



NASCIO State IT Recognition Awards

State CIO Office Special Recognition Category

State of Wisconsin DET Customer Service Enhancement Initiative

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Executive Summary

Amid many ambitious enterprise IT initiatives, Wisconsin State CIO David Cagigal decided in early 2015 that the state's central IT organization, the Division of Enterprise Technology (DET), needed to embark on a comprehensive program to enhance its customer service capabilities. After discussing the challenge with DET managers, Cagigal determined the program had to incorporate four important components:

- DET employees had to understand and believe in the premise for the program;
- Staff had to have an essential role in designing the day-to-day elements of the program;
- Results had to be measured; and
- Employee engagement had to be assessed along with customer satisfaction.

DET decided to utilize the INSPIRE Model for customer service (Involvement – Notice – Standards – Philosophy – I Can – Results – Excellence). A key feature of INSPIRE is that staff dealing with customers on an everyday basis are instrumental in developing standards used in their specific work areas. For most of 2015, DET senior leaders, bureau directors, section chiefs, team leads and staff participated in a series of workshops that transitioned the general INSPIRE principles for DET into specific standards for particular teams. These standards were not imposed on DET teams by upper-level DET management – staff crafted them in consultation with supervisors. These workshops require valuable time, but the ownership employees take away from the process is what generates confidence and follow-through.

In order to measure INSPIRE's impact, DET conducted surveys of two main groups of customers: 1) agency managers and 2) all staff in organizations whose IT services are completely provided by DET. The surveys were conducted in spring 2015 to establish a baseline and again in 2016 and 2017. Those subsequent surveys indicated considerably more customer satisfaction, both in terms of cumulative scores and on the individual survey items.

The INSPIRE Model also includes an important internal-looking component: employee engagement. If staff are engaged with the organizational mission and satisfied with their work environment, the likelihood of customer satisfaction increases significantly. DET followed up on its customer service surveys in 2015 with an employee engagement survey, whose questions were designed to gauge whether DET is providing staff with the tools, support, and positive work environment necessary to deliver excellent customer service. The overall responses were encouraging, but at the same time they highlighted areas the management team needed to address (for example, employees are looking for additional flexibility in training options). The Department of Administration followed up on DET's employee engagement survey by conducting an agency-wide employee engagement survey in late 2016.

Project Narrative: Concept

In recent years, the State of Wisconsin has made significant strides in advancing an enterprise vision for IT. Agencies have consolidated their data centers and virtualized servers, saving \$5 to \$6 million per year. The state implemented an enterprise resource planning system, which replaced 140-plus legacy systems with one comprehensive system for managing procurement, finance, and human capital. Teams of state and local government officials, along with private-sector infrastructure operators, worked together to develop a cyber disruption response strategy. Wisconsin expanded broadband connectivity throughout the state, while the e-government program guided state agencies in launching 70 new services in the past three years.

IT professionals throughout state government, and particularly within the Division of Enterprise Technology (DET) – the state’s central IT organization – were justifiably proud of these accomplishments. But State CIO David Cagigal believed a more fundamental and unifying effort had to take place alongside of these important technology initiatives in order to establish a foundation for enterprise progress – namely, DET had to build on its customer service capabilities and implement a systematic, sustainable program for enhancing and assessing customer service. DET needed to convince agency partners of its commitment to customer service to generate the buy-in necessary to implement a vision for collaboratively designed, enterprise-focused services.

In early 2015, Cagigal hired a consultant whose customer service enhancement model featured what Cagigal considered a crucial component: staff involvement in crafting and refining the key standards the division would employ going forward. Ultimately, DET employees had to feel they owned the outcomes of the program, Cagigal believed, because the ownership staff take away from the process is what generates follow through and confidence in the standards. With that key understanding in place, the INSPIRE Model was introduced to DET – Involvement, Notice, Standards, Philosophy, I Can, Results, and Excellence (see graphic below).

The mechanics behind INSPIRE are straightforward – an organization decides on overall, high-level objectives that drive its customer service approach for each of the INSPIRE elements (e.g., for “Results,” DET managers resolved that DET overall invests time on the things that matter to our customers, and use metrics to measure performance). But ultimately, individual work units within the organization have to use those seven guiding principles to help them articulate specific standards for how INSPIRE will apply to their day-to-day work procedures. That second, more time-consuming process of identifying specific standards involves supervisors and front-line employees, and generates the staff ownership of INSPIRE that is fundamental to its viability.

DET's Customer Experience Team Model

"a responsive, reliable strategic partner"



We create a positive customer experience when....

We listen to customers and clearly understand their needs.

We are dependable and always respond with a sense of urgency.

Our platform for success with customers and co-workers is built on mutual trust.

Excellence

We understand the value proposition to our customer and each other
We don't use blame, we learn from mistakes and act with resolve

Results

We invest time with things that matter to our customers
We use metrics to measure our performance



For most of 2015, DET senior leaders, bureau directors, section chiefs, team leads and staff participated in the series of workshops that transition the general INSPIRE principles for DET into specific standards for particular teams. For example, one section within DET's Bureau of Business Application Services derived the following standards for dealing with one specific customer, the Division of Gaming:

- **Involvement:** Have three 15- to 30-minute phone meetings per week (M-T-W) with Charitable Gaming to take the pulse of the Raffle Modernization project and stay on track; we meet every other Thursday at 1:30 p.m. to look at the bigger picture and overall health of the project.
- **Notice:** Have a 60-minute quarterly meeting to review service request metrics for the quarter, as well as upcoming business activity for the quarter and year, where we may need to increase our focus and resources to ensure service disruptions do not occur.
- **Standards:** Follow-up with Gaming staff at least weekly to provide status and updates on any open problem and service requests.
- **Philosophy:** Always share the reason for existence of enterprise standards and policies proactively to work better with our customers and ensure we provide excellent services – for example, the need to allow DET to patch servers to protect data and equipment from hacking and theft of sensitive information.
- **I Can:** Assist customer in the event there are problems with the ability of the vendor to access systems on the state network.

- **Results:** Develop a dashboard specific to Gaming to monitor status of service requests and incidents.
- **Excellence:** Complete quarterly customer reviews measuring key deliverables; we act with resolve to address barriers. Analyze the results to identify opportunities for change and report our findings to Gaming leadership.

To see the complete set of standards and objectives developed for DET's work with the Division of Gaming, see

<https://det.wi.gov/Documents/A%20Section%20Chief%20INSPIRE%20Process.pdf>.

Driven by the INSPIRE Model, comparable workshops generating similarly specific standards went on throughout sections and offices in DET during 2015 and 2016. In some cases, DET teams consulted with and surveyed their specific customer bases to help define their standards. Considerable information about DET's use of the INSPIRE Model is available on the DET portal at <https://det.wi.gov/Pages/INSPIRECustomerService.aspx>.

It is important to stress that these standards were not imposed on DET teams by upper-level DET management nor by the consultant – staff crafted them in consultation with supervisors and customers. These workshops take valuable time. But the ownership employees take away from this more organic process is what generates confidence and follow-through.

In addition to promoting staff ownership of results, the INSPIRE Model has been successful in DET due to three additional factors, Cagigal believes.

- The program was framed repeatedly and carefully for staff as an enhancement of already existing customer service capabilities, not as a punitive or corrective measure.
- The program's results would be measured – in this case, through annual surveys sent to customers. *See the Impact section of this nomination for more details.*
- DET employee engagement would be assessed and nurtured in conjunction with the INSPIRE program. *See the Impact section of this nomination for more details.*

When Cagigal first introduced the program in early 2015, he constantly repeated these words to staff: "We are already good at customer service. But we can be even better." As Cagigal describes it, "This was absolutely true on both counts. I have never doubted that that vast majority of DET professionals care deeply about the customer experience, and always have. They wouldn't be here in the first place if that weren't true. I had to reinforce that this program was not being instituted to fix all their customer service deficiencies. Instead, it was meant to introduce some proven techniques for articulating specific customer service challenges in particular work areas, and then designing collaborative solutions for addressing those challenges. INSPIRE was meant to make employees' work days more productive and satisfying, not more hectic. They eventually understood this, but it took more than a few meetings with staff to allay their concerns."

Ultimately, the INSPIRE Model characterizes effective customer service and communication as ongoing guiding principles for DET's work, not as finished products after a one-time series of workshops. Therefore DET teams regularly review the standards and goals they arrived at in earlier sessions. And now this exercise is more of a refresh than a start-from-scratch process, so it is not difficult to integrate the activity into already existing team meetings.

Significance

When David Cagigal arrived as State CIO in late 2012, he worked with his managers and staff to develop the current DET mission statement: to be the IT service provider of choice, exceeding customers' expectations and allowing state agencies to focus on their core business. And no matter how well-designed and comprehensive were initiatives such as IT infrastructure consolidation and enterprise resource planning, without commensurate progress in customer service to agencies, the state's vision of a truly efficient and responsive enterprise IT environment could never be realized. In that sense, the INSPIRE Model has been as significant as any of more technically driven projects the division has had to take on. At the end of the day, effective customer service, and the ability to tailor solutions for agency customers, are the justifications for DET's existence.

There is no shortage of enterprise challenges on the horizon – cybersecurity, document management, cloud adoption, recruitment and retention, just to name a few. But the foundation of customer service DET has built gives the division continued confidence to engage agency partners, trust its staff, and implement genuinely collaborative solutions. Being a service provider of choice requires this systematic, measurable approach to customer service.

Impact

At the kickoff of INSPIRE, David Cagigal and DET managers agreed there had to be a mechanism for measuring results. After considering this with the consultant, they decided on using two surveys, both conducted annually – one provided to managers at customer agencies and another to all staff at organizations whose IT services are completely supported by DET. The survey questions address aspects of DET service provision for which, whatever the range of responses, DET managers believed they would have an actionable set of options to address potential customer concerns. The surveys consist of 16 items in which respondents are asked to grade DET on a continuum (for each specific item asked, Not Satisfied = 1 point; Somewhat Satisfied = 2 points; Satisfied = 3 points; Very Satisfied = 4 points). Therefore numeric measures could be gleaned from the responses. Respondents were also presented with several questions where they could key in whatever

they wanted to (for example, “If DET could change one thing today to increase your satisfaction, what would that be?”).

The surveys were first administered in spring 2015 and again in spring 2016 and 2017. The trend has been moving in a positive direction:

Survey Group	2015 Surveys	2016 Surveys	2017 Surveys
DET Customer Service Cumulative Score from Agency Leadership Group	2.2/4.0	2.7/4.0	2.7/4.0
DET Customer Service Cumulative Score from All-DET Service User Group	2.8/4.0	3.1/4.0	3.2/4.0

Also, for the 16 individual items that called for a response graded 1 through 4, the cumulative average of responses went up for all 16 items in 2016. DET managers understand that trend lines over longer periods of time will provide the most definitive assessment of the quality of customer service, but nevertheless, the improvement shown in survey responses has certainly been encouraging, and gives some confidence that the INSPIRE Model has been worth the time and effort invested. Surveys to these groups will continue to be administered annually. Meanwhile, DET teams likewise attach performance measures to their specific team’s customer service standards as much as possible.

The INSPIRE model also includes an important internal-looking component: employee engagement. A compelling amount of research indicates that if staff are engaged with the organizational mission and satisfied with their work environment, the likelihood of customer satisfaction increases significantly. But, again, employee engagement must be measured, not just hoped for or taken for granted. DET followed up on its customer service surveys in 2015 with an employee engagement survey, whose questions were designed to gauge whether DET is providing staff with the tools, support, and positive work environment necessary to deliver excellent customer service.

The overall responses from DET staff were very encouraging, but at the same time they highlighted areas the management team needed to address (for example, employees are looking for additional flexibility in training options). In light of the feedback generated by DET’s employee engagement survey, the Department of Administration (in which DET is a division) decided to conduct an all-agency employee engagement survey in November 2016, utilizing many similar questions. With this more recent survey, 100 percent of DET employees selected either Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement, “Providing good customer service is important to me.” Likewise, 97 percent responded Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement, “My supervisor supports customer service.” These percentages are significantly higher than when DET did its first employee engagement survey in 2015, and suggest that INSPIRE has helped to infuse customer service as a high priority at all levels of the organization.