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Government Call Center Satisfaction Narrows Gap with Private Sector

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (October 13, 2010) – Satisfaction with call centers run by government agencies increased 8% over the past year compared to only a 3% increase for call centers operated by private companies, according to the latest Government Contact Center Satisfaction Index (GCCSI) report prepared jointly by CFI Group and the Federal Consulting Group using the methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The improvement in GCCSI is welcome news for every citizen because call volume for most agencies rises during difficult economic times.

“Satisfaction improvements of this magnitude in a single year are actually quite rare,” states David Ham, CFI Group’s Public Sector Program Director. “This type of short term rise only happens when an organization, in this case our government, not only makes the effort to listen, but takes action on what it hears to actually improve the way it does business.”

The study found that two areas of the call center experience that improved the most were the same areas that historically prove to be the most frustrating for callers. The score for the time it takes to reach a live agent and the overall rating of the automated IVR systems improved 17% and 16% respectively.

“What makes improvements in these areas so remarkable is that they occurred during a time when budget cuts could have easily derailed the process and caused scores to move the other way,” says Ham. “The GCCSI results are a good example of government finding a way to do more with less.”

Although government call centers are catching up to those operated by companies in the private sector, the study finds that there is still considerable room for further improvement. Overall call center satisfaction for government came in at 69 compared to 76 for the private sector (out of a possible 100).

The study also found that satisfaction with a call center experience is driven by different factors when somebody calls a government agency versus a private company. When calling a private

company the “process” is the biggest driver of overall satisfaction (speed to reach an agent, etc.). For government callers, however, the interaction with the actual agent primarily determines how callers feel when they get off the phone.

Ham explains, “When someone calls a private company to find out about a shipping delay or question a billing statement, it’s mostly an inconvenience which means that speed and efficiency takes precedent. While calls to a government agency are not necessarily life or death, they tend to be much more important. The agent on the other end of the phone may seem like their only lifeline, so having an agent who instills confidence and empathy becomes the determining factor of how we feel when we get off the phone.”

The full report is available for download at www.cfigroup.com. A webinar will be held on Thursday, October 14, 2010 to present the results of the study. The webinar is free and open to the public. To register for the webinar, please visit:

http://www.tmcnet.com/webinar/cfi_group_09_01/cfi_group.html.

About CFI Group www.cfigroup.com

CFI group is a global leader in customer satisfaction measurement and management. Founded in 1988 by University of Michigan professor Claes Fornell, CFI Group brings the precision and accuracy of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) methodology to its clients, applying the science of satisfaction to drive loyalty, word of mouth, revenue, and shareholder value.

About the Federal Consulting Group

The Federal Consulting Group, a franchise of the Department of the Interior, serves as the executive agent in the government for the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), and holds a generic clearance from the Office of Management and Budget that enables agencies to utilize the ACSI without having to obtain a separate clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act to conduct customer satisfaction surveys. Agencies can participate in the ACSI through an arrangement between the Federal Consulting Group and CFI Group.

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