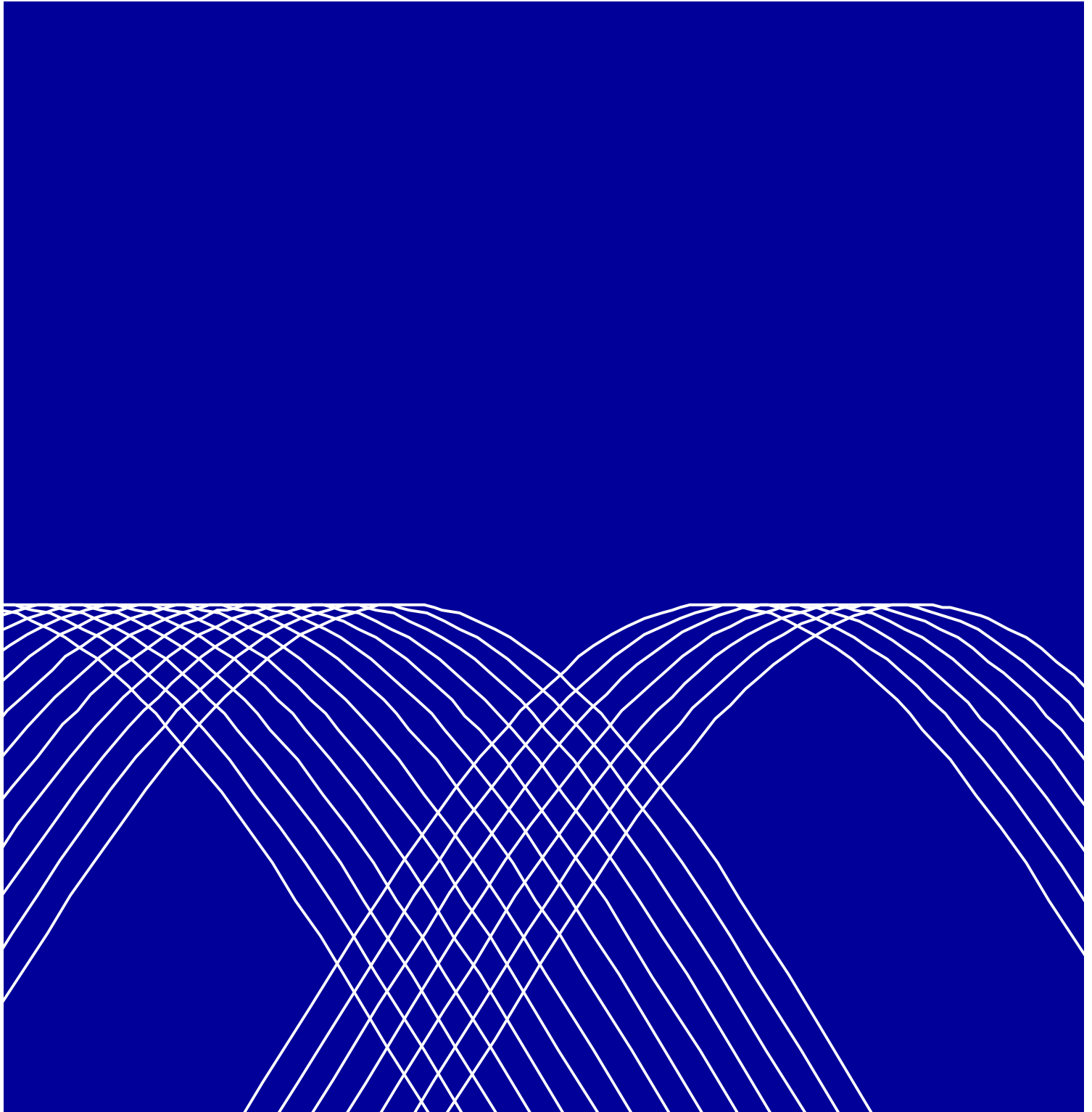




Establishing an effective Customer Insight Capability in Public Sector Organisations

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Establishing an effective Customer Insight Capability in Public Sector Organisations

1. Background

This section outlines the need for public sector organisations to become more customer focused and summarises the benefits of better understanding the citizens and businesses we serve. If you have read the Customer Insight Forum’s *Customer Insight in Public Services: A “Primer”*, you may want to skip past this section and the definition of ‘insight’ in the Introduction, and go straight to ‘What is this paper about and who should read it?’ on page 3.

Across public services, whether centrally or locally delivered, we are hearing a lot about ‘insight’. Ministers and public officials alike have stressed the need to be “relentlessly customer-focused”¹, applying learning from best practice not only in the public sector, but more widely in the private and voluntary sectors. In part, this is a response to the active public sector reform agenda which puts the customer and not the producer first in a quest to deliver world-class service.

In an increasingly competitive global market, customer expectations have risen and providers across all sectors need to step up to the mark. For government, there is also a need to design services which meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population, including the socially disadvantaged who are often hard to reach. So the need to be ‘customer-focused’ has become widely accepted. The challenge now is how to achieve this.

It is important that we get this right. If we don’t understand what really matters to the people we are trying to reach we will waste time and money. We will also risk compromising our reputation by offering services which customers don’t recognise as being relevant to them and have difficulty accessing. If we do make the effort to engage systematically in understanding the needs and behaviours of customers, the rewards will be felt by everyone, socially, democratically and economically. Customer engagement becomes a reality because the customer voice can be fed back to the decision makers and acted on; front line workers can feel more empowered because their views are heard and reflected in service design and delivery; policy and service designers can be more confident about getting the right outcome in the best way for all concerned.

¹ Sir Gus O’Donnell, Cabinet Secretary, in his speech to 21st Century Public Services Conference, ‘Putting People First’, 6 June 2006

2. Introduction

What do we mean by ‘customer insight’?

Before going any further, it might be useful to set out a working definition of what we mean by ‘customer insight’.

Insight can be defined as “a deep ‘truth’ about the customer based on their behaviour, experiences, beliefs, needs or desires, that is relevant to the task or issue and ‘rings bells’ with target people.”²

This is a good definition of what we mean by a customer insight but we also need to consider customer insight as a *discipline*. Here, customer insight capability has been defined as “having a deep, embedded knowledge of the customers and the market around us that helps structure thinking and sound decision making”³. The discipline comes from a combination of multiple pieces of data, built into a joined-up ‘big picture’ through strategic business analysis.

A customer-focused *organisation* has the capability for customer insight embedded throughout, as set out in the following extract, from *Harvard Business Review*, April 2005:

“...getting closer to customers is not just a matter of installing a better CRM system or of finding a more effective way to measure and increase customer satisfaction levels. Tools and technology are important. But they're not enough. That's because getting close to customers is not so much a problem the IT or marketing department needs to solve as a journey that the whole organization needs to make.

... customer-focused companies consistently embrace three concepts.

First, they know they can become customer-focused only if they learn everything there is to learn about their customers at the most granular level, creating a comprehensive picture of each customer's needs - past, present, and future. Second, they know that this picture is useless if employees can't or won't share what they learn about customers, either because it's inconvenient or because it doesn't serve their interests. Finally, they use this insight to guide not only their product and service decisions but their basic strategy and organizational structure as well.

The Quest for Customer Focus, R Gulati and J Oldroyd

² From Government Communications Network Engage Programme:
<http://engage.comms.gov.uk/>

³ S Will ‘The *management and communication of customer insight*’, Interactive Marketing, April/June 2005

What is this paper about and who should read it?

At the first meeting of the Delivery Council in June 2006, members discussed a number of delivery challenges including how to drive change through the public sector and “*how to embed the voice of the customer in the way services are designed and delivered.*” The Customer Insight Forum, which supports the work of the Delivery Council⁴, is a small group of heads of insight in the public sector, working individually and collectively to help government at a central and local level to establish a customer-focused culture of continuous improvement.

This paper, from the Forum, sets out some guidelines and examples that help to explain how to establish an effective customer insight capability in a public sector organisation. It applies to local government and other public sector agencies as well as central government departments. It is based on Forum members’ own experiences and their knowledge of best practice across the public sector and beyond.

Customer Insight is not a new discipline. However, in recent years we have witnessed a clear cultural shift in the commercial sector, led by brand-leading financial services, telecoms and fast-moving-consumer-goods companies, where customer insight as a discipline has moved into the heart of companies and their operations. This has resulted in part from the pressure of competition to deliver the ‘right’ products and services in environment where customers are more demanding and the pressure on costs is constantly increasing. The result has been the development of sophisticated insight capabilities within organisations where innovative qualitative techniques are routinely applied alongside tried and tested quantitative research to generate customer stories which have impact at the highest levels.

Similarly some public sector and third sector organisations have enthusiastically embraced the principles and are applying customer insight in service design and delivery⁵. But in many organisations, insight is still misunderstood. Customer intelligence exists within organisations, sometimes in large volumes – from surveys and consultations, customer databases, web usage data and the front line (amongst other sources). However, often absent is the coordinating function that links the information together to generate stories and genuine ‘insights’ which meet specific strategic and business objectives and ensures that these are understood and embedded in business processes.

This paper argues the need for a strong customer insight capability in central and local government organisations, in order to meet these requirements. It sets out the basic elements required to establish an effective customer insight capability, acknowledging that these will need to be adapted to meet the needs of specific organisations. An important point to stress here is that customer insight is a *business* activity, more than a research activity. Although based on robust techniques, it is less concerned with methodological purity. It should not be limited to a single team or department but should span an organisation, empowering staff to make confident decisions affecting strategy, policy and delivery that are grounded in customer insight and managed risk.

⁴ You can find out more about the work of the Delivery Council and the Customer Insight Forum at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/public_service_reform/deliverycouncil

⁵ The Customer Insight Forum’s *Customer Insight in Public Services - A Primer* includes a number of examples:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/public_service_reform/delivery_council/workplan.asp

The paper is aimed at all those responsible for delivering services which meet the needs of communities, businesses and individuals. This includes strategy and policy officials responsible for incorporating the customer voice in business plans and policy initiatives, as well as staff in existing research or communications functions.

After reading this paper, you will have a clearer understanding of what might be involved in setting up an effective customer insight capability from a process and structural perspective, as well as an overview of the type of activity for which an insight function should take responsibility.

3. Critical Success Factors for an Effective Customer Insight Capability

This section sets out the critical factors for establishing an effective customer insight capability.

An effective customer insight capability:

- A. has TOP LEVEL LEADERSHIP and SPONSORSHIP**
- B. draws on customer information from MULTIPLE SOURCES and turns it into stories which have BUSINESS VALUE**
- C. is INDEPENDENT but with TRACTION across the organisation**
- D. values customer insight as a STRATEGIC ASSET informing policy, strategy, operations and communications**
- E. involves the right level and mix of SKILLS and EXPERIENCE**

Let's discuss these in more detail:

A. Top level leadership and sponsorship

Support at the **Ministerial level** is very important. Ministers (and Members at the local government level) set the vision for where the organisation needs to be and determine the needs of citizens and communities that the organisation should strive to meet. At the local level, Members play an important role as representatives of their community. The leadership of any public sector organisation therefore needs to understand, value and champion the role that customer insight can play in achieving positive outcomes for citizens and communities.

The following example from a local authority shows how senior leadership is vital in order to embed a customer focused culture in the organisation.

Kettering Borough Council: Top Level Leadership

In Kettering Borough Council, the customer is at the heart of everything that is done. Chief Executive, David Cook, believes the customer should experience a consistently high standard of service across any contact channel and in all the services they consume. David Cook's commitment to embedding this culture is evidenced in his determination that everyone who works in the council should deal with the customer - including staff working in Finance. On his daily commute, he regularly listens to CDs of calls to the contact centre - "listening to calls from real customers is one of the most useful things a Chief Executive can do."

Accountability at **board or director level** for insight and the customer view is also crucial. For clear governance, one director or person on the Board should be responsible for the customer view (to avoid this being everyone's and no one's responsibility). He or she should be a respected, well-networked individual, able to draw on skills and expertise across the organisation, and beyond, as needed. Critically, this individual may be appointed from within the existing structures (as an

existing Board member in some cases). *Their appointment need not lead to the creation of a new large directorate.*

Once accountability for customer insight at the top is in place, he or she will need support from a **group or network** drawing on members from across the organisation (including policy, strategy, communications and operations). This group is responsible for agreeing the insight work plan and setting priorities in line with the organisation's overall business strategy, overseeing progress on major insight projects, taking action based on the output of insight work and ensuring results and impacts are fed back to their teams. The group should also draw on external views from customers and from customer insight teams in other organisations.

Department for Transport: Board Level Accountability

At the Department for Transport agency, VOSA, findings and recommended actions from all strategic research (such as customer satisfaction surveys) are presented to the Board. Once agreed, individual Directors take responsibility for driving forward the specific actions. These may cover areas such as staff training, operations or any aspect of customer service. Progress is monitored at VOSA Board level and the results are measured in ongoing research.

Finally, top level leadership will be responsible for creating the all-important customer-focused *culture*, where – as set out in the introduction – employees understand who their customers are, routinely share information and stories about them, making decisions that are rooted in a deep customer understanding.

B. Draws on customer information from MULTIPLE SOURCES and turns it into stories which have BUSINESS VALUE

The key feature of customer insight is that it draws on multiple sources of customer information to generate meaningful stories about the customer which have business value and can be acted on. This is the value which an insight function can add.

A customer insight 'function' acts as **one recognised place** where insight is made available, offering a **strategic overview** of the various sources of customer information available to an organisation. Customer information often exists in large volumes, from surveys to social research, consultation data and customer complaints. The insight function is about pulling together the information as required from many sources, not necessarily owning them.

The insight team should **optimise existing resources** by collating and analysing the information that already exists. This is key. Most departments have a number of teams which deliver different parts of the jigsaw puzzle. In order to deliver effective insight and to see the whole picture, the insight team will need access to all of these. Further, the insight community has a responsibility to ensure that all existing sources of insight are properly exploited. For example, this means gathering, analysing and applying lessons from the valuable information contained within the hundreds of letters of complaint received annually at central government

level; or learning from existing research (inside the organisation or in other government departments) before commissioning new studies⁶.

It is also important that the insight team not only gathers the intelligence already available but also shapes the information that the organisation routinely collects. Essentially, this is about ensuring that the organisation is **asking the right questions** about the things that really matter to customers and checking that the right things are being measured.

C. Independent but with traction across the organisation and beyond

The customer insight team has an **independent customer advocacy role**, providing a **source of challenge** for the rest of the organisation from the customer perspective. Regardless of where it is situated within the organisational structure, it is the role of the customer insight function to act as the impartial voice of the customer across the business – even if it means delivering unpalatable messages, which may conflict with received wisdom. This means that the team may often work horizontally, delivering customer insight *across* the organisation, not in service of, or prioritising, any specific unit.

It is also important that the insight function should be **outward looking** – drawing on information about the customer, but also information from other public sector organisations and international experience. The aim here should be to pick up on interesting new ideas, to draw parallels and most critically to **spot opportunities for synergy** and for joining up to improve customer experiences across the board. The insight team should never take a purely department-centric view but should **look at the system** or journey in the way that the customer experiences it. Packaging up insight to focus only on parts of the system that a single department delivers simply won't drive the necessary improvements from a customer perspective.

Finally, the insight function acts as a means by which insights can be stored and shared within and between organisations in service of a range of different but linked objectives. Customer insights which have been sourced in service of one policy area, for example, may be equally applicable to others. Organisations will achieve cost savings by exploiting the full potential of existing sources before commissioning new research.

The following example from DWP's strategy directorate demonstrates how two major government departments are working closely together to identify their common customers and to share insight about these citizens and businesses more effectively.

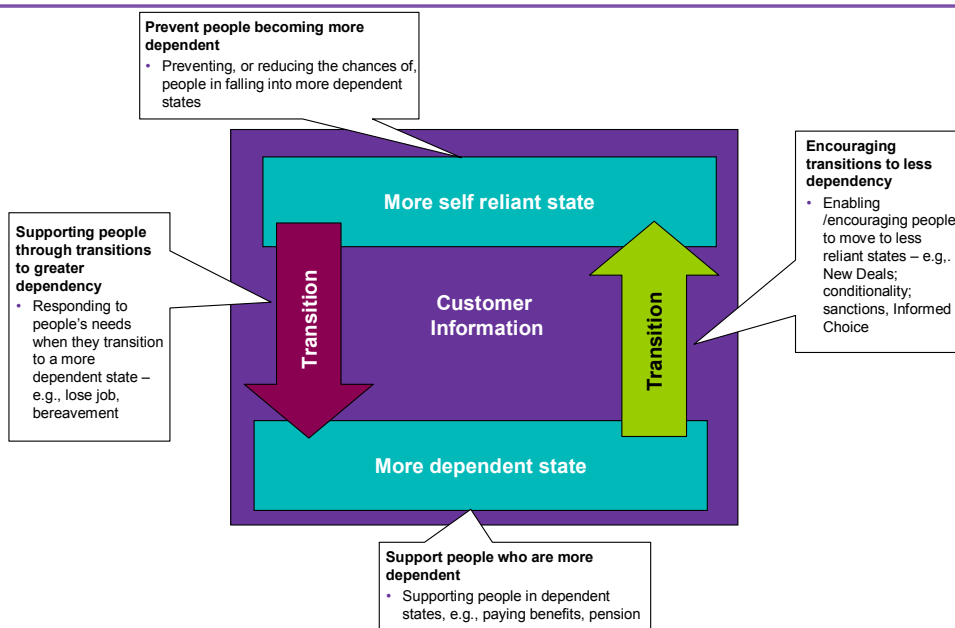
⁶ The National Consumer Council estimates that government has carried out 139 studies of eight to fifteen year olds over the last two decades.

DWP and HMRC: Customer Insight – Closer working

Historically, HMRC and DWP have had clearly defined, discrete sets of customers and have largely been dealing with different sections of the population at the point of service delivery.

However with recent policy developments such as the creation of tax credits, the need to identify and understand the needs of customers who are common to both departments is set to grow. In addition, DWP's remit in outcome terms is increasingly expanding to help and influence a broader range of customers and to intervene proactively to prevent dependency rather than simply reacting to critical needs. This will require a much deeper understanding of their common customers.

Policy outcomes increasingly depend on understanding the customer



DWP Department for Work and Pensions

A set of solutions is now being developed to address these needs. These include the following:

Information Sharing

- Regular meetings are held between DWP and HMRC customer insight teams and major stakeholders
- HMRC Customer Insight online library is available to DWP staff
- Development of a knowledge sharing function to enable research, information, front line views etc. on different customer groups to be shared

Joint Projects

- HMRC and DWP to jointly commission work around common customer groups with shared objectives and funding and with some limited exchange of data using ad-hoc solutions, for example understanding the needs of customers who are regularly in and out of work

Joint Working

- HMRC and DWP to work together to influence both operations and delivery in their respective organisations.

D. Valued as a strategic asset informing policy, strategy, operations and communications

Effective customer insight is informed by, and should inform, **strategy** and **policy**, **operations** and **communications** priority areas, to ensure relevance and correct ownership. If the link between the customer insight work and the business objectives is unclear, don't do it. Recognising customer insight as a strategic asset and incorporating it into early thinking and planning, as an integral part of the process – whether in policy, operations or communications - is vital.

Effective customer insight should help to **inform what is appropriate to measure**. Generating insight is essentially a business process, aimed at creating something which has value to the organisation. Once insight has helped to formulate those measures, meaningful targets can be set.

The policy and strategy development frameworks themselves should include links at every stage to the appropriate customer insight work streams, showing where insight has been considered and incorporated into findings and recommendations. In service development processes this means sourcing from the customer at every stage, including concept, 'prototype', usability testing etc.

The following example sets out how an organisation has used customer insight as a strategic asset, recognising its value and using it to define the brand:

Directgov: Using customer insight to define the brand:

In setting up Directgov, staff listened to customers in order to gain insight into five underlying customer truths relevant to the provision of government services online:

1. **Lack of transparency:** People are generally confused as to what the government 'offer' is, the relationship between government and public services and in particular where to go for a specific service or piece of information. For example 55% 'don't know where to start when dealing with government'⁷.
2. **Complexity:** The sheer volume of central and local government web sites, coupled with the myriad of government brands, branded campaigns, initiatives and logos creates confusion for the end user. For example there are currently 2,500 .gov.uk domains and 900 central government web sites.
3. **Convenience:** Changing lifestyles (time poor, need for instant gratification, more people living alone) and a change in the media landscape mean that online services are now a 'hygiene factor' for most, with many people as likely to use the internet as the phone to access public services⁸.
4. **Levels of frustration:** People are frustrated when services don't join up, and feel a sense of disempowerment. Negative perceptions from the media can also lead to mistrust in the provision of services from government.
5. **More people using online services.** Whilst 15 years ago not every desk had a PC, nowadays figures show that 66% of the population has access to the internet; 55% use the internet more than once a month and 47% are using the internet regularly every two or three days⁹.

Based on this insight, Directgov has developed four key values that underpin the brand and which are evident whenever and however people come into contact with it:

⁷ Directgov Audience Research, 2006

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Continental Spring Internet Report, 2006

1. **Accessible:** always a simple, consistent and integrated approach to make citizens' lives easy and hassle free: *Would the average person understand this? Am I excluding a group by not considering their needs? Is this genuinely easy to follow?*
2. **Enlightening:** informing people of the range of opportunities on offer to them and providing positive experiences for the user: *Have I organised my work around the customer?*
3. **Progressive:** a first for government. Committed to employing the latest technology to enable the user to interact and access services in a completely new way: *Does my work feel contemporary?*
4. **Trustworthy:** trusted for government and services. Trusted for web security. *Have I engaged the audience in an adult to adult relationship?*

Although the private sector is different from the public sector in its objectives and target outcomes, the following example from a leading branded consumer goods company shows how insight can be embedded in the strategic decision framework for product development:

Unilever: Using customer insight to define business metrics:

At Unilever, there is an established innovation process for new product development. Insight is embedded right from the start of the process at idea generation through to launch and post launch review. There are clear stages, called 'gates', within the innovation process. Each gate has to be signed off by the innovation 'gatekeeper' to ensure resource and funds are directed appropriately.

The first stage is to use creative techniques to generate ideas for potential products or solutions to fit identified consumer trends or needs, or gaps in the market. Nothing is out of scope at this stage. Using consumer clinics, which are workshops with identified target customers, the customer insight, marketing and product development teams share these ideas with customers who help in refining the best ideas into concepts. These concepts are then subjected to formal research, where mocked-up products are shown to customers. Those that make it through this first 'gate' are then allocated resource so that they can be developed into actual products.

Once the product has been developed, it is subjected to further tests with customers. If the product is a pasta sauce, for example, 200 jars are made and 200 concepts are produced. Respondents use the product in their home environment and fill in a questionnaire. It is important to test the product against the concept as this is how the product will be positioned should it be successful enough to go to market. Price is also tested.

The Senior Marketing Manager or Director responsible for the product area sets "action standards" for the concept/product stage. Marketing action standards for a food product are volume (amount of packs that need to be sold to break even); margin (how much profit can we make on each pack?); and consumer propensity to buy. A product must score highly enough on "definitely/probably buy" and price measures in order for it to go to launch.

If the tests are successful, the product passes through the next 'gate'. Advertising and packaging development kick off to support the positioning of the new product. These are also tested before the product passes the final gate which is 'launch'.

Six months after the product has been launched and is on sale, a post launch review takes place. The action standards are revisited by Customer Insight, Marketing and Product Development teams and sales data and brand tracking are examined to understand how well the product performed against these.

E. The right level and mix of skills and experience in the team and in wider networks

Customer insight is a **discipline** which requires **specialist** as well as generalist skills. The team should include a **mix of professional backgrounds** and experience to encourage innovation and stretch thinking, for example:

- I. **Consultancy** skills to clarify - and challenge if needed – the business objectives which drive insight work and to feed back results, ensuring that they are understood and can be actioned
- II. Strong **communication and networking** skills to work effectively with teams in strategy, policy, operations, human resources, communications and project areas
- III. **Direct links to the front line**, to be as close to the customer as possible
- IV. Excellent **marketing and strategy** capability (understanding of insight in different forms, use of insight tools, application of insight in business planning process etc.) Team members themselves need not be practitioners of all insight tools, but they should have good **analytical skills** so that they can understand their application, know when to bring in outside help and be able to specify objectives. The team also needs to understand the language of specialists in order to be able to turn data into insight.
- V. An ability to **engage with business teams**, to understand how they work and to talk the same language in order to position insight in the appropriate context for each individual circumstance
- VI. The team should be **well networked**, not only within the organisation, but also outside, bringing in ideas from other departments and organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors, as appropriate
- VII. The customer insight function needs to make the right linkages and be able to **draw on the right skills elsewhere** in the organisation – for example, from economists, statisticians and researchers. (Not all of the skills need to sit in the immediate team but the right links and ways of working do need to be in place. For example, specific subject matter or policy **specific expertise** can be drawn in on a more flexible, project by project basis, for example by **secondments** into the team from elsewhere in the organisation.)

4. Customer Insight Role and Responsibilities

The following section summarises some core activities and responsibilities for an effective customer insight capability:

- **Reporting at a senior** (board or director) **level** to advise on and help to develop business priorities and strategy
- **Advising on the appropriate range of insight tools.** Working with relevant parties to develop clear objectives which translates into insight objectives
- Helping to **define what action is going to be taken as a result.** Being clear that the output of insight activity is the start point – not the end point
- **Investigating the links between customer and business outcomes** and ensuring that these are established, measured and tracked
- **Ensuring all insight** (including research and evaluation projects) **fits and informs the organisation's business strategy**, as well as the overall customer insight programme
- **Commissioning and managing major insight programmes**, including segmentation, journey mapping etc.
- **Acting as a formal gatekeeper** (with power of veto) **for major insight work** (including research and evaluation programmes), and providing consultancy support, advice and expertise for all research, evaluation and insight activity, ensuring value for money
- **Evaluating existing formal training** in customer insight within the organisation and **providing training support** to embed an understanding across the organisation of what customer insight means and how it should be applied
- **Coordinating the gathering of customer insight** across key project areas on an organisation-wide level, with close alignment to analytical services, research and communications in particular
- **Disseminating key findings of insight** and research programmes across the department in the timeliest way, ensuring that the information is widely understood and actionable. This may mean presenting the information and key messages in a range of forms and across a range of media.
- **Communicating insight and research findings outside the department**, where appropriate, to partners and related organisations, and collaborating with these organisations where applicable on joint insight work
- The insight function may also be responsible for (depending on organisational structures and scale) **providing a major repository for insight**, research and evaluation (including 'soft' intelligence from non-research generated sources – e.g. web hits, feedback from events and meetings) from across the organisation and from relevant external sources - so that research information is all stored in one place and can be easily accessed and disseminated.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have developed our argument for the need for public sector organisations to develop their customer insight capability. Based on the experience of Customer Insight Forum members and on examples drawn from both the public and the private sector, this paper has put together some guidelines which help to explain how to establish an effective capability in a public sector organisation and how to manage the potential organisational change. Unless organisations are able to apply insight and to be clear about the action that follows, the benefits derived from a real understanding of our customers cannot be realised.

We recognise that the development of a customer insight capability is likely to be an iterative process for both central and local government organisations. Experience is relatively limited in the public sector at least: organisations need to learn as they go – particularly around the application of insight – and many will need to be persuaded as to the real benefits. Yet there are public sector organisations – particularly at the local government level – that are demonstrating real ambition in this area and that already have considerable expertise.

The recent introduction of customer insight functions in major government departments demonstrates that there is momentum building around this work and that existing insight resources are proving their value. Now is the time to raise our sights and also to ensure that public sector organisations' insight capabilities are more than just the sum of their parts.

What you do next depends on the resources available to you, who you are, your organisation and its current priorities and issues. If you would like to explore some of these ideas further, understand more about what you can do, or just offer us your feedback or suggestions, please get in touch with us via your customer insight representative in the Customer Insight Forum or contact Alex Oliver at Alex.Oliver@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk and on 0207 276 3412. It would also be useful to hear from you if you would like to be included on the circulation list for future updates, publications and events.

This paper has been written by the Customer Insight Forum. We would also like to thank the Government Social Research Unit and members of the Service Transformation Team and Government Communications Group within the Cabinet Office who actively contributed to this publication.

6. Appendix – Case Studies

Department of Health

During the Summer of 2006, the Health Insight Unit, in the Department of Health, conducted some in-depth research, looking across best practice in the private sector, as part of an internal benchmarking study to understand how best to approach customer focus. A sample of the key findings of best practice is set out in the two slides below:

There are three key elements in successful customer-focused organisations

Evidence

Enablers

Foundation

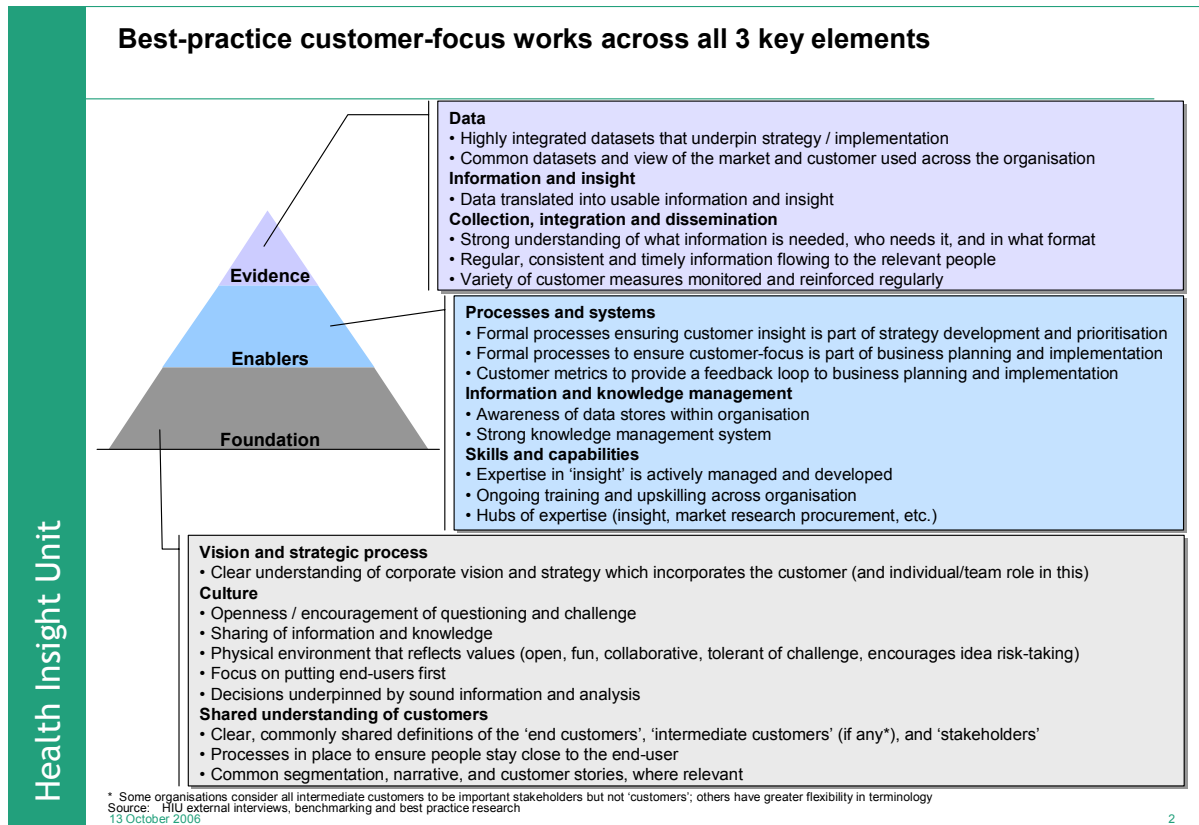
- Information about and relating to customers
- Capabilities, systems/infrastructure, capacity
- Culture of the organisation and its strategic vision

- None of these is individually sufficient for success
- Key both in centralised and decentralised organisations
- Apply both in the corporate centre and in the field

Health Insight Unit

Source: HIU desk research and benchmarking
13 October 2006

1



What the team, led by Deidre Sorensen, found was that there are 3 key elements that are consistently in place in customer-focused organisations:

- The first and most important, cited again and again by successful companies, was vision and culture. It is about the whole organisation understanding who their customers are, how they behave and what they need. It is about having a questioning culture where people will always challenge decisions that are not made from a customer-centric position. This is the baseline on which a customer-focused organisation can be built.
- The second building block is processes and systems which ensure that insight is reflected in business planning and is acted on, with effective knowledge management and skills development to harness and exploit it, as needed
- The third critical element is accessible and relevant customer information, together with the ability to turn it into actionable insight and communicate it effectively across the organisation.

This final case study illustrates how one central government department has succeeded in realising the importance of customer insight, making it part and parcel of their daily business:

Department for Constitutional Affairs

The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) has put people and their needs at the centre of strategic development, helping to turn around an 800 year old culture that had focused on the process of supply and on professional stakeholders.

In 2003, the DCA emerged as a new department from the Lord Chancellor's Department. The problem they faced is familiar to organisations in both the private and the public sectors: how to identify what their customers need and experience and then orientate the organisation towards the customer?

The impetus for change came from the very top of the organisation. In line with the government's overall strategy for public sector reform, Lord Falconer, the Lord Chancellor, wanted to put the public at the heart of everything this department did. He appointed a senior level individual with excellent marketing and strategy experience to lead the work.

Civil servants from policy, operations and finance formed **cross-functional teams** each led by a **Director-level** civil servant to:

- Develop a **vision for customers**, based on customer outcomes that expressed what the DCA would like the future to look like for the public in 10 years' time.
- Develop an **in-depth understanding of the journey** that the customer experiences when he or she accesses the justice system to attempt to resolve a dispute
- Develop **qualitative and quantitative research** to inform the DCA of the experiences of the public
- Develop **customer segmentation** techniques to identify the attitudes and behaviours of different groups to help move away from a 'one-size-fits-all' approach

Importantly, **the teams included people with private sector experience as well as experience of other departments** so that they could take a view of the issue as the customer experiences it, rather than limiting the scope of the remit to a particular department. A **steering group** consisting of high level stakeholders and **chaired at the Ministerial level** was established and met with the teams on a monthly basis.

This work has proved to be a crucial **catalyst in the culture change process** of the department. It has also resulted in a step change in the DCA's understanding of engaging with customers so that the department now has a strategy that is much more customer-focused, notably when dealing with vulnerable groups. The department has a much **improved profile among stakeholders** and its new direction, outlined in its first 5 Year Strategy, shows how the DCA is improving customer experience. The outputs produced by the insight teams contain a range of **actionable concrete measures and proposals for improvements in service delivery**: for example on the issue of family breakdown these have led to legislative change. In short, the conviction is that the DCA is working to focus on the public's rather than the providers' priorities and to deliver those priorities: community justice centres; anti-social behaviour courts; on-line claims issuance among many others.

For more information, please email Sanjay Ghosh in DCA's Consumer Strategy Directorate at Sanjay.Ghosh@dca.gsi.gov.uk .

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