



**Assessment of Service Canada's
"Citizenship and Immigration"
Pilot Project**
*Survey among citizens and interviews
with staff*

Highlights presented to
Service Canada

July 2006

Background, objectives and summary of methodology (survey)

Background

- On September 14, 2005 the federal government launched Service Canada, a one-stop window where the general population can obtain various government services, all under the same roof. For each service that it wants to offer, Service Canada (SC) has developed a service offer and is currently experimenting it by means of pilot projects. Consequently, SC wants to evaluate these projects in order to ensure proper delivery of the service to the general population. Part of the information needed to evaluate the project will be obtained from the general population through telephone surveys. This pilot projects took place at various places in Quebec.

Objectives

- The main objective of this survey is to measure the level of satisfaction of people who received services at the pilot sites.
- This report presents only the results for people who obtained services in one of the two Service Canada Centres experimenting, by means of a pilot project, the service offer of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (Eastern Townships and Mauricie).

Target population

- Population serviced by the Citizen and Immigration Canada (CIC) service offer.

Sampling

- 15 respondents from the 56 people recruited responded to the survey.

Collection

- Telephone surveys conducted between May 24 and June 7, 2006.
- Survey response rate: 27 %
- Response rate for the telephone interviews: 94 %

Weighting

- No weighting was done.

Maximum error margin

- 23.2% (at a confidence level of 95%)

Objectives and summary of methodology (interviews)

Objectives

- The main objective of the interviews with staff was to obtain their impression about the delivery of the service offer, including an evaluation of the quality of the documentation and tools available, of service modes, of impacts on their work and suggestions about good practices that could be implemented in view to a large scale roll-out of the offer.

Recruiting

- The recruiting for the in-depth telephone interviews was done by SOM from May 25 to 30, 2006 using a list of contacts provided by Service Canada.

Interviews

- Seven telephone interviews with Service Canada staff, during between 30 and 45 minutes, were conducted from May 31 to June 8, 2006 by a SOM interviewer. The interviews were conducted in French and recorded with the respondent's authorization. They were subsequently transcribed. The interviews are broken down as follows:

- Agents d'aide à la clientèle (AAC): 4 interviews
- Consultantes, prestation de services (CPS) : 2 interviews
- Directrices, prestation de services (DPS) : 1 interview

Highlights incorporating the survey and the interviews with staff

Aspects evaluated by citizens* and staff

The overall service provided to citizens

- Overall, most citizens declare themselves satisfied with the services they received. The politeness and courtesy of staff, the layout, and the coaching on the use of the service modes seem to constitute (on the basis of the limited information we have) the aspects with which citizens are the most satisfied, although there is not insignificant proportion of dissatisfied citizens. A certain arrogance or lack of interest is sometimes perceived on the part of staff. It should be noted that although these comments were very infrequent (1 ou 2 respondents) they should be taken into consideration because of the very small number of respondents. However, the large majority of citizens consider that they were treated fairly and equally.
- The wait time to meet a AAC, the time spent to obtain the services received, and the competency and level of knowledge of staff, although generally judged satisfactory, create more dissatisfaction than the preceding aspects. Certain citizens explain that they are not getting answers (or clear answers) to their questions.
- Besides, AACs feels uncomfortable in their role as coaches to citizen: they are quite often unable to meet the needs of citizens. They are also uncomfortable with the fact that they offer fewer services compared with employment insurance.

The service provided by the CIC

- All citizens polled received the services in the official language of their choice and were offered to use the Internet or the telephone line. Some were coached on these uses, satisfactorily in almost all cases. What the citizens feel they learned by using the service modes is however very variable. In fact, some learned nothing while others learned a great deal. The majority of citizens are considering using one of the service modes autonomously in the future.
- Only half of citizens feel they received service that goes beyond what they asked for, while almost all feel important to be given service that exceeds the request made (which is what the offer is supposed to do). Furthermore, the general information on Government of Canada programs and services is not always provided. Here as well, most citizens think it is useful to receive this type of information.
- According to staff, the information available on the website is too general to meet the needs of customers. The call centre does not pose any problem. The IVR system is usually by-passed by citizens (they “dial” zero to talk to a agent).

Privacy and layout

- Almost all citizens polled believe their personal information was protected by the Service Canada staff and that the layout is appropriate with respect to protecting personal information. However, some are concerned about the proximity of other people, a problem also raised by AACs and CPSs, who consider that open office space is less appropriate with respect to privacy. The staff would like to have partitions and closed offices. The signs and movement do not pose any problems, neither for citizens nor staff.

Aspects evaluated by staff only

Human resources

- The AACs feel that the training they received reflects the spirit of the service offer, but that it is insufficient to allow them to meet the needs of citizens.
- As part of training, staff would like to have more general knowledge about CIC services, as well as practice using the website.
- The introduction of the CIC service offer had a positive impact (or a neutral impact) on almost all staff.
- Operations and processes
- The CPSs and the DPS are satisfied with the supervision provided by the region. The tracking requested by the region does not pose any problem either.
- Integrating the CIC service offer to the other existing offers is not easy according to some. On the one hand, the offer would not meet the needs of citizens. And on the other hand, their needs are often limited to immigration.

Exportability of the pilot project

- Here are the main suggestions or practices to consider according to staff in view to a potential roll-out of the offer:
 - Make the service know to the public for what it is.
 - Longer training including more general knowledge and more practice.
 - Have a resource person from the department on site during the first month or permanently.

* The word “citizen” in this report is used in a broad sense and refers to any individual who has received services from CIC. Consequently, a citizen may be an individual who does not have Canadian citizenship.

Conclusions

About the services provided to citizens:

Citizens generally satisfied with the services

- As we have seen, almost all citizens polled here declare themselves satisfied with the services they received. However, the number of respondents being very low (15), the few cases of dissatisfaction noted should not be overlooked. Thus, concerning the time spent providing the services, we note that dissatisfied respondents feel that the services should be provided for more than twenty minutes. The politeness and competency of staff, with which most are satisfied, still constitute a source of dissatisfaction for a few respondents. The reasons invoked include the arrogance of staff, their lack of interest, not getting an answer to their question or obtaining information that is not sufficiently clear.
- It should be noted that all citizens received the services in the official language of their choice. Furthermore, the general information on Government of Canada programs and services is not always provided. It may be necessary to make an adjustment here, since this is an integral part of the service offer.

But the AACs rather uncomfortable with the service they provide

- The uneasiness of AACs with the service they provide to citizens is an important theme in their comments. We clearly note a discomfort due to the fact that they cannot meet the needs of citizens, first and foremost because the latter often present themselves with needs that go beyond the service offer. AACs are caught between, on the one hand, their desire to satisfy the citizen and, on the other hand, the limits of their training and the mandate of the CIC service offer. If the offer was to be rolled-out in its current form, this aspect would have to be carefully considered. It is not desirable that the offer create a generalized feeling of uneasiness with AACs. The suggestion to advertise the offer for what it is (general information, coaching) certainly represents an avenue to consider. In addition, it will be necessary to insist with AACs for them to understand and accept their role.

Conclusions -Suite

About the layout and privacy:

Open office space is not appropriate with respect to the protection of personal information

- Although most citizens polled feel that the layout of the premises is appropriate with respect to protecting their personal information, some are concerned about the proximity of other people. Staff also draws attention to the fact that open office space, the absence of partitions between the telephones and the computer workstations, as well as the absence of booths, hindered privacy. Paradoxically, when private offices are available, it seems that AACs hesitate to use them, since the service offer provides for the services to be given in the reception area.

About the services modes:

A more complete website would be desired

- The offer to consult the Internet or the telephone service was made to all citizens polled, which is encouraging since it forms the very basis of the service offer. Those who were coached on their consultation declare themselves satisfied, so there is no problem with this aspect. We note however that some consider they learned nothing from using these services (Internet or telephone), which indicates shortcomings in this respect. Staff is pointing to the website in particular. To answer the needs of citizens, the website should contain more information and citizens' files should be more complete. The call centre does not seem to pose any problem according to staff, and the IVR system neither.

About the internal aspects of the service offer's implementation:

Training should be improved

- Some elements of knowledge about immigration, as well as time to browse through the website, are the two main elements that should be integrated to the AAC's training. This training should be longer, as nothing should be removed from the existing training. Furthermore, despite the discomfort that is felt by AACs, they generally consider that this training had a positive impact on their work, bringing something new and the joy of learning.

However, internal processes are adequate

- The local follow-up mechanisms, which consist mainly in meetings, as well as supervision and tracking by the region, do not pose any problems. Furthermore, conference calls and support visits seem particularly appreciated and are therefore elements to be retained. Finally, we note that the presence of an agent from Citizenship and Immigration Canada on site would be appreciated to support AACs in their work.