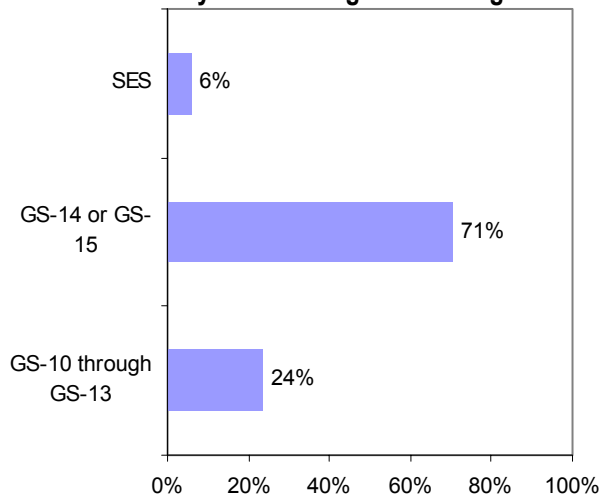
Science	73%
Aeronautics	7%
Procurement	7%
Other	13%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Please indicate your current government grade level.

SES	6%
GS-14 or GS-15	71%
GS-10 through GS-13	24%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Please indicate the number of years you have worked for NASA.

1 to 4 years	35%
5 to 14 years	24%
15 to 24 years	29%
25 years or more	12%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

11

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants
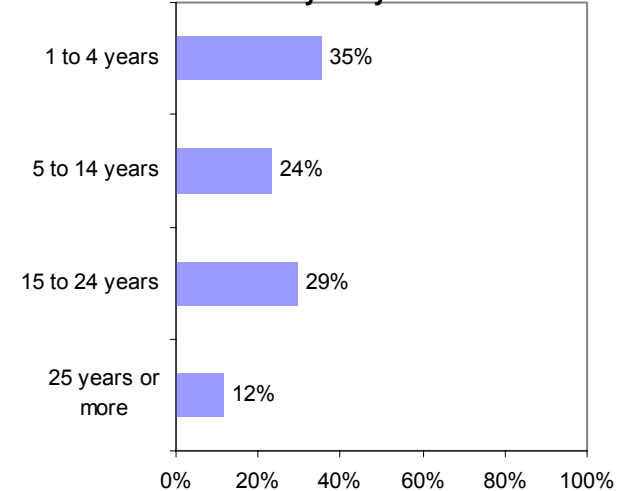
Overall Satisfaction with Grants/Cooperative Agreements

Overall satisfaction is generally positive, with 60% providing positive responses. However, nearly 30% are not satisfied.

Overall Satisfaction
(n=15)

Mean

4. Overall, I am satisfied with Grants/Cooperative Agreements (e.g., processing of grants and cooperative agreements)

| 27% | 13% | 47% | 13% |

3.47

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

12

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants
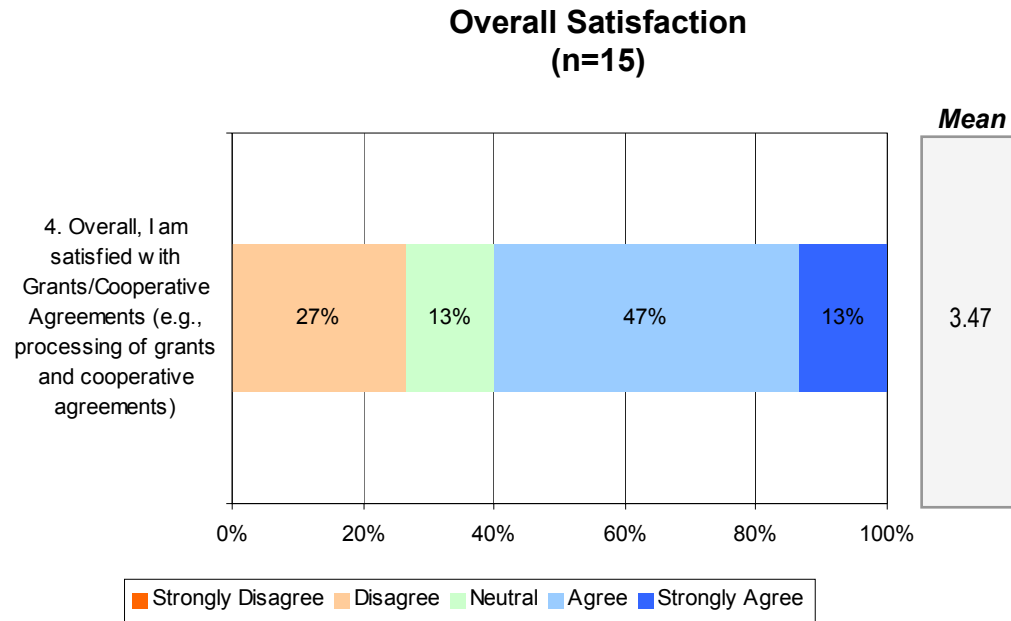
Evaluation of Grants/Cooperative Agreements Services

Customers perceive the importance of the Grants/Cooperative Agreements service as very high, but opinions on performance are quite mixed.

Customer ratings on the <u>performance</u> of Grants/Cooperative Agreements services

Mean

Grants/Cooperative Agreements: 6% | 24% | 24% | 29% | 18%

3.29

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Very dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Neutral ■ Satisfied ■ Very satisfied

Customer ratings on the <u>use</u> of Grants/Cooperative Agreements services

Mean

Grants/Cooperative Agreements: 6% 6% 11% | 17% | 61%

4.22

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Never use ■ Rarely use ■ Use occasionally ■ Use each month ■ Use weekly

Customer ratings on the <u>importance</u> of Grants/Cooperative Agreements services

Mean

Grants/Cooperative Agreements: 12% | 88%

4.88

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Unimportant ■ Not very important ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat important ■ Very important

13

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Satisfaction Drivers

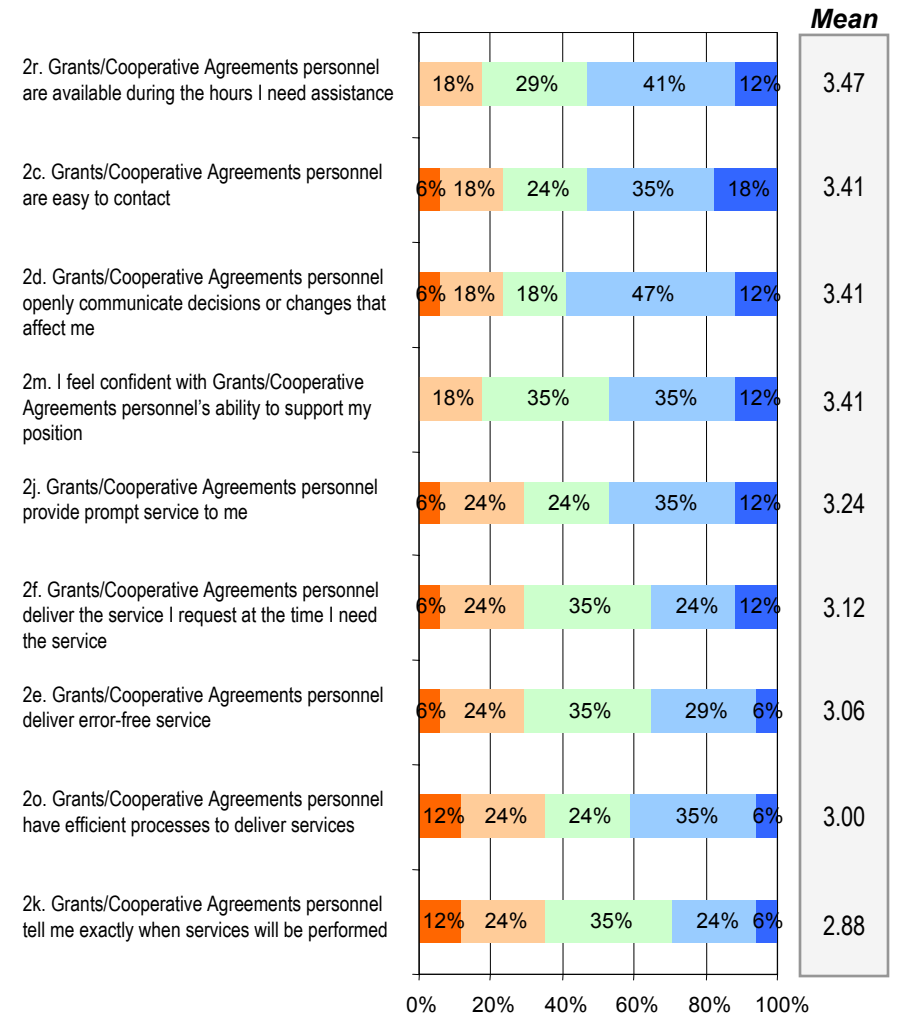## Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements
(Questions are listed in descending order, by mean)

Left chart — Mean:

Statement	Mean
2l. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are consistently courteous	4.06
2g. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel follow through on the commitments they make	3.88
2a. The Grants/Cooperative Agreements service meets the requirements of my position	3.82
2n. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel have the knowledge needed to deliver services	3.71
2h. When I have a problem, Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel show sincere interest in solving it	3.71
2p. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel understand my specific needs	3.69
2b. I know who to call or where to go for my Grants/Cooperative Agreements-related questions or issues	3.65
2i. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are always willing to help me	3.65
2q. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel provide personalized attention	3.65

Right chart — Mean:

Statement	Mean
2r. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are available during the hours I need assistance	3.47
2c. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are easy to contact	3.41
2d. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel openly communicate decisions or changes that affect me	3.41
2m. I feel confident with Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel's ability to support my position	3.41
2j. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel provide prompt service to me	3.24
2f. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel deliver the service I request at the time I need the service	3.12
2e. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel deliver error-free service	3.06
2o. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel have efficient processes to deliver services	3.00
2k. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel tell me exactly when services will be performed	2.88

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

14

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Service Quality Index

Question 2 is designed to assess the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL[1] model:

◆ <u>Tangibles</u>: Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials

◆ <u>Reliability</u>: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately

◆ <u>Responsiveness</u>: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service

◆ <u>Assurance</u>: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence

◆ <u>Empathy</u>: Caring, individualized attention the provided to customers

The following graph shows how Grants/Cooperative Agreements rates on each of these dimensions and compares the dimensions to overall satisfaction. Mean values are used to compute the index.

Service Quality Index
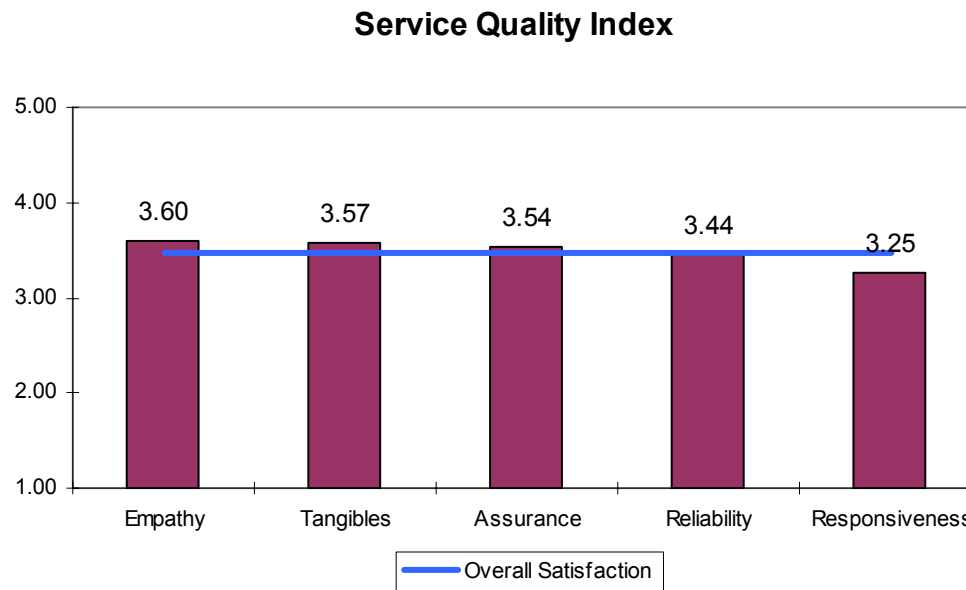
[1]Adapted from: <u>Delivering Quality Service</u>, Valarie A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman and L. Berry

15

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Payoff Index for Grants/Cooperative Agreements Customers

◆ The Payoff Index provides a systematic way to identify and prioritize areas for improvement

◆ The Payoff Index range for the survey was from 0.29 to 0.04. Below are the ten questions that have the highest Payoff Index values. They represent the areas where improvement would have the largest potential impact on improving overall customer satisfaction (Payoff)

◆ In summary, communicating about turnaround times, improving process efficiency, and overall performance would have the greatest potential impact on improving overall satisfaction with Grants/ Cooperative Agreements

Efforts to improve the following areas would result in the greatest payoff for Grants/Cooperative Agreements customers	Importance (Correlation with Overall Satisfaction with Grants/Cooperative Agreements)		Weight (Unfavorable Response Percentage*)		Payoff Index
2k. NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel tell me exactly when services will be performed	0.83	x	35%	=	0.29
2o. NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel have efficient processes to deliver services	0.80	x	35%	=	0.28
2. Grants/Cooperative Agreements (e.g., processing of grants and cooperative agreements) – Performance	0.87	x	29%	=	0.26
2j. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel provide prompt service to me	0.85	x	29%	=	0.25
2f. NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel deliver the service I request at the time I need the service	0.80	x	29%	=	0.24
2e. NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel deliver error-free service	0.75	x	29%	=	0.22
2d. NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel openly communicate decisions or changes that affect me	0.73	x	24%	=	0.17
2c. NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are easy to contact	0.72	x	24%	=	0.17
2m. I feel confident with NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel's ability to support my position	0.90	x	18%	=	0.16
2r. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are available during the hours I need assistance	0.68	x	18%	=	0.12

* Percent Unfavorable = (% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree), or (% Dissatisfied + % Very Dissatisfied)

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Most Important Objectives – Customer View

Please rank your three most important priorities for NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel.
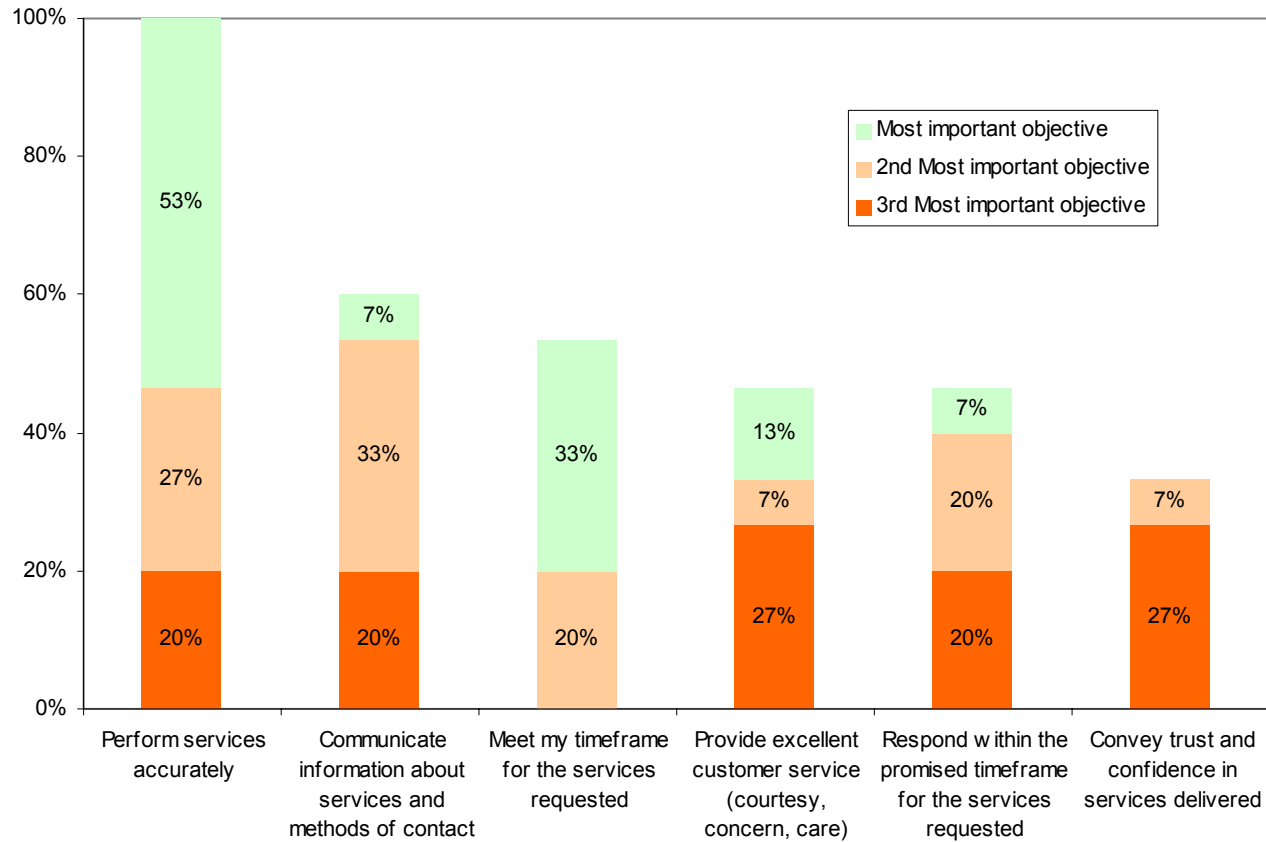
(How to read this chart: 66% of customers who answered the survey thought "Quality of services and accuracy of service delivery" should be the most important objective, 21% thought it should be the second most important objective, 5% thought it should be the third most important objective)

17

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Appendices

Statistical Definitions

Definitions

◆ Margin of Error

— A measurement of the accuracy of the results of a survey

— A margin of error of plus or minus 3.5% means that the responses of the target population as a whole would fall somewhere between 3.5% more or 3.5% less than the responses of the sample (a 7% spread)

— Lower margin of error requires a larger sample size

◆ Confidence Level

— A measure of the precision of an estimated value. In sampling, the confidence level (usually expressed as a percentage) indicates how often the true value can be expected to be within the margin of error

— A 90% confidence level means that if all possible samples of the same size were taken, 90% of them would include the true population mean within the interval created by the margin of error around the sample mean

— Higher confidence level requires a larger sample size

◆ Example

— If a poll reports that 78% of Americans eat peanut butter and the margin of error is stated to be 3%, and the confidence interval is 95%, we can expect that the true value of peanut butter eaters is somewhere between 75% and 81% for 95% of the samples

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Verbatims

Tell us how the service and support can be improved.

Communication

◆ Better communication

◆ Communication! Instead of 'we seem to disagree on funding availability', what we hear is always 'send more money'

◆ Increase the number of personnel responsible for processing the grants. When there are issues or changes insuring that the appropriate personnel are notified

Responsiveness

◆ Improve follow-through. When a program officer provides the information and asks that a grant be processed, it should be processed promptly OR the program officer should be contacted immediately with any concerns that will delay the grant processing. Now, it often just doesn't get processed, with no communication as to what piece of information is lacking

◆ Processing of new grants should been done faster. It shouldn't take a minimum of six weeks to two months to get a new grant awarded. The process seems overly bureaucratic, although frankly we don't have a lot of insight into the entire process. It's difficult to find out exactly where in the process a grant action is and what may be causing it to take so long

◆ Seems to take a long time to get one set up

◆ Work faster

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Verbatims (Cont'd)

Tell us how the service and support can be improved.

Miscellaneous

◆ Make the Grant Status page more customer friendly. There are a few improvements that would make it more useful to me

◆ Need ability to track money

◆ Service and support can be improved by having fewer layers in the SAP Financial Management system where a PR is initiated. Once the PR arrives in the NASA Grants Officer's (Contracting Officer) mailbox, there are added fields that burden the award process for the Grants Officer

◆ This is all based on present service for grants and cooperative agreements through the GRC; no NSSC services have been used thus far. GRC service has greatly improved over the ~3 years we have been having to go through them for grants and cooperative ag

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Verbatims (Cont'd)

Please provide comments regarding your level of satisfaction with the service.

Positive Comments

◆ I have been working through the GSFC Grants Office and Headquarters Grants Administration Offices (HGAO) for the past 7 years. While the senior management of those offices have changes frequently, the level of service the grants team employees have provided has continuously improved. I run two Congressionally-mandated programs with unique situations and sometimes unusual circumstances; the grant team employees have taken the time to understand those programs and work collaboratively with me to help me accomplish what I need to have done while providing thorough and understandable explanations of the grant rules, regulations, and requirements. They seek to provide the maximum flexibility and options for me, always in a pleasant, helpful manner

◆ My previous service experience was excellent

◆ Once a grant is in place things seem to go smoothly

◆ The service provided by the NASA Grants Officer in the Wallops Procurement Office (WPO) is excellent. The WPO is located in the next building at WFF. This proximity allows the Grants Officer and I to exchange scientific research proposals that support Grant awards, and approach challenges as a one-on-one team that involve detailed Government property issues, grant supplements/augmentations, or grant terminations. Because of the close physical proximity of our program office and the WPO, even the most complex issues (i.e., GFP, revised grantee budgets, Grant terminations, replacement PIs, having science & funding follow PI to a new organization) are handled in an orderly and timely fashion

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Verbatims (Cont'd)

Please provide comments regarding your level of satisfaction with the service.

Process Complexity

◆ I believe the personnel working the grants are working hard and trying to do a good job as quickly as their system allows. However, I think the system they use is overly complicated and prone to individual grant actions getting lost or put into a holding bin and not receiving attention until someone inquires about it

◆ The processes are cumbersome, but the job does get done. Overall, the accuracy of the work is good

Miscellaneous

◆ I believe that there is an insufficient number of personnel to handle the large volume of grants/cooperative agreements

◆ It is OK

◆ Not satisfied. Following up on grants funding takes too much of my time

23

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Verbatims (Cont'd)

Please provide any additional comments.

◆ I am in the procurement office therefore, I did not think I was a target audience for this survey

◆ Someone I know who understands my situation was absolutely essential

◆ The grants office is not bad, but the procurement side is a total black hole--we get no information

◆ The new accounting systems have seemed to add a whole additional layer of complexity on the grants systems, increasing the time needed and the potential for problems due to accounting problems, i.e. account balances being inaccurate and indicating funds for the grant action isn't available when, once we look into the problem we find it actually is

◆ Two GSFC employees who have been especially knowledgeable and helpful to me are XX and XX

◆ Why is NSSC going back to Stennis and the low country of Mississippi? The Hurricane experts forecast a 20 year cycle of violent storms. Why put yourself in harms way? Our program can't afford any down time when it comes to procurement support, especially with Grants and subsequent management of at least a 3 year period of performance

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Survey Question 1

Please evaluate each of the following services in terms of <u>frequency of use</u>, <u>importance to you as a customer</u>, and <u>current performance</u>.

For the frequency of use rating:
5 = Use weekly, 4 = Use each month, 3 = Use occasionally, 2 = Rarely use, 1 = Never use

For the importance rating:
5 = Very important, 4 = Somewhat important, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Not very important, 1 = Unimportant

For the performance rating of services:
5 = Very satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Dissatisfied, 1 = Very dissatisfied

NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements Services	Use	Importance	Performance
1. Grants/Cooperative Agreements (e.g., processing of grants and cooperative agreements)			

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Survey Question 2

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:
5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree

Please rate NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements services for each statement	Rating
2a. The Grants/Cooperative Agreements service meets the requirements of my position	
2b. I know who to call or where to go for my Grants/Cooperative Agreements-related questions or issues	
2c. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are easy to contact	
2d. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel openly communicate decisions or changes that affect me	
2e. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel deliver error-free service	
2f. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel deliver the service I request at the time I need the service	
2g. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel follow through on the commitments they make	
2h. When I have a problem, Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel show sincere interest in solving it	
2i. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are always willing to help me	
2j. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel provide prompt service to me	
2k. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel tell me exactly when services will be performed	
2l. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are consistently courteous	
2m. I feel confident with Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel's ability to support my position	
2n. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel have the knowledge needed to deliver services	
2o. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel have efficient processes to deliver services	
2p. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel understand my specific needs	
2q. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel provide personalized attention	
2r. Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel are available during the hours I need assistance	

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Survey Question 3

Please rank your three most important priorities for NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel.
1 = Most important, 2 = Second most important, 3 = Third most important (please select only 3)

Please rank NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel's three most important objectives	Rating
3a. Communicate information about services and methods of contact	
3b. Perform services accurately	
3c. Meet my timeframe for the services requested	
3d. Respond within the promised timeframe for the services requested	
3e. Convey trust and confidence in services delivered	
3f. Provide excellent customer service (courtesy, concern, care)	

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Survey Questions 4 – 7

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement:
5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement:	Rating
4. Overall, I am satisfied with NASA's Grants/Cooperative Agreements services	

5. **Tell us how NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements personnel can improve their services and support.**

6. **Please provide comments in regards to your level of satisfaction with NASA Grants/Cooperative Agreements services.**

7. **Please provide any additional comments.**

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants

Customer Survey Questions 8 – 11

8. **Please indicate the Center with which you are currently associated:**
    –   ARC
    –   DFRC
    –   GRC
    –   GSFC
    –   HQ
    –   JSC
    –   KSC
    –   LaRC
    –   MSFC
    –   SSC
    –   Other (please specify in next blank)

9. **Please indicate the Mission Directorate or Mission Support area in which you work:**
    –   Exploration
    –   Science
    –   Space Operations
    –   Aeronautics
    –   Finance
    –   Procurement
    –   Human Resources
    –   Information Technology
    –   Other (please specify in next blank)

10. **Please indicate your current government grade level:**
    –   SES
    –   GS-14 or GS-15
    –   GS-10 through GS-13
    –   GS-5 through GS-9
    –   Other (please specify in next blank)

11. **Please indicate the number of years you have worked for NASA:**
    –   Less than 1 year
    –   1 to 4 years
    –   5 to 14 years
    –   15 to 24 years
    –   25 years or more

SCOTTMADDEN
Management Consultants