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Client Management - What our Clients said

Over the course of the summer 1998, the TCS administered an independent client survey pilot.

The Client Survey for all Posts is to take place in January 1999.

To gather feedback from our clients on the Performance Measurement Initiative, we consulted with over 30 industry associations and representatives of more than 250 client companies since January 1998.

Some client observations:

- Overall satisfaction with our services is high
- But service quality is inconsistent.
- Clients want a consistent base of services from post to post.

Satisfaction with our services is generally high:

The overall perception of the Trade Commissioner Service is positive to very positive. However, participants in the consultations were relatively quick to point out "it's a people business: it depends on who you get." On the whole, good experiences appear to be the rule, and poor experiences the exception.

Inconsistent service quality:

Many clients still tell us that the quality of service delivery varies too widely from post to post abroad, and that they are dissatisfied when service varies between posts within a given region. Some posts are regarded as simply better than others, in terms of the quality of service the client can expect to obtain.

Desire for a consistent base of services:

On the positive side, most clients understand that not all posts are equipped to provide all services at the same levels. For the most part, what our clients want is simply a consistent base of services on which they can rely from post to post.

Uncertain expectations:

From what clients have told us during consultations, it is obvious that at least some complaints derive from unrealistic expectations. Even so, the problem is ultimately ours, not theirs. If clients are confused, as many have admitted they are, about what we can and cannot do for them, then it is a failure of communication that only we can remedy.

Difficulty getting in touch with officers:

Several participants claimed that getting in touch with officers can be quite cumbersome. Some complained of the long and complex e-mail addresses, while some expressed dissatisfaction with the complex Integrated Voice Response System (for xyz, press 1; for abc, press 2, and so on).

Poor response: