

City of Chattanooga
311 System Customer Satisfaction Survey
February 9, 2005

Submitted to:

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**City of Chattanooga
311 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report
Survey #5
February 9, 2005**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fifth City of Chattanooga 311 Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted in January 2005, as part of a continuing effort to monitor the effectiveness of the City of Chattanooga 311 system. The 311 system is designed to streamline resolution of problems experienced by residents in such areas as sanitation, animal control, street conditions, and other services. Residents who had called the City using 311, between July and December 2004, were randomly selected to participate in the survey. Of the 1,851 residents selected, 509 residents agreed to be interviewed for the current survey.

Of particular importance in this longitudinal analysis of the 311 system is how well customers feel they are treated when they call, and how quickly their problems are resolved. Since the initial surveys there has been a steady, positive trend in both of these areas. Customer service courtesy and problem handling continue to receive high marks from residents. Wait and hold times also continued to remain low, with most calls handled within the first two minutes. Additionally, three-fourths of the problems were able to be handled by the customer representative without further referral. Satisfaction with problem resolution also continued to trend upwards, with a slight increase in the number of residents who indicated they were “very satisfied” with the City’s response to their problem.

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I. Introduction

This survey is the fifth in a series of surveys investigating the success of the City of Chattanooga's 311 city services call system. As previously, the survey is of residents in the City of Chattanooga who have called the city's 311 line for help with services, including sanitation, animal control, and traffic-related problems. Since the advent of the system in 2003, and regular advertisement of 311, the majority of citizens now use this system as the way to contact the city for help. In the present survey, 92.5% of respondents indicated they called 311, rather than a city department directly, as compared to 47% in first 2003 study (see report dated June 6, 2003). Training of customer service representatives to handle problems has also resulted in gains over time in this area. With an increasing number of problems handled on the first call through these personnel, the use of the 311 system will likely remain strong. Tracking the use and efficiency of the 311 system has been an important objective of the City, and the present report provides results for the service period of July 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004.

II. Methodology and Sample

A telephone survey was used in the present study, using a random sample of 1,851 persons who had called 311 for assistance between July 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004 as the primary calling base. Of the 1,851 persons in the sample, 509 were successfully contacted, and agreed to participate in the survey.

The questionnaire used in Survey #4 was also used in the current survey. The questionnaire consists of four groups of questions – (1) Initial Call Information; (2) Initial Call treatment; (3) City Response To Problem; and (4) Rating of Satisfaction with the City's Response to the Problem. Only two demographic questions continued to be used - age , and gender (inferred). A copy of the survey questionnaire is contained in Appendix A. Most surveys were completed within three minutes. The resulting data were analyzed using SPSS 12.0 and standard statistical procedures.

III. Survey Findings

A. Respondent Characteristics

A total of 509 persons comprised the respondent group, with the majority of the respondents being female (63%), and the remaining 37% being male. As shown in Table 1, the largest age group was of those between the ages of 41-55 (30.1%), with the next largest group between the ages of 26-40 (25.5%). A cross-tabulation of gender and age variables indicated that females between the ages of 41-55 made up the largest group of respondents. Table 1 shows respondent characteristics in terms of gender and age groupings.

Table 1: Gender and Age Characteristics of Respondents by Respondent Category

| Gender | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Male | 186 | 37% |
| Female | 323 | 63% |
| Total | 509 | 100% |
| Age | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
| 18-25 | 25 | 4.9% |
| 26-40 | 130 | 25.5% |
| 41-55 | 153 | 30.1% |
| 56-65 | 93 | 18.3% |
| Over 65 | 101 | 19.8% |
| Refused | 7 | 1.4% |
| Total | 509 | 100% |

B. Category 1 Questions: Initial Call Information

The majority of respondents (92.5%) indicated that their initial call was to 311, rather than directly to a city department (5.1%). As with previous surveys, the number of respondents calling 311 directly had a slight increase. As shown in Table 2, there was a small portion (.8%) of respondents who indicated that they e-mailed the city for service.

Table 2: Method of Contact by Respondent Category

| Method of Contact | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Called 311 | 471 | 92.5% |
| Called a City Department | 26 | 5.1% |
| Don't Know | 8 | 1.6% |
| Other (Please specify) | 5 | .8% |
| Total | 509 | 100% |

Table 3 shows the categories of problems reported by respondents. Similar to previous survey findings, the most frequently noted problem was with sanitation services (58.7%), followed by street conditions (8.8%). A notable number of respondents indicated “other problems” (19.7%). A listing of these problems is contained in Appendix B.

Table 3: Type of Problem by Respondent Category

| Type of Problem | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Sanitation Services | 299 | 58.7% |
| Street Conditions | 45 | 8.8% |
| Sewer/Drainage | 33 | 6.5% |
| Animal Control | 11 | 2.2% |
| Traffic | 21 | 4.1% |
| Nuisance | 0 | 0% |
| Other | 100 | 19.7% |
| Refused | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 509 | 100% |

C. Category 2 Questions: Initial Call Treatment

This group of questions pertained to how well those who contacted the City using the 311 service felt they had been treated in terms of (1) how long it took for their initial call to the city to be answered by a customer service representative, and (2) the courtesy of the customer service representative who handled their service call. In terms of response time, most respondents (41.9%) indicated that they did not have to wait on hold prior to being assisted by a service representative. There was a slight decline from the previous survey in that 25.9% indicated they were connected to a service representative within 1-2 minutes, as compared to the 38.1% in the previous survey. There were declines in the response time for the majority of respondents as compared to the previous survey. The number who said they waited between 3 and 4 minutes was seen to have a noticeable decline, with 9.2% stating this time frame, as compared to 28.4% in the previous survey. An additional 8.6% stated they were on hold between 5 and 6 minutes before speaking with a representative, a decline from 15.2% of respondents who indicated they held for over 5 minutes from the last survey.

When asked to indicate if respondents had to call more than once before their call was answered, a majority (80.3%) of respondents indicated their call was answered on the first try. Ten percent of the respondents stated having to call back twice before the call was answered. Only a small portion, 6.5% indicated to having called the City three or more times before speaking to a service representative.

The courtesy of customer service representatives continued to receive high ratings, with 60.1% rating courtesy as ‘excellent’ as compared to 54.6% in the previous survey. An additional 26.2% stated courtesy was good, while 7.7% indicated courtesy was ‘fair’. Only a combined

4.6% stated that courtesy was ‘poor’ or ‘less than fair’, a considerable decline from the 7.9% who rated representative courtesy as ‘poor’ in the last survey. Table 4 provides the results for call response time as well as service representative courtesy ratings.

Table 4: Call Response Time and Customer Service Representative Courtesy Ratings

| Contact with Representative | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Call answered on first try | 405 | 80.3 |
| Called back twice before answered | 54 | 10.7 |
| Called back three times before answered | 16 | 3.1 |
| Called back more than three times before answered | 17 | 3.4 |
| Don't know | 8 | 1.6 |
| Refused | 4 | .9 |
| Total | 504 | 100% |

| Service Representative Courtesy Rating | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Poor | 12 | 2.4 |
| Less than fair | 11 | 2.2 |
| Fair | 39 | 7.7 |
| Good | 132 | 26.2 |
| Excellent | 303 | 60.1 |
| Refused | 7 | 1.4 |
| Total | 504 | 100% |

* A total of 509 respondents were included in this survey, with 5 respondents indicating that they requested city services online. Only 504 respondents were included in the questions pertaining to customer service ratings etc.

D. Category 3 Questions: City’s Response to Problem

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the representative’s ability to assist the caller. It is evident from previous findings that quick problem resolution is quite important to callers. Respondents were asked if customer representatives were able to assist them with the problem or if they were informed that their problem would need to be referred to a specific city department. As shown in Table 5, the majority (75.4%) of respondents indicated that indeed the representative was able to assist them with the problem. The results were similar to previous survey findings in that, only 19.6% of the respondents indicated that the problem had to be referred to another department in the city.

Table 5: Method of Initial Problem Handling

| Contact with Representative | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Service representative was able to help | 380 | 75.4% |
| Problem was referred | 99 | 19.6% |
| Don't Know | 20 | 4.0% |
| Refused | 5 | 1.0% |
| Total | 504 | 100% |

When asked to rate the handling of their problem by the customer service representative, 52.6% rated the handling of their problem as 'excellent'. Additionally, 21.6% of respondents rated the handling of their problem as 'good'. Only a small proportion (10.5%) of respondents rated the representatives as 'poor'.

Respondents were asked if they were contacted by a city department as a result of their 311 call, and how long it took for the problem to be addressed. The majority (72.8%) did not receive a call from a city department, a similar response rate to the previous survey results (71.1%). However, as shown in Table 6, when asked to indicate the length of time it took to resolve the customer's problem, the majority of respondents (61.5%) reported having their problems worked on within six days, a slight increase from the previous survey findings (60.3%). An additional 10.1% stated that the problem was resolved with one to two weeks, and 3.4% indicated within three to four weeks. Similar to previous survey results, fifteen percent of the respondents indicated that their problem had never been resolved.

Table 6: Problem Resolution Response Rates by selected Time intervals

| Contact with Representative | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 0-6 Days | 310 | 61.5 |
| 1-2 Weeks | 51 | 10.1 |
| 3-4 Weeks | 17 | 3.4 |
| 1-3 Months | 21 | 4.2 |
| Never | 79 | 15.6 |
| Refused | 4 | .8% |
| Other | 22 | 4.4 |
| Total | 504 | 100% |

The majority of respondents (66.8%) indicated they did not make follow up calls to the city to get problems resolved. Thirty-one percent stated that they had to make follow up calls on their service request.

E. Category 4 Question: Rating of Satisfaction with the City’s Response

Respondents were asked to rank their level of satisfaction with the handling of the problem about which they contacted the city. There was a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who indicated they were “very satisfied” with the handling of their service request, from the previous survey. In the current survey, 56.4% indicated they were ‘very satisfied’ in comparison with 54.2% previously, and an additional 13.8% reported they were ‘fairly satisfied’. A total of 21.2% stated that they were either ‘fairly dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with the City’s response to their problem. Table 7 provides a summary of satisfaction rates with the City’s response to individual problems.

Table 7: Customer Satisfaction with City Response by Respondent Category

| Satisfaction Rating | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Very Dissatisfied | 79 | 15.5% |
| Fairly Dissatisfied | 29 | 5.7% |
| Neutral | 43 | 8.4% |
| Fairly Satisfied | 70 | 13.8% |
| Very Satisfied | 287 | 56.4% |
| Refused | 1 | .2% |
| Total | 509 | 100% |

*Neutral: neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Those respondents who reported they were dissatisfied with the City’s response to their problem were asked to specify the reason for their dissatisfaction. 12.6% of respondents reported their dissatisfaction as a result of their problem not being sufficiently resolved. The second most frequent reason for dissatisfaction was because of the amount of time it took to resolve the problem. A number of other responses were reported for the respondent’s dissatisfaction. Additional reasons for dissatisfaction can be found in Appendix B.

Respondents were also asked if they had called the City at any other time in the past 12 months for assistance with another city service. Sixty-one percent of respondents indicated ‘no’, similar to 62.1% of respondents who indicated ‘no’ to the last survey. Thirty-five percent stated that did indeed make a call for another service request.

Finally, respondents were asked if they would request city services online if they knew they could do so. Nearly half (48.9%) of the respondents indicated that they did know they could request city services online, and 45% stated ‘no’. When asked to indicate the reason as to why they did not use the online method to request city services, 18.5% stated that they would much rather to talk to a ‘live person’. Additionally, 14.7% or 75 respondents provided other reasons for not using the online method. These reasons are contained in Appendix B.

A cross-tabulation was conducted to determine the level of satisfaction by the type of problem that was reported. Similar to previous survey results, as shown in Table 8, it was found that

35.2% or 179 respondents were very satisfied with the sanitation services, the most frequent problem cited by respondents, while only 34 respondents (6.7%) indicated to being very dissatisfied.

Table 8: Customer Satisfaction Rating by the Type of Problem

| Satisfaction Rating | Problem Type | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Sanitation Services | Street Conditions | Sewer/ Drainage | Animal Control | Traffic | Nuisance | Other | Refused | Total |
| Very Dissatisfied | 6.7% | 2.2% | 2.2% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0% | 2.4% | 0% | 15.5% |
| Fairly Dissatisfied | 2.4% | 1.0% | .4% | .2% | .2% | 0% | 1.5% | 0% | 5.7% |
| Neutral | 5.5% | .4% | .6% | .2% | .6% | 0% | 1.1% | 0% | 8.4% |
| Fairly Satisfied | 9.0% | .8% | 1.0% | .0% | .0% | 0% | 3% | 0% | 13.8% |
| Very Satisfied | 35.2% | 4.3% | 2.4% | .8% | 2.2% | 0% | 11.5% | 0% | 56.4% |
| Refused | 0% | .2% | 0% | .0% | .0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | .2% |
| Total | 58.7% | 8.8% | 6.5% | 2.2% | 4.1% | 0% | 19.7% | 0% | 100% |

Additional analyses were conducted to determine if length of time had any correlation to dissatisfaction. It was found that 9.6% of the respondents who were very dissatisfied were those who never had their problems resolved. However, those respondents who reported being very satisfied were those whose problems were resolved within 0-6 days. These results follow previous survey results, which also indicate that the length of time for problem resolution has a relationship with the customers' level of satisfaction. Detailed results of the current survey findings can be found in Table 9.

Table 9. Length of Time for Problem Resolution and Customer Satisfaction Level

| Satisfaction Rating | Length of Time for Problem Resolution | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| | 0-6 Days | 1-2 Weeks | 3-4 Weeks | 1-3 Months | Never | Other | Refused | Total |
| Very Dissatisfied | 1.8% | .8% | .8% | 1.0% | 9.6% | 1.5% | .0% | 15.5% |
| Fairly Dissatisfied | 1.0% | .6% | 0% | 1.0% | 2.0% | .9% | .2% | 5.7% |
| Neutral | 1.6% | 2.0% | 1.4% | 0.2% | 2.6% | .2% | .4% | 8.4% |
| Fairly Satisfied | 9.2% | 2.0% | .4% | .8% | .6% | .8% | .0% | 13.8% |
| Very Satisfied | 47.3% | 4.5% | .8% | 1.2% | .8% | 1.4% | .2% | 56.4% |
| Refused | 0% | .2% | .0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | .0% | .2% |
| Total | 61.5% | 10.1% | 3.4% | 4.25 | 15.6% | 4.4% | .8% | 100% |

Appendix A

City of Chattanooga 311 Telephone Survey Questionnaire Survey #5

Appendix B

“Other” Problems Cited by Survey Respondents 5th City 311 Survey February 9, 2005