Introduction to
'Voice of the Customer'
Focus Groups

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PAC meeting, May 4, 2011

Outline

1. Introduction
2. There are lots of tools, why use "Voice of the Customer" (VOC) focus group?
3. How does a VOC focus group work?
4. What resources will you need to conduct a VOC focus group?
5. Products of a VOC focus group

1. Introduction

- I'm Jeffrey Showman and I work at OFM doing performance assessments of state agencies.

- I used this approach on a project to redevelop the OFM budget performance measure system then called PMT, now Results through Performance Management (RPM)

- PMT/RPM are databases linked to OFM's budget and activity systems.

- Agency staff set up performance measures and update data in the system.

- OFM budget staff review and approve performance measures, and use performance data in Priorities of Government (POG) teams.

- I use performance data in preparing performance assessments.

2.1 Why use "Voice of the Customer" (VOC) focus groups?

- This produces useful, actionable results because it is about specific products and services.
- It captures the customer's point of view: "Lean is a set of concepts, principles, and tools used to create and deliver the most value **from the customer's perspective** while consuming the fewest resources"
- It's low tech. Ken Miller* provides step-by-step instructions and templates, and it can be done with relatively few resources (about 1-2 staff, 2-4 months).
    - *Ken Miller and Robin Lawton, *The Change Agent's Guide to Radical Improvement*, Ch. 3, "The customer satisfaction process", pp 57-106.
    - *Attribute wall chart and other tools are available for free download from http://www.changeagents.info/, registration is required.
- It works. This approach can get more relevant data than surveys, and produces positive (not negative) feedback about services.

# 3.1 How does a VOC focus group work?

- Assumption: customers value certain <u>attributes</u> of your product or service more than others.

- This technique helps customers articulate, prioritize, and explain which attributes they find most valuable.

- The "Focus" of the focus group is a particular product, service or business process. Before you conduct focus groups, you'll need to do foundation work to define business processes and products, and to segment customers into specific groups.

- Once you have customer segments defined, schedule a focus group with ten or so representatives of each segment.

3.2 How does a VOC focus group work?

- At the meeting:
  - Let them vent: "If you could change one thing about . . ."
  - Hand out "attribute sheets" and have customers highlight important attributes of an ideal service or product
  - Each customer votes for their top 5 attributes on a wall chart, then the group discusses and prioritizes the top few to delve into
  - The facilitator 'unpacks meaning' for the top 3-5 attributes by asking "What does 'convenient' mean to you?" and recording the feedback on flip charts. This is the heart of the process.
  - Optional – brainstorm "What do we need to do to make our service [attribute]?"
- Afterward, transcribe flip charts to Word and/or Excel for analysis
- Repeat with different customer segments
- Analyze results, and use for process improvement

4.1 Resources to conduct VOC focus groups

- A necessary foundation is to have an **Analysis of your business process**, to identify key products or services and key customer segments.

- For instance, I spent a fair amount of time analyzing the existing performance measure tracking system (PMT), what it produces and who uses it.

- I ended up with following view (next slide) that I used to set up focus groups

- You can use other tools to analyze your business processes and customers, e.g.

  - Maricopa County logic model

  - "Activity worksheets"

Enter data into PMT

Manage data in PMT
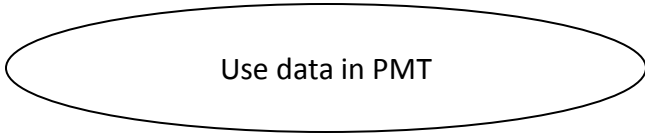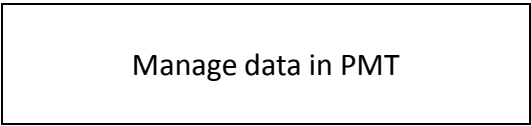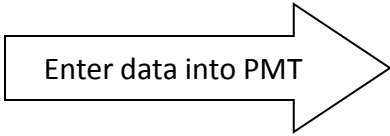
Use data in PMT

What: **Enter new performance measures**
Who: Agency management, budget, performance staff
Widget: PMT pending entries
Customer: OFM budget staff, agency performance staff, OFM decision makers

What: **Notify of pending changes**
Widget: Email notice of change
Customer: OFM budget staff, agency staff

What: **Analyze budget requests based on performance**
Who: OFM budget staff, POG teams
Widget: Budget memos
Customer: OFM decision makers, Governor

What: **Review and approve**
Who: OFM budget staff
Widget: Approved entries
Customer: Agency, OFM decision makers

What: **Decide what to fund based on performance**
Who: OFM decision makers
Widget: Recommendation Summaries
Customer: Governor, Legislature

What: **Update data in PMT**
Who: Agency budget staff
Widget: PMT pending measures
Customer: OFM budget staff, agency budget and performance staff

What: **Archive**
Who: OFM budget staff, Agency staff
Widget: OFM inactive?
Customer: Agency staff

What: **Assess agency performance**
Who: OFM performance assessment staff
Widget: Performance Assessments
Customer: OFM budget staff, Agency staff, Legislature

What: **Review pending data and release to OFM**
Who: Agency budget and performance staff
Widget: PMT pending measures
Customer: OFM budget staff, agency performance staff

What: **Publish performance information**
Who: OFM operations staff, Agency performance staff, GMAP staff
Widget: Enterprise reports web documents, Agency performance reports, CSAP Reports
Customer: Public, agency staff, Cabinet GMAP

4.2 Resources to conduct VOC focus groups

- Facilitation skills:
  - Preparing plans and agendas
  - To really hear the customer's voice, follow brainstorm rules during the focus group:
    - Everyone's ideas are important
    - Write words that people say as closely as possible
    - Clarifying questions are okay, but don't allow people to analyze or debate – just write down what they say
  - Meeting management
    - Enlist contributions from everyone
    - Channel "dominators"
    - Listening
    - Judgment (stay on agenda or let folks go?)

4.3 Resources to conduct VOC focus groups

- "**Attribute chart**" (next slide) adapted to your group, with handouts for everyone to have (with highlighters) plus one large enough to hang on a wall

- Voting "stickies" for the attributes (3 – 5 per attendee)

- A room large enough to hold the group, with enough wall space for the large attribute chart and flip chart pages

- Flip charts, pens, tape for capturing what attributes mean to customers and posting to wall

- Transcribing results to Word, Excel for analysis

- Analyzing the results and acting on them

Attribute chart

Accessible	Easy to recognize
Accountable	Easy to renew
Accurate	Easy to return
Affordable	Easy to see
Answered quickly	Easy to start
Attractive	Easy to store
Available	Easy to understand
Beautiful	Easy to use
Boring	Educational
Brief	Effective
Challenging	Efficient
Cheap	Energetic
Cheap to acquire	Enforceable
Colorful	Error-free
Comfortable	Error-proof
Compact	Exciting
Comprehensive	Fair
Computer linked	Fast
Concise	Fast-drying
Connected	Fast-loading
Consistent	Fast-moving
Conveniently located	Flat
Credible	Flexible
Customer Friendly	Focused
Custom-made	Foldable
Dependable	Forward-looking
Diligent	Fraud-proof
Dramatic	Frequent
Durable	Fresh
Easy	Fun
Easy to apply	Happy
Easy to audit	Hard to copy
Easy to carry	Hassle free
Easy to clean	Healthy
Easy to copy	Honest
Easy to file	Hopeful
Easy to find	Inexpensive
Easy to hold	Informative
Easy to maintain	Infrequent
Easy to navigate	Inspiring
Easy to obtain	Insurable
Easy to push	Intelligent
Easy to read	Interactive

Just	Rational
Kind	Reactive
Laid-out well	Refillable
Leak-proof	Relevant
Legal	Respected
Less intrusive	Results-oriented
Life-affirming	Rugged
Lightweight	Safe
Logical	Sane
Long	Secure
Long-lasting	Self-monitoring
Made-to-order	Self-motivated
Maintenance-free	Serious
Meaningful	Short
Memorable	Simple
Modular	Smooth
Motivational	Standardized
Moveable	Straight
Nimble	Sturdy
Objective	Stylish
On-line	Successful
On-time	Swift
Open-minded	Tamper-proof
Original	Thorough
Pain-free	Thoughtful
Peaceful	Timely
Polished	Topical
Portable	To-the-point
Precise	Transferable
Prepared	Trustworthy
Private	Upbeat
Proactive	Valuable
Processed in a	Visionary
timely manner	Well-supported
Professional	Wide
Profitable	
Prompt	
Punctual	
Quick	

Instructions: Check, highlight, or circle all that apply, then select the five most important.

Instructions: Check, highlight, or circle all that apply, then select the five most important.

5. What are products of a VOC focus group?

- I ended up with 196 different ideas in Excel for what an "ideal" performance measure tracking system would be and do in terms of data entry, measure review, and usefulness

- For analysis, I prepared pivot tables, sorted by ideas and groups, looked for common themes, etc.

- I used these to prepare a first draft of business requirements for the new system.

- I also distilled this into a "business" vision or goals

- After the system was delivered, I reviewed this and found that about two-thirds of the goals had been fully or partially addressed.

- Issue: RPM system has not been fully built yet.