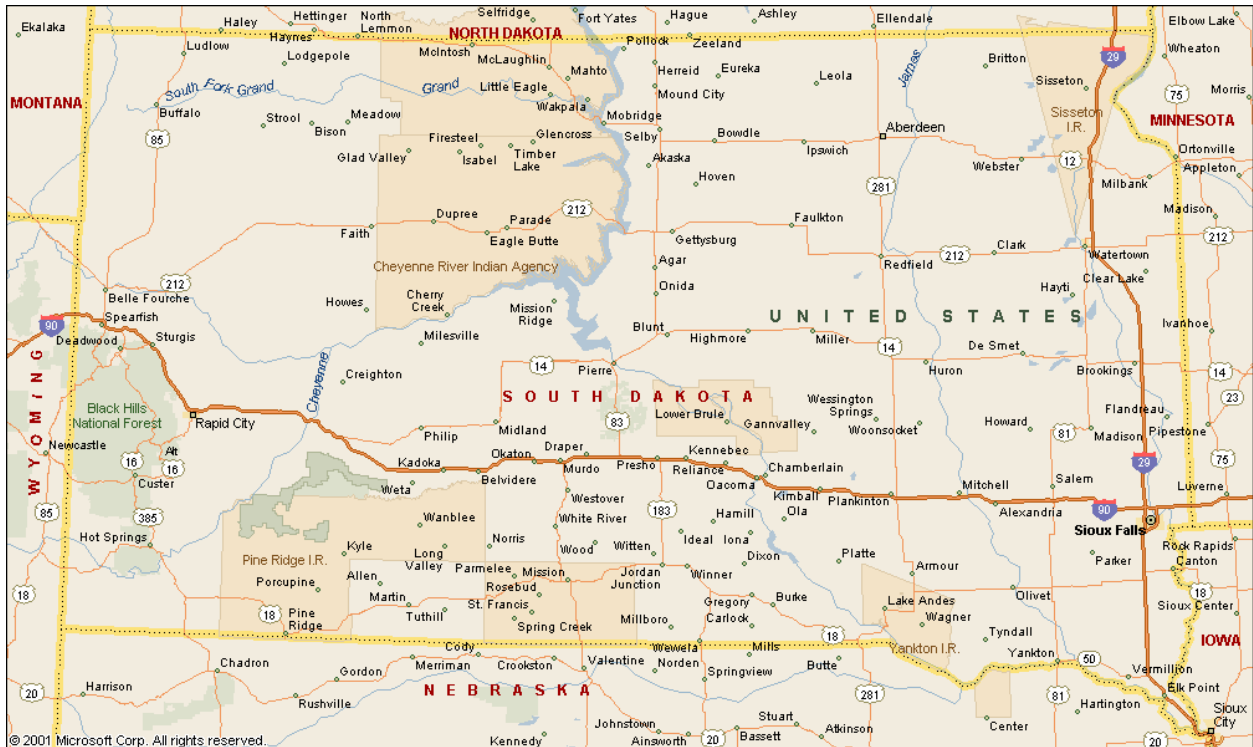


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South Dakota Motor Carrier Services 2006 Customer Satisfaction Assessment

Study SD2005-15 Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF STUDY

In response to a 2003 customer satisfaction assessment of services, the Motor Carrier Services (MCS) unit of the South Dakota Highway Patrol invested significant time and resources to address the first assessment's findings. As a follow-up to the 2003 benchmark study, the current 2006 customer satisfaction assessment study was designed to objectively measure and document any impact MCS management's actions taken as a result of the assessment have had on customer segments and staff.

The current research study sought insight to several key questions:

- Have the MCS unit's priorities, policies, and staff performance become better aligned with trucking industry wants and needs identified in the 2003 assessment?
- Have operational and/or policy changes had their desired effect?
- Have satisfaction ratings changed, and if so, how and to what degree?
- Have new issues emerged that affect the unit's relationship with its customers?
- Has new technology implemented after the initial assessment helped to meet regulatory obligations without impeding the industry?
- And, most importantly, how can MCS further improve its efforts so that collaboration with the trucking industry can be strengthened?

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were to:

- assess perceptions regarding the importance of motor carrier regulatory services and satisfaction with their delivery within the trucking industry and the SD Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Services unit;
- identify underlying causes or factors that shape these perceptions;
- assess the effectiveness of changes made in response to the 2003 motor carrier customer satisfaction assessment;
- identify opportunities for business improvements that will enable the trucking industry and regulatory agencies to strengthen collaboration while maintaining highway safety.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The process for this customer satisfaction assessment relied heavily on gathering input from a diverse cross-section of stakeholders representing the Motor Carrier Services Unit, Department of Transportation, trucking and agricultural associations, business operators and independent drivers. At each step of the process shown in Figure 1, issues were identified, clarified and documented for use in the telephone survey—the final step in the formal assessment. At each successive step in the process, more and more

perceptions were expressed and reviewed for use in developing lines of inquiry at the next step of the process.

Figure 1: Research Process

Focus of Research Components	
<p><u>1. SCOPE / WORK PLAN MEETING—TECHNICAL PANEL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH NEEDS AND DESIGN ▪ IDENTIFICATION OF ONGOING AND NEW ISSUES ▪ CURRENT RELATIONSHIP OF MCS WITH CUSTOMER BASE ▪ PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE AND PROGRESS TO-DATE ▪ LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS TO CONTACT 	<p><u>3. STATEWIDE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DISCUSSION OF INFORMATION SOURCES AND USE ▪ DISCUSSION OF NAME CHANGE AND MISSION ▪ PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE AND PERFORMANCE ▪ AWARENESS AND USE OF NEW TOOLS AND SERVICES ▪ FINDINGS USED IN DESIGN OF TELEPHONE SURVEYS
<p><u>2. ONE-ON-ONE STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PERCEPTIONS OF RELATIONSHIP OF MCS TO CUSTOMER ▪ PERCEIVED CHANGE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS ▪ SIGNS OF EMPHASIS ON CUSTOMER SERVICE ▪ EXPOSURE TO AND UNDERSTANDING OF NEW TECHNOLOGY TOOLS ▪ MCS OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION EFFORTS ▪ REFINEMENT OF ISSUES TO EXPLORE IN FOCUS GROUPS 	<p><u>4. SEGMENTED STATEWIDE TELEPHONE SURVEYS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DETERMINATION OF INFORMATION NEEDS ▪ PERCEPTIONS OF SD REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT AND CHANGE / BENCHMARK WITH NEIGHBORING STATES ▪ ASSESSMENT OF OPERATOR & STAFF INTERACTIONS ▪ EVALUATION OF PRACTICES AND SERVICES ▪ STAFF POINT OF VIEW—ISSUES AND NEEDS ▪ FINDINGS USED TO DEVELOP ACTION PLAN

1. Members of the project’s technical panel defined the research need, clarified the problem description as outlined in the request for proposal, and provided insight based on their personal perceptions. The name change from “enforcement” to “service” was assumed to be a major change factor resulting in a more positive outlook among the customer base. It was noted that for MCS officers the shift to a service focus required adjustments. The panel provided a list of fifteen stakeholders of interested parties available for phone interviews to the research team.
2. Fifteen phone interviews with diverse industry stakeholders helped to further define issues, give definition to possible change and clarify any perceived emphasis on customer service resulting from actions taken following the 2003 assessment. These first two research components provided the necessary insight for development of discussion guides used in the focus group discussions.
3. A series of seven focus groups were held in a key city within each Motor Carrier zone of enforcement—Aberdeen (2), Pierre (2), Rapid City (2), and Mitchell (1). Two groups were conducted with each of the following interest groups: operators of trucks used in agriculture (2), operators of trucks used by businesses (2), and independent carriers with trucks for hire (2). One (1) group was held with Motor Carrier Services staff.

Focus group discussions helped to define the diverse issues and perceptions of all parties. The discussions provided the needed clarity for developing survey instruments for use in the final stage of assessment—the telephone survey.

4. A telephone survey was conducted with a random sample of South Dakota truck operators representing statewide agricultural operators, business operators, and independent carriers—a total of 456 interviews from these three segments. A subset of identical questions focusing on the trucking regulatory environment in states adjacent to South Dakota was conducted with 100 business operators based in these states. Twenty-five surveys were conducted in each of the following four benchmark states: Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming. In addition Motor Carrier Services staff (59) was interviewed by telephone.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Major findings of the 2006 Customer Satisfaction Assessment Study are provided below. Findings are grouped by topic areas comprising the survey instruments. One or more survey questions relate to each topic area.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE

Although awareness and extent of change in perceptions of how MCS staff performs their duties has been limited and slow, several positive indications of change were seen.

Awareness of Change in Staff Performance

The degree of perceived change was rated on a 10-point scale where “10” is A Lot of Change down to “1” no change at all. More than half of all operators surveyed (239 of 456) rated change a “5” or greater. For purposes of analysis, this subgroup of operators (who rated change “5” or greater) was considered to have noticed sufficient change to form meaningful perceptions.

- The more recent an operator’s contact with MCS staff the greater the degree of perceived change seen. This correlation indicates changes put in place after the 2003 assessment are slowly taking root and changing prior perceptions.
- Independent carriers reported seeing the greatest degree of change. They perceived a significantly higher degree of change than did agricultural operators (average rating of change 4.6 versus 4.0, respectively). On average in 2003, this group’s perceptions of MCS were the most negative of all operators.
- Specific changes mentioned by all operators included: more weigh stations and inspections (19%); friendlier, less arrogant, and better staff attitude (18%); more visibility and activity (16%); and more attention to details, logs, and types of vehicles. Nearly half of all operators (47%) had no suggestion for further changes. The single most requested change was for more leniency (13%).

Characterization of Perceived Change

More than half of the operators perceiving change (126 of 239) characterized the changes they noticed as having a positive impact on their ability to legally and safely drive their truck on South Dakota roadways.

- Change was significantly more likely to be viewed as ‘positive’ if operator contact occurred in the last 12 months, indicating changes put in place two or three years ago are taking time to have an impact.

- Operators who viewed changes as having a positive impact were significantly more likely to feel safety on South Dakota roadways had increased in the past year or two than were all other operators (50% versus 33%, respectively).
- Views of change having a positive impact correlate to higher overall ratings of MCS job performance.
- Operators who viewed change as having a positive impact were significantly more likely to state “Most all” staff exhibits the personal characteristic of most importance to them. Being polite was significantly more likely to be of greatest importance to these operators than it was to all other operators (27% versus 14%, respectively).
- Operators perceiving positive change were significantly more likely to state that the majority of staff they had contact with exhibited each of ten assessed staff attributes related to good job performance.

Assumed Agent of Change

Nearly a third of operators noticing change (76 of 239) were not sure of what to attribute observed changes. The most mentioned change agent was politics in general and the governor specifically (15%). Safety and driving safely was mentioned by 8%. MCS changes in attitude and policy were mentioned specifically by 6%.

SOUTH DAKOTA REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

In comparison to the 2003 assessment, significant improvement in operator perceptions of South Dakota’s regulatory environment was seen. Although improvement was seen in all segments, improved perceptions were strongest for independent carriers and agricultural operators and within Zone 2.

There still is significant room for improvement. For six of nine benchmarked questions, South Dakota operator perceptions were significantly less positive than those of operators in neighboring states.

Uniformity

- Compared to 2003, significantly more operators now view uniformity of truck inspections and weight restrictions and postings in South Dakota as being “Fairly Uniform” or “Very Uniform”.
- There were no significant differences in perceptions of uniformity by neighboring state operators asked to rate their states.

Characterization of Environment

Four statements related to aggressiveness and strictness of enforcement were rated in both 2006 and 2003. Operators used a 10-point scale with 10 “Strongly Agree” down to 1 “Strongly Disagree” to indicate agreement. 2006 survey results indicated significant improvement in responses to the four statements.

- In 2006, operator agreement with the statement “South Dakota enforces trucking safety more aggressively than do neighboring states” is significantly less than in 2003—average rating 6.1 compared to 6.4. Benchmark operators rated their states identically to South Dakota operators.

- In 2006, independent carrier agreement with the statement “South Dakota enforces weight restrictions more aggressively than do neighboring states” is significantly less than in 2003, average rating 6.8 compared to 7.6. Operators in benchmark states, when asked a similar question related to their own state, expressed significantly less agreement that their agencies enforced weight restrictions more aggressively than neighboring states.
- In 2006, significantly more operators felt enforcement of laws for overweight trucks in South Dakota was “About Right”—63%, up from 54% in 2003. This lags significantly with benchmark operators—83% stating strictness was “About Right” in their states.
- Benchmark operators were asked to characterize South Dakota’s enforcement strictness compared to their state. 58% stated it was about the same and 22% viewed it as more strict. 17% said it is less strict.
- In 2006, operator agreement with the statement “South Dakota has discouraged out of state truck operators from traveling through the state because of overly strict application of trucking regulations” is significantly less than what it was in 2003 (4.8 versus 6.1, respectively). Operators in benchmark states agreed significantly less that their states discouraged out of state trucks because of overly strict application of trucking regulations.

Opinions of regulations and outcomes associated with their application improved significantly in 2006.

- In 2006, operator agreement with the statement “South Dakota focuses too much on generating extra revenue through fines for truck related violations” is significantly less than in 2003 (6.4 versus 7.0, respectively). Benchmark operators expressed significantly more positive views, stating their states were less revenue focused.
- Trucking regulations in South Dakota are perceived as being “Somewhat” to “Very Different” compared to a benchmarked operator’s state by nearly 6 in 10 operators in neighboring states.

PERFORMANCE PROGRESS

Overall MCS Job Performance

A significant shift in opinion of the overall job MCS does in performing its duties occurred this assessment period. Ratings are now comparable to operator ratings of truck regulatory agencies in neighboring states.

- Overall performance ratings by independent and agricultural operators were significantly higher than in 2003. Significant improvements were seen in ratings in Zones 2 and 4. On a 10-point scale where 10 meant “Extremely Good Job” down to 1 a “Very Poor Job,” the average rating in 2006 compared to 2003 was 7.4 versus 6.9. The average rating of regulatory agencies in benchmark states was 7.3.

Customer Interactions

In 2006, perceptions of MCS staff improved significantly in one or more operator segments and Zones for six of 10 personal characteristics measured. Ten attribute questions identical to those asked in 2003 were used to measure progress. Using a 10-point scale (where 10 is “Strongly Agree” down to 1 “Strongly

Disagree”), operators were asked their level of agreement with statements on whether the majority of staff they had contact with exhibited a particular personal characteristic.

- Of all operators interviewed in 2003, independent operators were the most critical of MCS staff. Of the three surveyed operator segments in 2006, independent operators expressed the most improved staff performance ratings. Average levels of agreement (higher value represents stronger agreement) for independent operators in 2006 versus 2003 were:
 - “Treat truck drivers in respectful manner”—6.8 vs. 6.0
 - “Try to interpret regulations fairly”—7.3 vs. 6.7
 - “Show a willingness to listen”—6.2 vs. 5.5
 - “Exercise good judgment and common sense”—6.7 vs. 6.0
 - “Are polite and courteous”—7.3 vs. 6.4
 - “Are more ready to help an operator than find fault”—5.4 vs. 4.5
- The characteristics rated as most important to a truck driver were “exercising good judgment” (19% of all operators) and “being polite and courteous” (18% of all operators). Significantly more operators—83%, up from 71% in 2003—stated “Some” or “Most All” staff that they had contact with exhibited the characteristic most important to them.

Safe Operation of Trucks

Independent carriers and operators in Zone 4 expressed significantly higher performance ratings for the job MCS does in helping drivers of trucks operate safely within the law.

- On a 10-point scale where 10 is an “Extremely Good Job” down to 1 a “Very Poor Job,” the average rating by independent operators was 6.9 in 2006 compared to 6.4 in 2003. The average rating in Zone 4 was 6.8 in 2006 compared to 6.1 in 2003.
- More than one-third of all operators (38%) felt safety on South Dakota roadways had increased. Less than 2% felt it had decreased.

STAFF ATTITUDES AND JOB PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

Employee Communications and Support

Most MCS officers reported that they received necessary information and feedback from supervisors to know what is expected of them, know how they are doing and know what are the policies and activities of the organization.

- On a 10-point scale with 10 “Strongly Agree” down to 1 “Strongly Disagree,” the average response to questions regarding these communication needs was between 7.7 and 8.4, indicating high agreement.

An area where a majority of staff expressed frustration related to staff’s agreement with the statement “I get concerned that my decisions may be questioned by my supervisors”.

- 58% expressed agreement in the range of 7 to 10 on the 10-point scale where 10 is “Strongly Agree”.
- Staff explanations for their ratings on this issue pointed to low morale and defensiveness about being second guessed. This was mentioned particularly in the context of customer complaints.
- In the case of customer complaints, the assumption of many staff persons was that management sides with the offender until the staff person proves otherwise.

Service Focus—Impact on Interaction Outcomes

Emphasis on customer service has greatly impacted how MCS staff interacts with customers. Reasons for contact, locations of contact, and number of monthly contacts varied little between assessment periods. Staff was asked to make a number of comparisons of interactions today compared to three years ago.

- One-half of the staff stated that the number of warnings and citations issued in a typical month has decreased. Reports of operators supported this finding. In 2006, there was a significant increase in no warning or citation reported by operators compared to 2003 (72% versus 61%, respectively). In 2006, about half as many operators reported receiving a fine compared to 2003 (12% versus 22%, respectively).
- Three-quarters of the staff stated that the practice of stacking violations during an inspection has decreased.
- More than 6 in 10 staff members felt customer respect for the duties they perform had “improved somewhat” as a result of the unit’s new approach to dealing with customers.

REGULATORY INFORMATION

Familiarity and Preferred Sources

Familiarity with federal and state trucking regulations is identical to what it was in 2003.

- On a 10-point scale where 10 is “Extremely Familiar” down to 1 “Not at All Familiar,” the average rating for both assessment years was 6.5. Also consistent with the 2003 assessment, agricultural drivers rated their familiarity significantly less than both independent carrier and business operators.
- Operators most familiar with regulations were significantly more likely to rate overall MCS performance the highest. This implies an informed customer will be among the best customers.

The sources operators stated would be most useful to stay informed of rule changes are consistent with sources mentioned as most useful in 2003.

- The three sources mentioned by the greatest proportion of operators included: newsletters (90%), the motor carrier handbook (78%), and inserts to truck registrations and license renewals (78%).

Use and Evaluation of Provided Tools

Requests of MCS staff for regulatory or permit information is at the same level as seen in 2003. Significantly more business operators stated they had made requests than all other operators.

- Less than one half (43%) of all operators reported making a request. Nearly all of these (94%) stated the request was handled in a friendly and courteous manner.

The 2005 Motor Carrier Handbook was revised as a result of information obtained in the 2003 assessment survey. The revised Commercial & Agricultural Vehicle Handbook was rated higher for user friendliness and ease of understanding, but fewer operators were familiar with the newly revised publication.

- 35% of all operators stated they were familiar with the 2005 handbook. In 2003, 55% of all operators stated they were familiar with the then available motor carrier handbook.
- Handbook familiarity declined significantly in all three operator segments. Agricultural operators were the least familiar (28%), as was the case in 2003.
- 79% of those operators (126) familiar with the 2005 handbook stated they had a copy. 17% stated they did not and 4% didn't know.

AUTOMATED CUSTOMER SERVICE TOOLS

Awareness, Use and Interest

Questions regarding automated service tools were asked of independent carriers and business operators. Awareness and use of electronic permitting and electronic screening is very limited, but a sizeable proportion of operators expressed interest in the service tools.

- Just over one-half (52%) of the operators (159 of 304) stated they were familiar with the ability to obtain permits online.
- Of the operators familiar with electronic permitting (159), 29 operators (18%) had obtained a permit online and found the process easy to use.*
- Less than one-third (30%) of the operators (91 of 304) were familiar with availability of electronic screening at the Jefferson Port of Entry.
- Of the operators familiar with electronic screening (91), 11 operators (12%) currently use this electronic screening service.
- 41% of independent carriers and business operators expressed interest in learning more about electronic screening and considering in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The key findings suggest six possible opportunities for continued improvement in customer satisfaction. An overview of these opportunities is as follows:

1. Continue to apply customer focused training and service delivery programs,
2. Develop and make available independent learning materials,

3. Design and maintain a broad-based communications program,
4. Design an integrated low-cost internal performance appraisal program on all key measures,
5. Create a management supported employee performance development, awards and recognition program, and
6. Establish an Industry-Government MCS Advisory Board.

Conclusions supporting recommended action in the above areas are outlined below.

Conclusion 1: *MCS has made substantial progress in transitioning to a strategy repositioned on being customer focused versus regulatory minded (Opportunity Area 1).* However, there is still significant room for improvement. A multi-year strategy plan (road map) can maximize probability of success in all identified areas of opportunity.

Conclusion 2: *Exposure to, familiarity with, and use of existing MCS tools and services aimed at assisting truck operators varies broadly by customer segment and size. Many customers are not as well informed as they should be on how to legally and safely operate their trucks on South Dakota roadways (Opportunity Area 2).* Trucking activities and driver attitudes, needs, and experience vary considerably indicating that a “one size fits all” approach to public education may not afford the most productive outcome. Devising cost-effective ways to deliver customized materials that can be easily accessed and individualized would help support the wide range of customer training and information needs.

Conclusion 3: *Awareness and use of MCS provided information and communications could be much broader. Pathways to address communication needs of large operators and small “mom and pop” operators and all operators in between are needed (Opportunity Area 3).* A more informed customer is, in addition to operating safely and legally, more likely to be supportive of goals linked to the MCS mission. Message consistency and frequency are vital to effective communications. A more formalized effort at identifying and planning opportunities for broad-based communication with customer segments needs to be undertaken and its progress monitored over time.

Conclusion 4: *In order to sustain and further achieve management’s goal of improving customer service, progress needs to be both monitored and communicated on a more frequent basis (Opportunity Area 4).* Assessment of progress need not be limited to formal studies conducted every couple of years. Opportunities exist with every customer contact for monitoring progress. The real payoff is in identifying low cost ways to assess progress of an action plan linked to a formal assessment so that the plan can be calibrated as it is implemented over time. Consolidating customer feedback offers an opportunity to communicate progress internally and externally to staff, stakeholders and customers alike. Communication of results serves as a bond keeping all involved parties aware and supportive of service objectives.

Conclusion 5: *Staff transition from an “enforcement” to a “service” posture and orientation has taken root, but with growing pains. To sustain and achieve further progress a tangible ongoing employee program that communicates and manifests management support is needed (Opportunity Area 5).* There exists a general sense that management philosophy has changed. The focus on customer service is seen as support for whatever a constituent reports rather than assuming staff made good decisions. Staff feelings that actions need to be justified and supported by evidence that the correct decision was made is

negatively impacting morale. Staff representation and participation in establishing and maintaining a management program for staff development and recognition can help counterbalance difficult changes in transitioning to a more customer-focused service delivery.

Conclusion 6: *Baseline 2003 assessment recommendations that were collaboratively undertaken with trucking industry and related association representatives contributed to positive change and beneficial outcomes (Opportunity Area 6).* The most visible example was the redesign of the commercial vehicle handbook. This collaborative effort resulted in a new handbook judged by customers and staff to be more user-friendly and readable. It was judged a significant improvement over the previous version.

Motor Carrier Services management should evaluate each of these opportunities and set priorities that provide the best investment of the department's financial resources and staff's time. The summary conclusion is that continued improvement in any of these areas of opportunity will help secure enhanced cooperation between the trucking industry and South Dakota's regulatory agencies.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE FURTHER PROGRESS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researchers facilitated a two-step planning process with Department of Public Safety and Motor Carrier Services personnel. The planning objective was to prioritize, define required steps and timeframes to implement recommended initiatives.

Nine recommended initiatives addressed the opportunities viewed as high priorities. These opportunities were identified and supported by the research findings and related conclusions.

A brief description of each initiative follows. Initiatives are organized by area of opportunity. A preliminary calendar showing anticipated time requirements and sequencing of initiatives follows initiative descriptions. The sequencing is based on workshop participant consensus. A more detailed "Action Outline" for each recommended initiative was compiled by workshop participants. This collection of outlines is the basis for MCS's Action Plan and appears in Appendix L of the final report.

COMMUNICATIONS

Recommendation 1. *Specify content and then develop a MCS communications plan.* The desired outcome is to have a single plan that drives all internal and external communication activities within Motor Carrier Services. The plan must be flexible allowing for review and updating as needed.

The first step in plan development requires a complete communications audit. The audit will inventory all existing means of internal and external communication by the Unit and within individual enforcement zones. In the process, all target audiences or communications touch points and key points communicated will be identified and documented. Review of audit findings will guide and provide a framework for shaping plan requirements. Required responsibilities include: a plan manager, communications advisor, agency advisory panel, plan contributors, and a final plan reviewer. The anticipated time required to complete the initial plan is 10 months.

Recommendation 2. *Design and develop a MCS newsletter for external distribution.* The desired outcome is to increase contact and feedback opportunities with multiple customer segments. Initially the newsletter will be designed as an annual publication. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, graphic designer, editor, content contributors, proofreader, and production coordinator. An outside

publisher will also need to be identified. The anticipated time required to design and produce the first publication is 3 months.

OUTREACH

Recommendation 3. *Identify design requirements and then develop an enhanced web-based interactive reference tool.* The desired outcome is to construct a customer specific search engine that is compatible with the existing web site(s). Develop to address the needs of agricultural drivers first and then expand to other industry segments. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, web designer, communications advisor, an evaluator, and internal and customer testers. The anticipated time required to develop first module for agriculture audience is 9 months.

Recommendation 4. *Design, produce, and distribute a portable learning disc to educate drivers on basics of safe and legal operation of trucks.* The desired outcome is a standalone disc that is both media rich visually and well narrated. The design needs to support easy construction and easy updating.

The disc can be segment specific or generic to the entire trucking industry. Content should be general in nature. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, software designer, production coordinator for staff involvement, DOT technical advisor, and coordinator for testing. The anticipated time required to design, produce, and distribute the disc is 12 months. Some of the content development and production will be concurrent with the development of the web-based reference tool. Work will commence on the reference tool first. Total anticipated time required to complete is 12 months.

STAFF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

Recommendation 5. *Create a vehicle for staff engagement through publishing a motor carrier officer newsletter.* The desired outcome is to provide a vehicle to recognize staff while cultivating a feeling of ownership and input to work processes within the organization and individual enforcement zones. Content may include items such as recognition of awards, service longevity, birthdays, births, and anniversaries. Required responsibilities include: project manager, staff editor and content contributors. The anticipated time required to design and establish the program is 9 months.

Recommendation 6. *Create a career enhancement program to identify and reward inspectors achieving specialized training and consistently performing beyond required and expected standards.* Evaluate and implement if successful a pilot program of flexible night/day scheduling at Ports to provide more family and personal time. To be considered successful, scheduling would need to have a neutral impact on customer service. The desired outcome is to retain a knowledgeable workforce by providing advancement opportunities and flexible work schedules, and to create an atmosphere conducive to strengthening employee motivation and job satisfaction. Required responsibilities include: project manager for career enhancement program, Bureau of Personnel, budget personnel and Port managers for flexible scheduling. Anticipated time needed to design program is 9 months with a possible 2 or 3 month period for evaluation.

MEASURES AND INDUSTRY

Recommendation 7. *Design a joint effort for MCS and the trucking industry for promotion of safe driving conditions around trucks on roadways.* The desired outcome is to better educate industry drivers and the general public on safe operation around larger vehicles encountered on South Dakota roadways.

The approach will involve recruitment of industry partners and the design and dissemination of safety related educational content aimed at and appropriate for diverse public and industry audiences—younger drivers, older drivers, drivers of large recreational vehicles (motor homes), agricultural drivers, industry drivers etc. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, media consultant, safety consultant, and technical panel of agency and industry partners. The anticipated time required to develop the program is 12 months.

Recommendation 8. *Develop a program to demonstrate safety results linked to MCS activities.* The desired outcome is to raise awareness of MCS staff impact on traffic safety. The approach will entail the review of CMV crash history and related causation factors. From these data crash rates per vehicle miles traveled will be calculated. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, statistician, and public information officer. The anticipated time required to develop the program is 4 months.

Recommendation 9. *Establish an advisory team to examine the structure of fines for overweight trucks and their relationship to both safe driving conditions and protection of South Dakota’s roadway investment.* Survey results indicated the greatest disparity in attitudes and perceptions of South Dakota truck operators with truck operations of neighboring benchmark states centered on the issue of overweight enforcement. A study on fine structure would be best directed by a research technical panel assembled by the DOT.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Table 1: Initiative Implementation Schedule

Initiative	2006			2007												2008												
	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	
2																												
5																												
3																												
1																												
4																												
8																												
7																												
6																												
9	to be determined																											

1	MCS communications plan	6	Career enhancement program / Pilot program of flexible scheduling
2	MCS newsletter for external distribution	7	Promotion of safe driving conditions around trucks on roadways
3	Web-based interactive reference tool	8	Program to demonstrate safety results linked to MCS activities
4	Portable learning disc for safe/legal basics	9	Advisory team to examine structure of fines for overweight trucks
5	Vehicle for staff engagement		

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

The Motor Carrier Services unit of the South Dakota Highway Patrol invested significant time and resources in response to a 2003 customer satisfaction assessment of its services. That assessment clarified customer and staff working environment concerns and provided insight into ways the unit could be more responsive to the needs of the South Dakota trucking industry without forfeiting its regulatory responsibilities.

Motor Carrier Services management took several actions in response to the first assessment's research findings. Key changes included:

- changing the unit's name from Motor Carrier Enforcement to Motor Carrier Services;
- assembling a trucking industry advisory group;
- reformatting and revising the motor carrier vehicle handbook; and
- instituting staff training for communications and handling difficult situations.

As a follow-up to the benchmark study, a second assessment was needed to objectively measure and document any impact the unit's actions had on customer segments. It was important that there be consistencies between the two studies so that results could be compared.

The current follow-up research was needed to address several key questions:

- Have the unit's priorities, policies and staff performance become better aligned with trucking industry needs?
- Have operational/policy changes had their desired effect?
- Have satisfaction ratings changed, and if so, how and to what degree?
- Have new issues emerged that affect the unit's relationship with its customers?
- Has new technology implemented after the initial assessment helped to meet regulatory obligations without impeding the industry?
- And, most importantly, how can MCS further improve its efforts so that collaboration with the trucking industry can be strengthened?

A preliminary literature search identified surveys used in four states to assess the trucking industry's satisfaction with motor carrier services. These surveys were focused on the automated permitting process rather than the unit's regulatory services and the delivery of these services as is the case with South Dakota.

It appears that the South Dakota Motor Carrier Services assessment efforts may have nationwide application and value. Other states and municipalities seeking to foster more beneficial collaborations with the trucking industry may have an interest in the study's outcomes. Results of this assessment will demonstrate that the benefit of enhanced cooperation between the trucking industry and regulatory agencies serves the mutual interests of industry, government, and the public.

OBJECTIVES

The 2006 Customer Satisfaction Assessment Study had four primary objectives.

1. *To assess perceptions regarding the importance of motor carrier regulatory services and satisfaction with their delivery within the trucking industry and the SD Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Services unit.* This objective was achieved by obtaining qualitative and quantitative feedback from both representative samples of trucking industry segments and Motor Carrier Services staff. Stakeholder interviews and focus groups identified performance expectations and service delivery requirements from the customer and the staff points of view. Telephone surveys were designed to measure importance and satisfaction for ten staff attitude and performance characteristics. The "Findings" Section of this report is organized in a format to facilitate comparison of customer and staff points-of-view.
2. *To identify the underlying causes or factors that shapes these perceptions.* This objective was addressed by designing stakeholder interview outline, focus group discussion guides and survey instruments that focused on obtaining participant reasons for opinions and ratings. Researchers probed and clarified to obtain a fuller understanding of underpinnings of respondent attitudes, concerns, judgments and needs. Several open-ended questions were used throughout the telephone surveys to accomplish this objective. Copies of research instruments appear in Appendices E and F.
3. *To assess the effectiveness of changes made in response to the 2003 motor carrier customer satisfaction assessment.* This objective was achieved by identifying in stakeholder interviews and focus groups areas of perceived change and by probing survey participants for the reasons behind their responses and ratings. The telephone survey instrument was designed for wording and scale consistency with the 2003 survey so that statistical comparisons of performance ratings and service assessments were possible. To establish an additional baseline for performance comparisons, a benchmark survey was administered to 100 business operators of trucks in four states bordering South Dakota. All statistically significant differences in response between current study and the 2003 baseline study and/or the benchmark survey are indicated in charts or tables throughout the "Findings" section of this report.
4. *To identify opportunities for business improvements that will enable the trucking industry and regulatory agencies to strengthen collaboration while maintaining highway safety.* This objective was achieved by analyzing the results of all four major research components comprising the current assessment study to identify areas of opportunity for continued growth between now and the next formal customer assessment. The "Conclusions" section of this report identifies six areas of opportunity and outlines the supporting data upon which each opportunity area is predicated. The "Recommendations" section of this report identifies recommended steps to translate these identified opportunities into action.

TASK DESCRIPTIONS

The research instruments that comprised the recommended research design and associated tasks required to accomplish related objectives follow.

TASK 1: MEET WITH TECHNICAL PANEL

This initial task was intended to review project scope and establish a final work plan around which a research design would be finalized. At this meeting panel members provided perceptions of the current relationship of MCS and their customer base and discussed new issues and services that have taken place since the first assessment in 2003. An outline of the topics discussed is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Technical Panel Meeting Outline

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Name changeB. Repositioning / Mission statement<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Achievement of balance between service and enforcementC. Emphasis on strengthening staff<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Recruitment and evaluation2. Communication skills3. Customer service focusD. Strengthening of communications outreach<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Public meetings2. Informational brochures / revised handbookE. Service delivery enhancements<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Automated permitting2. Electronic screening3. Efforts to reduce duration of inspections / gain efficiencies |
|---|

Key points of feedback used in shaping the direction of inquiries in subsequent data collection tasks included:

- Name change from “enforcement” to “service” was perceived as a major change resulting in more positive customer perceptions,
- For staff it was pointed out that the change has required some adjustment,
- It was felt that level of enforcement is about the same as in 2003. The sense was that there has been a pullback in stacking tickets—writing one major ticket instead of five,
- It was felt that MCS is seen as more approachable—ready to assist and help in contrast to merely enforcing,
- More emphasis has been placed on customer service training, and
- Handbook redesign was seen as positive.

New or ongoing questions included:

- How to get people to attend public meetings? How to get more users of electronic screening?
- How does South Dakota enforcement compare to neighboring states?

The panel provided a list of fifteen individual stakeholders for one-on-one interviewing.

TASK 2: REVIEW APPLICABLE LITERATURE AND INTERVIEW STAKEHOLDERS

This task was directed at identifying new and ongoing issues that would support subsequent tasks.

APPLICATION LITERATURE

MarketLine reviewed websites for motor carrier organizations across the country. A search for motor carrier customer satisfaction assessments appeared limited and in the early stages of development. However, there may be other efforts not readily found via the web search.

Responses to email inquiries directed to State Patrol and DOT's seeking information on formal assessments in their states came back with notes stating "we are not aware of any studies". Several agencies stated that assessment is informally carried out on a continuing basis.

The most comprehensive and comparable assessment effort by another state's motor carrier enforcement agency was that of the Oregon Department of Transportation's Motor Carrier Transportation Division (MCTD). Oregon's MCTD has conducted mail surveys of its customers in 1998, 2002, 2004 and currently in 2006. Response rates to date have been 34%, 31% and 31%, respectively. The Division has conducted its customer satisfaction survey process at low cost using in-house resources to randomly compile a sample of its customer base. Key features of MCTD's approach include:

- Surveys gauge satisfaction with both staff and services,
- The customer base is segmented into nine groups, all of which have had recent interaction with the Division. For example, all Oregon companies subject to safety compliance review in the last six months or Oregon truck drivers inspected by staff in the past year,
- The survey also includes random selection of companies based in the neighboring states of Idaho and Washington that are part of their Oregon Trusted Carrier Partners program, and
- Each survey is customized to the customer group to which it is sent.

Results of their assessments are published in a quarterly newsletter that is distributed to some 30,000 individuals and companies in Oregon, the western states and Canada. The full surveys are available at the MCTD website¹.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

All fifteen of the stakeholders identified by the Technical Panel were interviewed. Interviews typically lasted 15 to 20 minutes. Topics that were discussed during the interviews included:

- characterization of working relationship of MCS and trucking industry;
- perceived change in the past couple of years;
- signs of emphasis on customer service;
- awareness and use of electronic permitting and electronic screening; and
- Opportunities for public education—venues, incentives and barriers to attendance.

¹ <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/MCT/>

Completion of this task resulted in obtaining perspectives from stakeholders affiliated with diverse associations, business, and operator groups. Researchers gained a good preliminary sense of how actions taken following the 2003 customer assessment have impacted perceptions of staff and the regulatory environment.

TASK 3: PREPARE TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM SUMMARIZING KEY ISSUES

The primary objective of this task was to prepare a technical memorandum that would serve to consolidate all stakeholder insights gained from discussions with technical panel members, MCS management staff, and identified stakeholders in Task 2. The collective insights formed the basis for development of the research tools (discussion guides and exercises) used in the focus groups.

The working relationship between MCS and its customers was characterized as improved by most stakeholders. Primary perceptions of change expressed included:

- everyone's polite, more friendly, more courteous
- attitude has changed—more personable
- not going out of way to pick you up
- more of a concern to get truck in and out faster
- word-of-mouth has improved
- improved avenue to call and express concern
- permitting is getting easier.

Many stakeholders associated the agent of change with the new administration and Governor. The Governor is credited with lowering the level of tension between the enforcement agencies and the trucking industry.

The consensus was South Dakota is getting better at enforcement practices compared to other states. Some characterized practices as drastically improved.

Industry stakeholder awareness and use of new communication and service tools was limited.

- The web site www.sdtruckinfo.com had broad awareness, but use was limited.
- About half the interviewed stakeholders had seen the new Commercial & Agricultural Vehicle Handbook.
- Most stakeholders were aware of electronic permitting. Barriers to use were seen as the need for education in how to use the system and the chance of error for those not familiar with the permitting process.
- Most stakeholders were aware of electronic screening, but use is very limited. Perceived barriers to adoption of electronic screening included:
 - fear of ability to be tracked in similar manner as caller ID;
 - one transmitter not working in all states;

- availability at only Ports of Entry;
- all trucks having to go through / perception should not have to stop;
- waiting for more states to participate;
- lack of knowledge on how to use; and
- not seen as a value unless interstate carrier.

Public education meetings have had disappointing turnouts for those stakeholders familiar with efforts. Some expressed the perception that it is harder for smaller carriers to attend. They felt there is a need to find a way to reach the “ma and pop” operations. Some associated lack of turnout with lack of time.

Stakeholders felt the following issues need addressing:

- lack of safety when trucks are pulled over on roadways;
- help with interpreting the hours of service regulations;
- outreach should focus on independent owner/operators who are more likely to lack knowledge of regulations because of lack of investment in time to learn;
- younger truck drivers viewed as having more aggressive driving habits;
- need for an educational effort on driving safely around trucks aimed at the general public; and
- smaller carriers seen as being able to skirt regulations.

The most contentious issue raised was that of perceived disparity in the application of the law between the agricultural and trucking industries. Some stakeholders expressed the perception that farmers blatantly disregard rules because they know they can get away with things. There is a sense that the playing field needs to be leveled.

As a result of this task, draft discussion guides were provided to the Technical Panel for review and comment. Guides outlined exploratory issues for each of the two types of planned focus groups—those with trucking industry operators and those with MCS staff.

TASK 4: CONDUCT FOCUS GROUPS

To accomplish this task a total of seven (7) focus groups were conducted. Six group discussions were held with customers—three each with agriculture (farmers/ranchers) and trucking (independent operators and business). One group was held with Motor Carrier Service’s Inspectors.

The groups were conducted the week of April 3, 2006. Of the 68 confirmed individuals to attend the groups, 59 individuals came and participated—a turnout rate of 88%.

To provide balance for possible geographic differences and effectively reach key customer segments sessions were conducted in all four MCS zones of enforcement. Two sessions were held in each location of Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City and Mitchell. Potential group participants were screened during telephone recruitment to meet segment specific qualifications.

The Technical Panel approved final screening criteria and segment definition. Twelve (12) participants were recruited for each group session with 8 to 10 individuals expected to show.

The purpose of the groups was to further explore customer needs and issues (ongoing and new) and probe and clarify perceptions of change and possible related effects as a result of measures taken following the 2003 assessment. The discussion focused on motor carrier inspections and attitudes, with specific attention to the changes that may have been noticed over the past three years.

Key areas of questioning for agriculture, business and independent operator groups included:

- carriers' familiarity with the rules;
- recognition/familiarity with the name change from Enforcement to Services;
- interaction with Inspectors, overall and when stopped; and
- familiarity and attitudes toward outreach efforts.

Key areas of questioning for inspectors included:

- operators' knowledge of the rules;
- impact of the name change from Enforcement to Services;
- interaction with the public overall and during stops; and
- performance assessment and job satisfaction.

A copy of the *Discussion Guide* used with operators appears in Appendix F.

Successful completion of this task ensured that the research instruments for telephone surveys would thoroughly measure perceptions, needs and issues (ongoing and new) specific and relevant to each of the key motor carrier customer segments and Motor Carrier Services staff.

TASK 5: PREPARE TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM SUMMARIZING FOCUS GROUPS

After preparing and providing the technical memorandum, MarketLine conducted a conference call with Technical Panel members to review the memorandum and solicit feedback on proposed survey instruments drafted based on information gathered in all prior tasks.

During the focus group discussions, participants not only revealed *what* they felt, but *why* they felt the way they did. These findings provided valuable insight and direction for the refinement of the telephone survey instruments.

FAMILIARITY WITH THE RULES

- Those most familiar (and professing greatest adherence) were the larger, interstate carriers. They usually had a designated person tracking the regulations and proactively making efforts to comply. They had the latest handbook and were familiar with online resources.
- Smaller carriers and independents spoke of an interest in compliance, but were burdened by the complexity of the laws. They were not particularly proactive in managing that side of the business. Most had seen a handbook, but didn't have the latest copy. Generally they learned the rules by experience and truck stop conversation.

- Ranchers and farmers primarily learned by trial and error. They felt they had a general understanding of what was expected.

RECOGNIZING CHANGE

- The “Services” component of the name conjured expectations of helpfulness, proactiveness and responsiveness. The name had an overall positive impression.
- Very few were aware of the name change to “Motor Carrier Services”. Several reported that vehicles and published materials do not reflect the change.
- There was substantial confusion as to the group responsible for motor carrier regulation and enforcement of trucking regulations. Consistently, truckers and farmers and ranchers used stories of State Troopers, DOT, and MCS interchangeably. The reputations of these departments have tremendous influence on each other.
- Most participants felt that there were improvements in attitude over the past year, but the approach of Inspectors was viewed as highly variable. Inspectors felt they now have better rapport with drivers.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND INTERACTIONS

- Motor Carrier Service’s performance as relates to its stated mission was modestly graded. Overall improvement was noticed, but not dramatic.
- Most participants felt characteristics associated with good demeanor and personal interaction skills typically describe an MCS Inspector.
- Generally inspector performance at ports of entry was more highly regarded than during random stops.
- Many still felt that an inspection would last until something could be found for a citation.
- A few suspected that they currently receive warnings for infractions that they would previously have received citations.
- If cited, there was also the recognition it would be one ticket and not a series of violations written up.

OUTREACH

- Electronic permitting and electronic screening were very appealing to a handful, but overall awareness and interest was minimal. They were considered substantial potential benefits for only a few who were computer savvy or interstate oriented.
- Most were willing to have more public service interaction with Motor Carrier Services, but would not take additional action to achieve it. The responsibility for education and goodwill activities was placed solely with MCS and the DOT.
- Participants felt that representatives should be speaking on issues of interest at their professional association meetings, at co-ops and truck stops—anywhere that the operators frequent.

- Few were interested in special meetings solely on motor carrier issues.
- The smaller operators were seen as the least likely to have time to attend outreach efforts, but they were the group seen as in most need of educational efforts. It was pointed out that the larger firms have safety officers and the staffing necessary to ensure that operators are up-to-date on rule changes and safety procedures.

INSPECTOR MOTIVATION AND SUPPORT

- On a daily basis, the aspect that regularly lowers motivation or demoralizes is the perceived change in management philosophy. Inspectors expressed the sentiment that their actions would be second-guessed by superiors.
- Inspectors felt that they now must justify all of their actions and provide evidence that they made the right call. There was a sense of uncertainty and pull back from situations perceived as possibly generating a customer complaint.
- There was a general sense that current management philosophy is to support whatever the constituent reported rather than assuming the inspector made good decisions or acted appropriately. Staff would prefer to feel the ongoing support of their management. More recognition from immediate supervisors was desired.
- The inability to provide financial compensation or other tangible rewards places significant constraints on the performance appraisal process. It is viewed as a process where there is little to gain or lose. Overall, the process is seen as lacking meaning and merit. There is the feeling that the job has over time continued to expand with enforcement of federal and state regulations, but the pay has not.
- Inspectors expressed concern for staff turnover rate, which is perceived to be significantly higher than it was 3 or 4 years ago. They suggested rewording the eighth goal related to the MCS mission as “training individuals to the highest quality” and incorporating the idea of enrichment and retention.

The positive aspects of the Inspectors’ jobs were viewed as:

- opportunity to interact with interesting people from across the country;
- flexibility in schedule;
- public safety presentations;
- job stability and security; and
- benefits and pension.

Survey content was guided by information collected during the one-on-one stakeholders’ interviews and focus group discussions. The final surveys reflected the collective insight and thinking of both researchers and all technical panel members. The result was survey instruments appropriate for addressing issues and needs of operators and staff and for benchmarking with neighboring states.

TASK 6: CONDUCT STATEWIDE TELEPHONE SURVEY

To accomplish this task, MarketLine conducted 456 telephone interviews statewide. This number ensured balanced representation across MCS's four enforcement zones. Key operator segments surveyed were:

- Agricultural—operators with vehicle operated on county or state roadways for purpose of moving agricultural equipment, commodities or products;
- Business—company with operators who route, schedule or drive commercial vehicle of GWT 8,000 or more pounds used for shipping goods, freight or commodities or providing services;
- Carriers—operators of a registered commercial vehicle of 13 ton or more used to haul goods or freight from one location to another location.

All three segments were qualified with a separate series of screening questions. If an operator did not qualify for one segment an attempt was made to qualify the individual for one of the two remaining segments. Quotas were set for 114 interviews per zone equally distributed between the three segments. In addition 59 of 62 MCS staff members were interviewed using a questionnaire that closely paralleled that of the operator survey.

Interviews were conducted at MarketLine Research using a computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system. The three trucking operator segments were called during the period May 17 through June 7, 2006. The average length of an operator survey was 22½ minutes.

Operator profiles for each of the three interviewed trucking segments are contained in Appendices A, B, and C at the end of this report.

SAMPLE REPRESENTATION

The survey used a randomly drawn representative sample of users from each key operator segment. Completed operator interviews by segment and zone are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Ending Sample Representation

Operator Segment	MCS Enforcement Zone				Segment Totals
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	
Agricultural	38	38	38	38	152
Business	38	38	38	38	152
Carrier	38	38	38	38	152
Zone Total	114	114	114	114	456

SAMPLE DESIGN

Sample design was identical to the 2003 assessment to allow for reliable comparison of results of the two studies. With the exception of the agricultural sample, all sample call records were obtained from South Dakota government agencies. Records for registered interstate and intrastate vehicles were obtained from the South Dakota Department of Revenue & Regulation, Division of Motor Vehicles. The manufacturing list used for sampling business operators was provided by the Governor's Office of Economic Development. The calling sample for contacting agricultural operators was purchased from Survey Sampling, Inc. Records without phone numbers were sent to a telephone matching service.

REPRESENTATIVE ENDING SAMPLE

The maximum gross weights of trucks driven most often by surveyed operators were compared with the most recently available U.S. Census data. By research design, emphasis was placed on sampling business and independent operators with larger, heavier trucks. This was also done in the 2003 assessment. The proportions of truck sizes in the ending sample reflect this sample design.

Table 3: Representative Truck Size of Sampled Operators

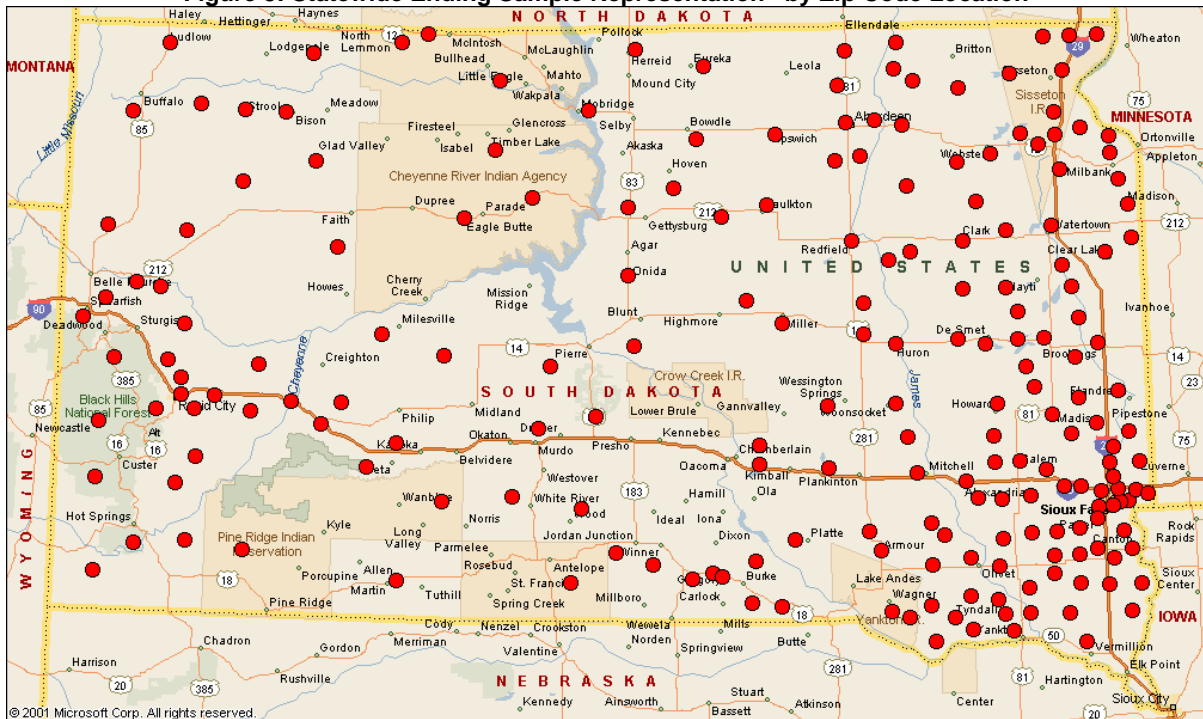
U.S. Census Data for South Dakota ¹	Ending Sample of Truck Operators (n = 456)
14% of trucks are under 6 ton [light]	Total study sample 9% are under 6 ton [light]
18% of trucks are 6 to 9 tons [medium]	Total study sample 5% are 6 to 9 tons [medium] ²
21% of trucks are 10 to 26 ton [light-heavy]	Total study sample 21% are 10 to 26 tons [light-heavy]
47% of trucks are over 26 ton [heavy-heavy]	Total study sample 65% are over 26 ton [heavy-heavy]

¹ Vehicle Inventory & Use Survey for South Dakota by U.S. Census 1997

² Medium sized trucks are under represented likely due to sample stratification of equal segments for agriculture, business and carrier.

Drivers in the ending sample live in 64 of South Dakota’s 66 counties. No one zip code indicated by the red dot in Figure 3 represents more than 3% of the ending sample.

Figure 3: Statewide Ending Sample Representation –by Zip Code Location



MARGIN OF ERROR

The ending sample of 456 operators has a margin of error of ±4.6%. When making comparisons between segments, the margin of error is ±7.9% for samples of 114 operators. The margin of error for segments within each zone (38 operators) is ±15.9%, making comparisons of segments on a zone basis impractical.

TASK 7: DATA ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS

To carry out this task, MarketLine Research tabulated results of the study and generated data tables for examining the data question by question. A number of special cross-tabulations were run to help analyze results and clarify findings. 2006 assessment results were compared with 2003 assessment data and significant differences noted where appropriate. Responses to questions asked of business drivers in neighboring states were compared to those of South Dakota business drivers to benchmark performance. Complete data table tabulations (in a question by question format) of operator, staff and benchmark surveys were provided electronically to SDDOT's Office of Research for future reference and use.

Several issues deserving action that are related to MCS achieving further progress in achieving its mission were identified. These issues are framed in the context of areas of opportunity for further growth and service improvement. Supporting data for the conclusions upon which these issues revolve is detailed in the "Conclusions" Section of this report. These reported areas of opportunity provide the starting point and focus for setting strategic directions in Task 8.

TASK 8: CLARIFICATION AND REVIEW OF KEY ISSUES

To leverage opportunities collectively identified as operation *SECURE*, a planning process was required to prioritize several possible avenues of pursuit supported by research conclusions. MarketLine proposed a planning strategy whereby management could evaluate each identified opportunity and establish priorities that would result in the best investment of financial resources and staff's time.

Researchers worked with staff from the Departments of Public Safety and Transportation to establish a planning framework that would detail steps necessary to achieve objectives and outcomes tied to priority pursuits. It was felt that priority pursuits could be achieved within a reasonable timeframe of 24 to 36 months using existing staff resources.

To clarify and review key findings, MarketLine facilitated a *Strategic Direction Conference* with the Department of Public Safety's upper management and representatives from other interfacing government branches, agencies and industry groups in Pierre on August 22, 2006. (See the list of participants in Appendix J.)

The conference agenda was devoted to the following items:

- a review of the 2003 assessment conclusions and results-based initiatives undertaken;
- a discussion of key findings of the 2006 assessment surveys;
- the identification of opportunities for further progress;
- a discussion of possible ways to pursue identified opportunities;
- group comment on factors seen as supporting and challenging pursuit outcomes;
- a discussion of the merits for possible approaches to addressing opportunities;
- group prioritization of long-term planning goals; and
- a discussion of workshop processes for developing an action plan.

The focus was on initiating a process of translating study findings and conclusions into a plan of action. Study conclusions identified several opportunities for further MCS progress. The conference outcome was to prioritize possible opportunity areas and identify and clarify related factors requiring consideration.

As a result of the conference, a number of areas of opportunity were agreed upon. Priority areas included:

- developing a means to structure the strategic planning process;
- structuring and broadening communication efforts;
- identifying ways to educate and inform agricultural drivers and other hard to reach customer segments; and
- finding ways to recognize, reward and support superior staff performance.

TASK 9: RECOMMEND SOLUTIONS MCS CAN APPLY

Task 9 began with the review of the priorities identified during the *Strategic Direction Conference* noted in Task 8. To accomplish this task, an Action Planning workshop with MCS managers and supervisors was held in late September to finalize a list of possible plans to achieve opportunities outlined in the Conclusions Section of this report. MCS management assembled a staff team supported by specialized staff from other departments for the purpose of developing an action plan that would identify anticipated outcomes, action steps, responsibilities, resources and timeframes to achieve opportunities linked to management's strategic direction priorities. (The workshop agenda and list of participants appears in Appendix K.)

MarketLine Research planned, organized, and facilitated the workshop. The goal was to identify and discuss possible tactics, action steps, responsibilities, cost elements, deliverable products, and timeframes to accomplish plans deemed feasible and having high probability of success. The action plan framework is a collection of action outlines that summarize strategic requirements needed to achieve each identified area of opportunity.

One week prior to the workshop, participants were provided a list of possible approaches so that they could begin to focus their thinking on what would be entailed in pursuing opportunities in the proposed areas. Presented approaches included:

- development of an annual communications plan;
- development of a web search engine as a reference tool for agricultural drivers;
- development of outreach tools targeted for difficult to reach customers such as agricultural and small "mom and pop" operators;
- promotion of services provided electronically, i.e. electronic permitting and screening, web-based information; and
- identification of strategies to provide staff recognition and support.

Also prior to the workshop, participants were encouraged to seek ideas from coworkers in how to achieve one or more of the proposed approaches. They were asked to visit an interactive search engine operated

by Missouri's motor carrier regulatory agency. The site was considered a desirable model for developing a reference tool for agricultural drivers in South Dakota.

Workshop Process

Workshop participants were divided into four work teams. Each team focused on one assigned area of opportunity—communications, outreach, staff support, or measures and industry. Teams developed an “Action Outline” detailing steps and resources associated with one or more envisioned strategies to achieve a given objective for their assigned area of opportunity.

At the start of the workshop, a completed example of an “Action Outline” was used to explain the format, content, and level of detail required. The first three items in the outlines—pursuit, objective, and considerations—were identified and provided to the workshop participants.

Teams discussed possible approaches to achieve each of their assigned pursuit objectives. The team agreed upon a desired outcome for each approach. Teams then worked to outline necessary steps (tactics) envisioned in achieving each approach's outcome.

The final section of the “Action Outline” identified personnel responsibilities required to complete the listed tasks. Teams listed what were considered to be primary cost components associated with completing the tasks and agreed upon a preliminary estimate of time required to complete the strategy.

Teams presented developed outlines for whole group discussion, with the aim of further strengthening and refining the plan outlines. The final outlines reflect collective thoughts of all participants.

The planning workshop resulted in the formulation of “Action Outlines” for nine initiatives. Completed outlines detail the direction, steps, resources, and time requirements for pursuing the nine initiatives related to priority opportunities. Collectively the outlines provided MCS with a strategic blueprint for a 36-month plan of action to leverage identified opportunities.

Following the workshop, MarketLine Research summarized and documented an Action Plan detailing action outlines for each selected approach to identified opportunities. After the document was presented, MCS management reviewed and made decisions on implementation.

TASK 10: FINAL REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PREPARATION

The accomplishment of this task was based on lengthy review of all gathered information and statistical testing to identify changes between 2006 and 2003 studies. A first draft of a report of findings was submitted to the Technical Panel on August 8, 2006.

This report included, but was not limited to, the following items:

- an Executive Summary of study objectives, methods, findings, conclusions and recommendations;
- detailed findings that contrast current and prior assessments, operator and staff points of view, and performance benchmarks;
- conclusions with supporting data;
- recommendations for setting strategic direction and developing an action plan; and

- copies of research instruments used throughout the research process.

The Technical Panel carefully reviewed the document and provided valuable comment and direction for processing the final document during a meeting with MarketLine on August 23, 2006.

TASK 11: EXECUTIVE PRESENTATIONS TO RESEARCH REVIEW BOARD AND INTERESTED PARTIES

Five presentations were made in completing this task. MarketLine Research developed a presentation of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Presentations were made at the:

- Strategic Direction Conference in Pierre on August 22, 2006
- Research Review Board and Technical Panel meetings in Pierre on August 23, 2006
- MCS Staff zone meetings in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Sisseton on September 6-8, 2006
- South Dakota Trucking Association Convention in Rapid City on September 15, 2006

FINDINGS

ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT

Findings are organized by topic areas comprising the survey instruments and one or more survey questions related to each topic area. Side-by-side comparisons of response results from operator and staff points of view appear where identical questions were asked of each group.

A number of questions are identical to those asked in the baseline study conducted in 2003. These are meant to serve as progress indicators for changes put into place following the 2003 assessment. Side-by-side comparisons of response for the two assessment periods appear only where significant differences were identified by statistical testing.

A limited number of questions dealing with perceptions of the regulatory environment in South Dakota were asked of business drivers in neighboring states. This provided a benchmark to compare perceptions of drivers in South Dakota with similar type driver perceptions of neighboring states. Where benchmark responses are available comparisons are made to South Dakota responses and results appear side by side.

Each topic of the report begins with a summary of the topic's findings.

"Figures" and "Tables" are referenced in the discussion and are found after the discussion. "Figures" and "Tables" include survey questions and an indication of the number of individuals who responded. Not all respondents answered every question. The actual number of respondents answering any given question follows each "Figure" or "Table" title and is noted as "n = ..."

Percentages are rounded to whole numbers, with the result that some may not add up to 100 percent.

Each topic concludes with the identification of possible further opportunities for progress.

Most results are reported through descriptive statistics such as frequencies of responses or average (mean) response of all respondents or a particular subgroup. When appropriate, data was analyzed using cross-tabulations and significance testing between proportions of response or average responses. For example, the average overall staff performance rating in 2006 compared to the average obtained in 2003.

COMPARISON OF 2006 SAMPLE TO 2003 SAMPLE

DRIVER SEGMENTS

Demographics and driving behavior are very consistent for each of the two sample years. Significant differences between sample years for vehicles most often driven by operators are noted below.

- Agricultural operators reported driving larger trucks capable of hauling heavier loads.
- Significantly more Ag operators reported holding a CDL (65% in 2006 versus 34% in 2003).
- Business operators reported driving larger trucks capable of hauling heavier loads.
- Twice as many independent carriers are driving 7 days in a typical week than in 2003 (13% in 2006 versus 7% in 2003)

Detailed comparisons of driver profiles for each customer segment appear in Appendices A, B and C.

STAFF INTERACTION HISTORY

In the 2006 survey, the time of most recent contact was clarified so that responses could be evaluated on the basis of whether the contact occurred prior to or following MCS service changes put in effect as a result of the 2003 assessment. The 2003 survey asked respondents whether or not contact with staff was within the last three years.

- 85% of all operators had contact with staff in the past three-year period. This compares to 62% in 2005.
- 65% of all operators reported contact with staff within the past 12 months and 16% within the past 12-24 months.

Current operator-reported reasons and locations for contact with MCS staff were consistent with interactions reported in 2003 (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).

Figure 4: Reason for Most Recent Contact (n = 456)

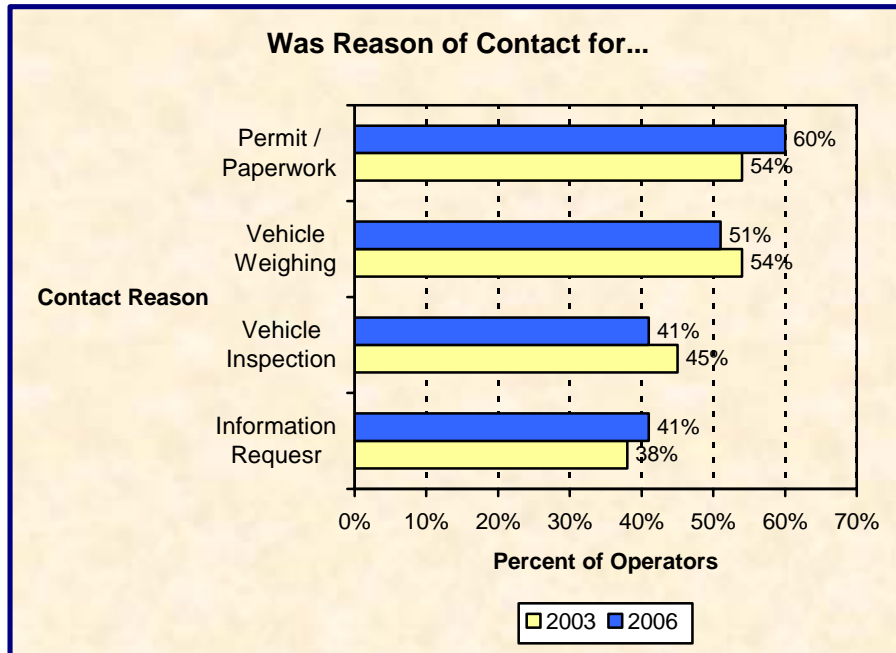
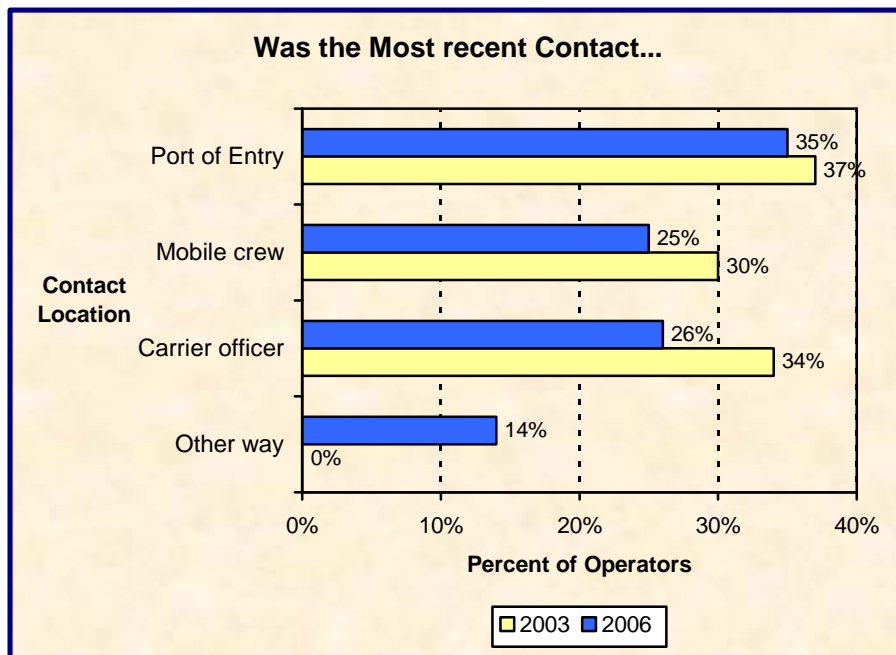


Figure 5: Location of Most Recent Contact (n = 456)



The 2006 survey allowed operators to mention other ways in which they had contact with staff. This was a departure from the 2003 survey. “Other” mentions (14%) were mostly contact by telephone and picking up forms, paperwork and licensing. Of these, seven operators mentioned personal visits by an officer and five mentioned meetings or seminars.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE

Awareness of Change in Staff Performance

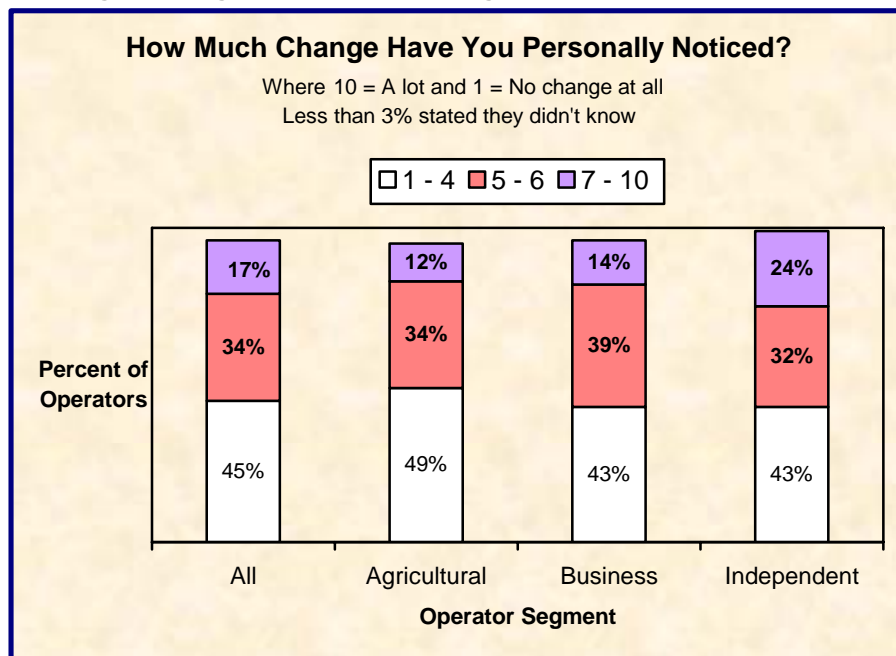
Operators were asked how much they personally had noticed change in how MCS staff performed their duties in the past year to two years. They were asked to rate level of change using a 10-point scale where 10 is “A Lot of Change” down to 1 “No Change at All”.

More than half of all operators surveyed (239 of 456) rated change a “5” or greater. For purposes of analysis, these operators were considered to have noticed sufficient change to form meaningful perceptions to characterize the change’s impact (Figure 6).

Overall perceptions of the degree of change were limited, but several signs point to progress being made.

- The more recent an operator’s contact with MCS staff the greater the degree of perceived change. This correlation indicates changes put in place after the 2003 assessment are slowly taking root and changing prior perceptions.
- Specific changes mentioned by all operators included: more weigh stations and inspections (19%); friendliness, less arrogance, and better staff attitude (18%); more visibility and activity (16%); and more attention to details, logs and types of vehicles (15%).

Figure 6: Degree of Perceived Change in Past Year or Two (n = 456)



- Nearly half of all operators (47%) had no suggestion for further changes. The single most requested change was for more leniency (13%).
- Independent carriers reported seeing the greatest degree of change. Nearly one-quarter (24%) rated change “7” or more on a 10-point scale where 10 meant “A Lot of Change”. The

proportion of independents who rated change “7” or more was twice the proportion of agricultural operators (12%).

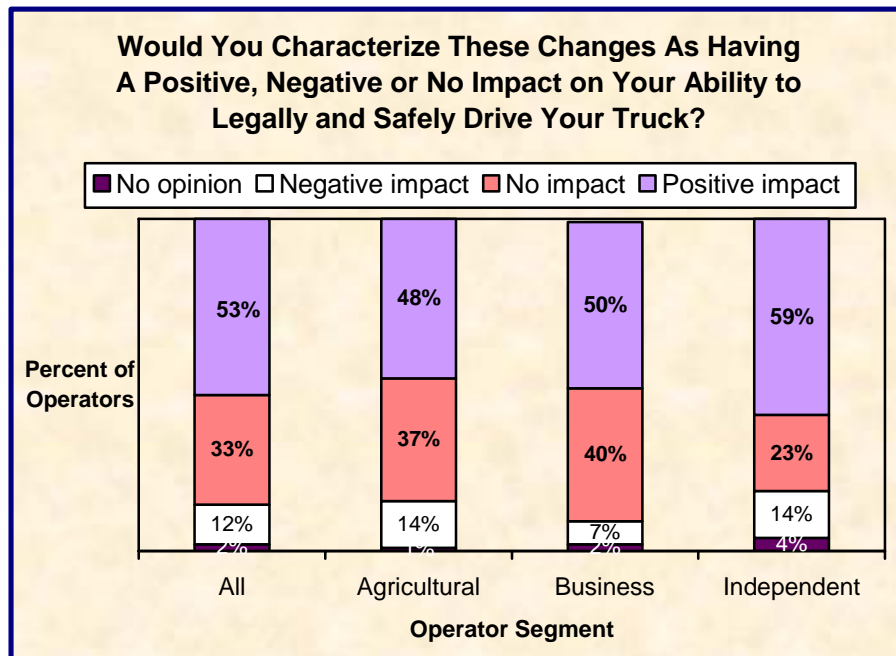
- On average in 2003, this group’s perceptions of MCS were the most negative of all operators. Progress within this group is particularly meaningful.

Characterization of Perceived Change

More than one quarter of all operators (28%) stated that the changes they noticed had a positive impact on their ability to legally and safely drive their truck on South Dakota roadways (Figure 7).

- The group of operators characterizing the impact of change as positive perceived a higher degree of change. Average rating of perceived change was 6.2 for these operators (126) versus 3.5 for all other operators (330).
- Views of change having a positive impact correlate to higher overall ratings of MCS job performance.
- Operators perceiving positive change were significantly more likely to state that the majority of staff they had contact with exhibited each of ten assessed staff attributes related to good job performance.

Figure 7: Operator Characterization of Change Impact (n = 239)



- Operators who viewed change as having a positive impact were significantly more likely to state “Most All” staff exhibits the personal characteristic of most importance to them. Being polite was significantly more likely to be of greatest importance to these operators than it was to all other operators (27% versus 14%, respectively).

- Operators who viewed changes as having a positive impact were significantly more likely to feel safety on South Dakota roadways had increased in the past year or two than were all other operators (50% versus 33%, respectively).

Assumed Agent of Change

Nearly a third of operators noticing change (76 of 239) were not sure of what to attribute observed changes. The most mentioned change agent was politics in general and the governor specifically (15%). Safety and driving safely was mentioned by 8%. MCS changes in attitude and policy was mentioned specifically by 6%.

Staff Awareness of Change in Customer Attitudes

- More than 6 in 10 staff members felt customer respect for the duties they perform had “Improved somewhat” as a result of the unit’s new approach to dealing with customers. 27% stated respect had stayed the same and 12% felt it had diminished.
- Staff attributes improved respect for their duties to signs of drivers showing or expressing appreciation, being more understanding and open-minded, more relaxed, more trusting, easier to get along with, less disgruntled, and nicer.
- Staff who stated respect for their duties had diminished expressed feelings that operators can complain and get away with things. “Getting away” with things is perceived as diminishing respect and loss of authority has contributed to less respect.

Further Opportunities for Progress

- Communicate to staff and customers the fact that sizeable numbers of operators are seeing positive impacts attributed to changes put in place. Encourage staff and customers to report further signs of change and their impact. Use information to reinforce the rationale for staying on “mission”.
- Take greater credit for progress achieved. Opportunity exists to communicate more strongly the change agent “MCS management philosophy” and its linkage to the unit’s mission statement.

SOUTH DAKOTA REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Uniformity

- Compared to 2003, significantly more operators now view uniformity of truck inspections and weight restrictions and postings in South Dakota as being “Fairly Uniform” or “Very Uniform”.
- There were no significant differences in perceptions of uniformity by neighboring state operators asked to rate their states. Benchmark of truck inspections was 84% “Fairly Uniform” to “Very Uniform”. Benchmark of weight restrictions was 88% “Fairly Uniform” to “Very Uniform”.

Figure 8: Significant Assessment Year Differences in Uniformity of Truck of Inspections (n = 456)

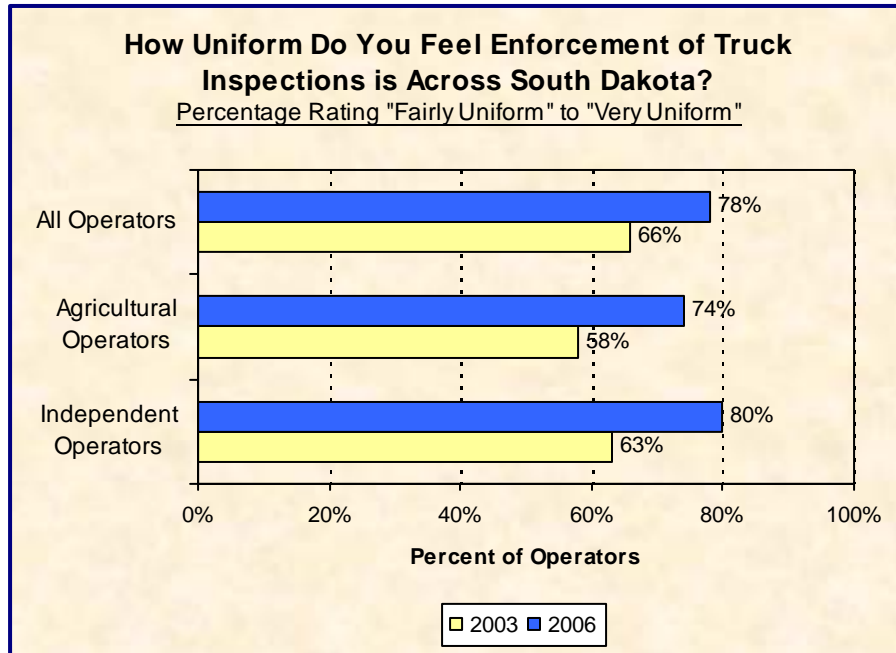
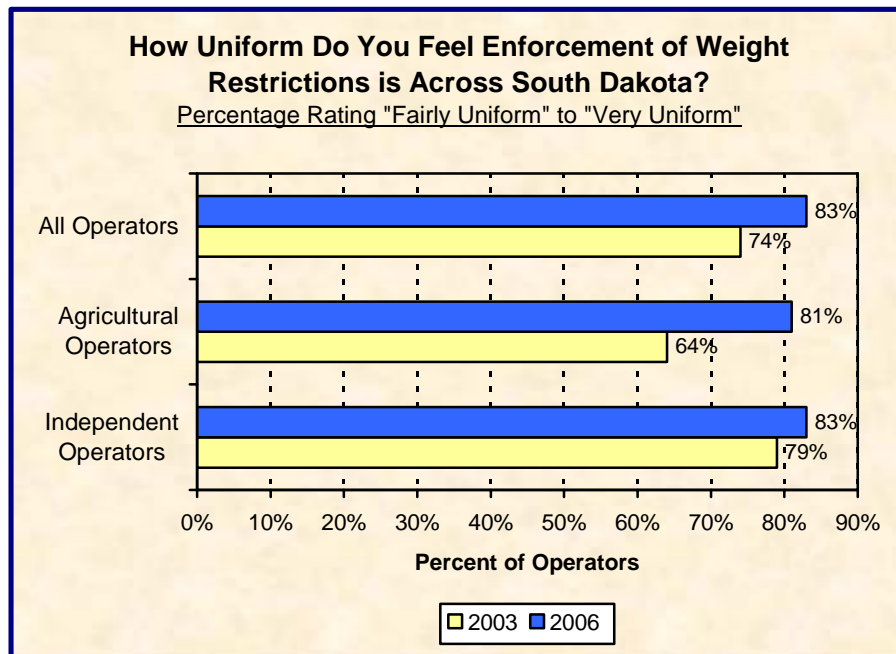


Figure 9: Significant Assessment Year Differences in Uniformity of Weight Restrictions (n = 456)

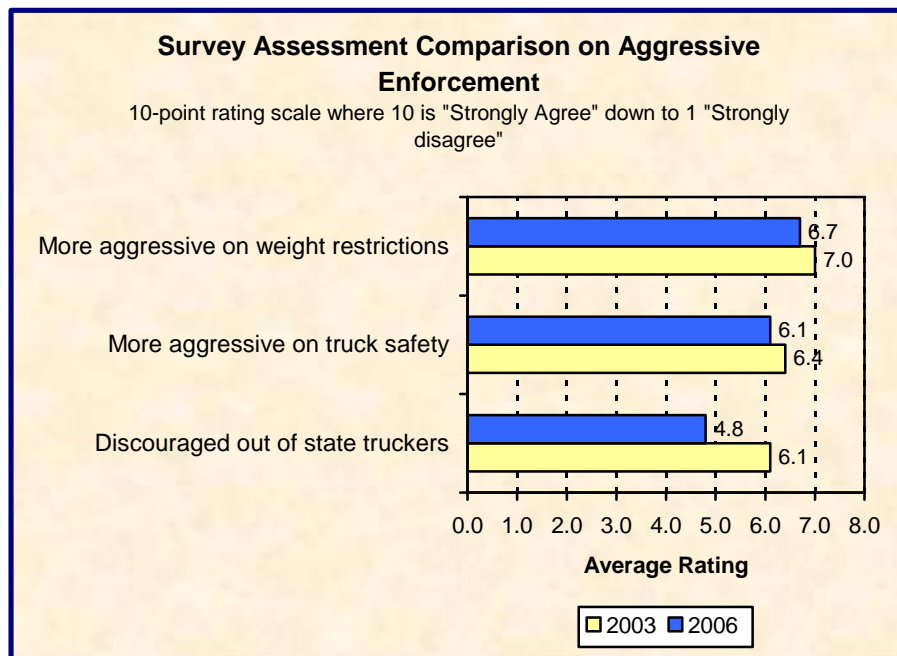


Characterization of Environment

Four statements that related to aggressiveness and strictness of enforcement were rated in both 2006 and 2003. Operators used a 10-point scale with 10 meaning "Strongly Agree" down to 1 meaning "Strongly Disagree" to indicate agreement. 2006 survey results indicated significant improvement in responses to the four statements (Figure 10).

- In 2006, operator agreement with the statement “South Dakota enforces trucking safety more aggressively than do neighboring states” is significantly less in 2006 than in 2003—average rating 6.1 compared to 6.4. Benchmark operators rated their states identically to South Dakota operators.
- In 2006, independent carrier agreement with the statement “South Dakota enforces weight restrictions more aggressively than do neighboring states” is significantly less in 2006 than in 2003—average rating 6.8 compared to 7.6. Operators in benchmark states, when asked a similar question related to their state, expressed significantly less agreement that their agencies enforced weight restrictions more aggressively than neighboring states.
- In 2006, significantly more operators felt enforcement of laws for overweight trucks in South Dakota was “About right”—63%, up from 54% in 2003. This lags significantly with benchmark operators—83% stating strictness was “About right” in their states.
- Benchmark operators were asked to characterize South Dakota’s enforcement strictness compared to their state. 58% stated it was about the same and 22% viewed it as more strict. 17% said it is less strict.

Figure 10: Significant Assessment Year Differences in Perceptions of Aggressiveness (n = 456)



- In 2006, operator agreement with the statement “South Dakota has discouraged out of state truck operators from traveling through the state because of overly strict application of trucking regulations” is significantly less than what it was in 2003 (4.8 versus 6.1, respectively). Operators in benchmark states agreed significantly less that their states discouraged out of state trucks because of strictness.
- In 2006, operator agreement with the statement “South Dakota focuses too much on generating extra revenue through fines for truck related violations” is significantly less than what it was in 2003 (6.4 versus 7.0, respectively). Operators in benchmark states, when asked

a similar question related to their state, expressed significantly more positive views—stating their states were less revenue focused.

- In 2006, independent operator agreement with the statement “South Dakota has too many truck regulations and exemptions that are open to interpretation” is significantly less than what it was in 2003 (6.0 versus 6.6, respectively). Operators in benchmark states, when asked a similar question related to their state, expressed significantly less agreement that their regulations were open to interpretation.
- Operators from benchmark states who were experienced in driving through South Dakota (71) were asked “How different are the trucking regulations in South Dakota compared to their state”. 14% of the operators said “Very Different” and 45% said “Somewhat Different”. More than one third (36%) viewed regulations as “Not Very” to “Not at All Different” from South Dakota.
- In 2006, operator agreement with the statement “South Dakota does a good job of keeping unsafe trucks off state roadways” changed little from 2003. On the 10-point scale for agreement where 10 is “Strongly Agree,” average operator ratings were 6.8 compared to 6.9 in 2003. Operators in benchmark states, when asked a similar question related to their state, expressed significantly more agreement that their agencies did a good job keeping unsafe trucks off roads—average agreement 7.4.

Broadest perception changes occurred with independent operators and with operators located in Zone 2. (See pattern of improved perceptions in Table 4.) Perceptions on 9 of 10 factors used to assess the regulatory environment in South Dakota changed favorably (significantly better) compared to 2003.

Table 4: Pattern of Significant Improvement in Ratings and Comparison to Benchmark States

Assessment Factor	All	Independent	Business	Ag	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Benchmark
Uniformity of truck inspections across SD	↑	↑		↑		↑			Same
Uniformity of weight restrictions/postings	↑	↑		↑		↑			Same
SD enforces truck safety more aggressively	↑	↑				↑			Same
SD enforces weight restrictions more aggressively		↑				↑			↓
Level of enforcing overweight laws 'about right'	↑	↑				↑			↓
Overly strict discourages out of state truckers	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
Focuses too much on generating revenue	↑	↑				↑			↓
Has too many regulations open to interpretation		↑				↑			↓
Does good job keeping unsafe trucks off state roads									↓
Provides unfair operating advantages	↑	↑	↑			↑			Not asked



↑ Current year ratings significantly more improved compared to baseline year 2003 assessment

↓ South Dakota respondent ratings significantly more negative compared to benchmark states²

² Nine identically worded assessment questions were rated by benchmark respondents and asked in the context of rating their home state.

Further Opportunities for Progress

- Despite rating improvements in 9 of 10 assessed factors, operator opinions in South Dakota are significantly less positive than are opinions of operators in neighboring states rating their states for two-thirds of the compared factors. Most differences relate to perceptions surrounding weight restriction enforcement.
- If perceptions are false, MCS should consider a communications effort to dispel falsehoods associated with a more aggressive enforcement of weight restrictions. If more aggressive weight enforcement is a planned policy, MCS should consider steps to proactively communicate the benefits of stricter enforcement in terms of safety and cost savings to South Dakota taxpayers. In either case, identify the best strategies to inform both customers and the general public.

PERFORMANCE PROGRESS

Overall MCS Job Performance

As in 2003, operators were asked to rate the overall job MCS does in performing its duties. For the rating, they used a 10-point scale where 10 was “Extremely Good Job” down to 1 a “Very Poor Job”.

- Agricultural and independent operator ratings significantly improved in 2006. Business operator ratings in 2003 were significantly higher than these two groups. Ratings by business operators in 2006 have remained at levels similar to those seen in 2003.
- Significant improvements were seen in ratings in Zones 2 and 4. To see the complete pattern of change refer to Table 4.
- The average rating of all operators in 2006 compared to 2003 was 7.4 versus 6.9. For this group, the average rating of regulatory agencies in benchmark states was nearly identical—7.3.
- Significantly higher ratings of the job MCS does in consistently applying and reasonably interpreting roadway regulations during truck stops were expressed by independent operators. Average rating was 6.9 compared to 6.5 in 2003.

Customer Interactions

Operators were asked how much they agreed with ten statements describing desirable staff characteristics. As in 2003, a 10-point scale with 10 “Strongly Agree” down to 1 “Strongly Disagree” was used to indicate how strongly an operator believed the statement described a majority of staff.

- Significant improvement was seen in six of 10 staff characteristics assessed. See Figures 10 and 11.
- All staff characteristics were seen as highly important. With the exception of “Being Lenient” (rated 8.1) on a 10-point scale where 10 means “Extremely Important,” all other traits were rated 9.0 or higher. Ratings by staff of what they believed operators viewed as important were the same.

- Of all operators interviewed in 2003, independent operators were the most critical of MCS staff. Of the three surveyed operator segments in 2006, independent operators expressed the most improved staff performance ratings.
- Average levels of agreement (higher value represents stronger agreement) for independent operators in 2006 versus 2003 were:
 - “Treat truck drivers in respectful manner”—6.8 vs. 6.0
 - “Try to interpret regulations fairly”—7.3 vs. 6.7
 - “Show a willingness to listen”—6.2 vs. 5.5
 - “Exercise good judgment and common sense”—6.7 vs. 6.0
 - “Are polite and courteous”—7.3 vs. 6.4
 - “Are more ready to help an operator than find fault”—5.4 vs. 4.5
- The characteristics rated as most important to a truck driver were “Exercising Good Judgment” (19% of all operators) and “Being Polite and Courteous” (18% of all operators).
- Significantly more operators in 2006 stated “Some” or “Most all” staff that they had contact with exhibited the characteristic most important to them—83% up from 71% in 2003.
- Ratings of staff personal traits relating to knowledge and training, professional attitude and consideration for safe vehicle stops remained consistent with 2003 ratings. All averaged above 7.
- Rating of staff being lenient when coming across honest mistakes showed no significant improvement. Average rating 5.8 compared to 5.6 in 2003.

Staff demeanor showed solid signs of improvement indicating MCS Unit’s focus on customer service is having positive results. Politeness and courtesy improved the most compared to 2003.

Figure 11: 2006 Agreement Majority of MCS Staff Possesses Personal Trait (n = 456)

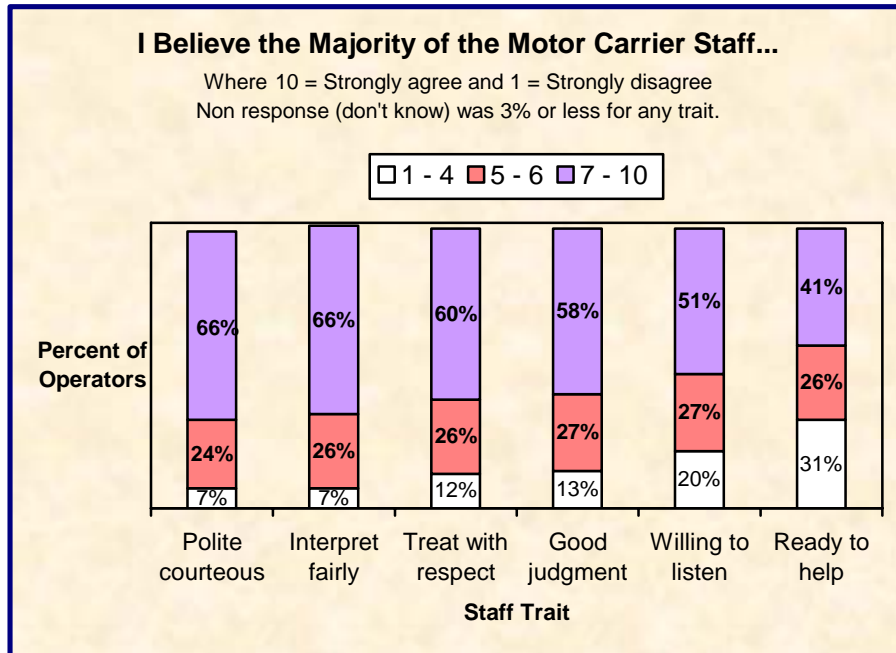


Figure 12: 2003 Agreement Majority of MCS Staff Possesses Personal Trait (n = 456)

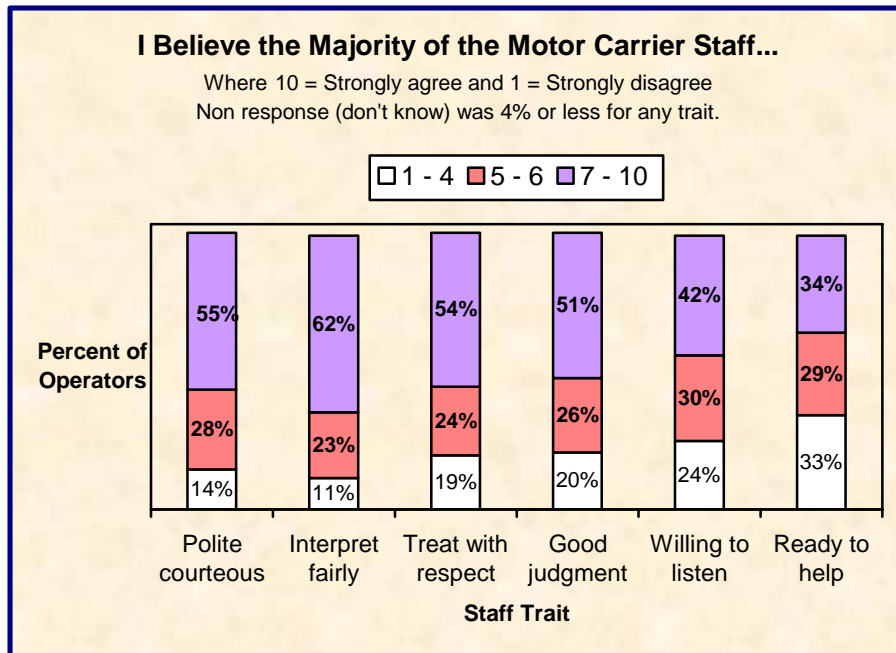


Table 5: Pattern of Significant Improvement in Ratings

Personal Characteristic	All	Independent	Business	Ag	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Majority of staff treats operators with respect	↑	↑			↑	↑		↑
Majority of staff interprets regulations fairly		↑						
Majority of staff is willing to listen		↑						↑
Majority of staff exercises good judgment and common sense	↑	↑						↑
Majority of staff is polite and courteous	↑	↑		↑		↑		↑
Majority of staff more ready to help operator than find fault	↑	↑				↑		
Some or most staff have most important trait	↑			↑		↑		↑
MCS does good job helping to operate safely		↑						↑
MCS consistently applies and reasonably interprets regulations		↑						
MCS overall performance rating	↑	↑		↑		↑		↑

↑ Current year ratings significantly more improved compared to baseline year 2003 assessment

Safe Operation of Trucks

- Significantly higher ratings of the job MCS does in helping drivers of trucks operate safely within the law were expressed by independent operators and by those operators located in Zone 4.
 - On a 10-point scale where 10 is an “Extremely Good Job” down to 1 a “Very Poor Job,” the average independent operator rating was 6.9 in 2006 compared to 6.4 in 2003.
 - Average rating of operators located in Zone 4 was 6.8 in 2006 compared to 6.1 in 2003.
- More than one-third of all operators (38%) felt safety on South Dakota roadways had increased in the past year or two. Less than 2% felt it had decreased. 6 in 10 operators felt it was about the same.

Further Opportunities for Progress

- Agricultural operators are currently the least positive segment when evaluating whether the majority of staff possess various desirable performance traits. The proportion of this group expressing strong agreement (7 to 10) that most staff possessed a personal trait was the lowest for 7 of 10 traits. This is a reversal of 2003 results; the independent operator segment was the lowest on 6 of these same traits. MCS should consider ways in which to expand public outreach to agricultural operators. It should look for further ways in which to closely work with agricultural associations and cooperatives.
- Nearly a third of all operators (31%) still have low perceptions of the majority of staff being more ready to help than find fault. MSC should identify opportunities to communicate the numerous ways and occasions in which staff helps operators collectively or individually. See that articles are disseminated with the broadest band of communications possible. Operators stated they preferred receiving information via a wide range of sources.

- Realize that most operators (68% of those surveyed) do not belong to a professional agricultural or trucking association or organization. Opportunities need to be identified to reach the smaller independent and agricultural operators who are not associated with a professional group.

STAFF ATTITUDES AND JOB PERFORMANCE

Employee Communications and Support

Most MCS officers reported that they received necessary information and feedback from supervisors to know what is expected of them, know how they are doing, and know what are the policies and activities of the organization.

The following statements were presented for assessment:

- I know what is expected of me at work.
- I get concerned that my decisions may be questioned by my supervisors.
- I regularly receive clear direction from my immediate supervisor about what is expected of me in my work.
- My immediate supervisor regularly provides helpful feedback regarding my work performance.
- My immediate supervisor provides necessary information to me about MCS's policies and activities.

On a 10-point scale with 10 "Strongly Agree" down to 1 "Strongly Disagree," the average response to the above questions was between 7.7 and 8.4—indicating high agreement. The one exception was the statement "I get concerned that my decisions may be questioned by my supervisors".

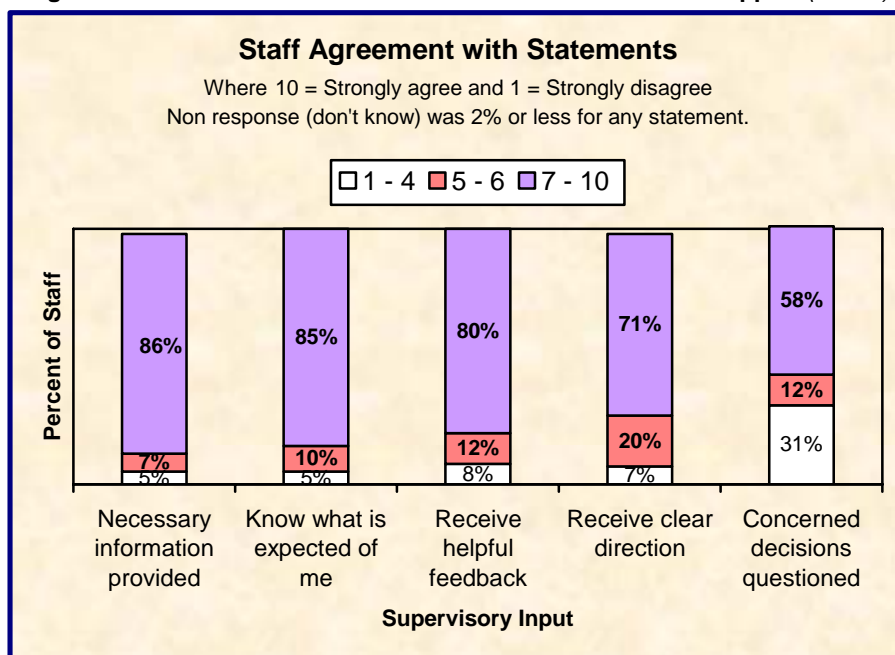
One area where a majority of staff expressed frustration was indicated by staff's agreement with the statement "I get concerned that my decisions may be questioned by my supervisors".

- 58% expressed agreement in the range of 7 to 10 on the 10-point scale where 10 is "Strongly Agree".
- Staff explanations for their ratings on this issue pointed to low morale and a defensiveness about being second guessed. This was mentioned particularly in the context of customer complaints.
- In the case of customer complaints, the assumption of many staff persons was that management sides with the offender until the staff person proves otherwise.

SERVICE FOCUS—IMPACT ON INTERACTION OUTCOMES

Emphasis on customer service has greatly impacted how MCS staff interacts with customers. Reasons for contact, locations of contact and number of monthly contacts varied little between assessment periods. Staff was asked to make a number of comparisons of interactions today compared to three years ago.

Figure 13: Staff Feedback on Issues of Communication and Support (n = 59)



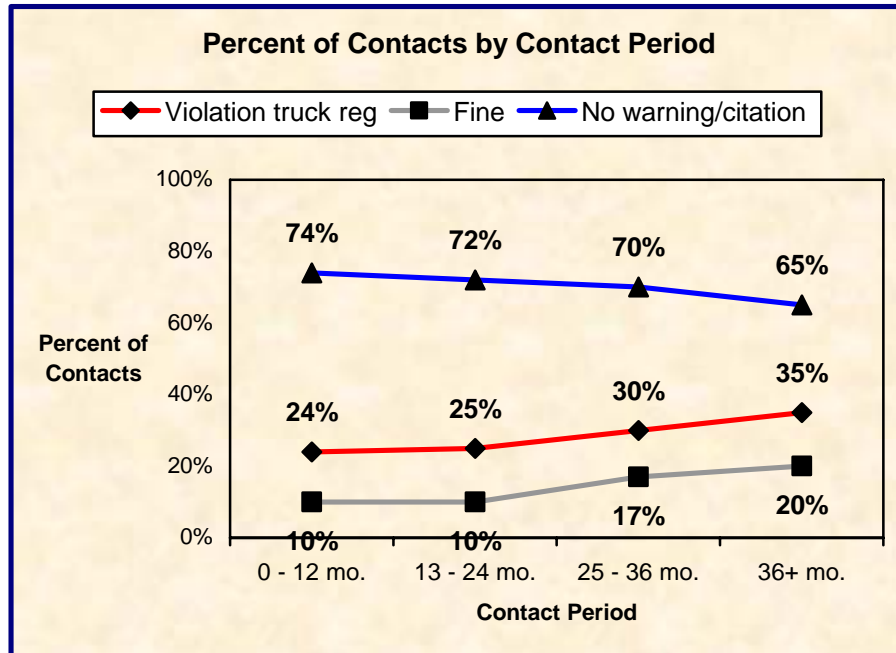
Impact on Customer

- One-half of the staff stated that the number of warnings and citations issued in a typical month has decreased.
 - Reports of operators supported this finding. In 2006, there was a significant increase in no warning or citation reported by operators compared to 2003 (72% versus 61%, respectively).
 - In 2006, nearly half as many operators reported receiving a fine compared to 2003 (12% versus 22%, respectively). See Figure 14.
- Three-quarters of the staff stated that the practice of stacking violations during an inspection has decreased.
 - 9 staff members stated it had stayed the same and 2 members said it had increased.

Operators were asked about receiving, and staff members about how often they handed out, Customer Service Survey cards. The responses of the two groups appear to be in conflict.

- Nearly one-quarter of all operators (24%) reported receiving a card at the time of their most recent contact with staff. 10% said they were not familiar with the card or didn't know.
- Agricultural drivers were significantly less likely to receive a card than were independent operators (74% versus 58%, respectively).
- Two-thirds of the MCS staff claimed to distribute cards on every occasion they had to interact with a customer. The remaining staff stated that they distributed cards on most occasions.
- Operators who had contact that resulted in a violation were significantly more likely to receive a card than were operators having contact not resulting in a violation (40% versus 18%).

Figure 14: Contact Result Compared to Contact Period (n = 435)



- Operators who stated that perceived change has had a positive impact (126) were significantly more likely to receive a card than were all other operators (311). The difference was 40% versus 18%.

Impact on Safety

- More than half the staff (32 of 59) felt a warning ticket for non out-of-service items was just as effective as a citation for keeping unsafe vehicles off South Dakota roadways. These staff members rated agreement a “7” or more on a 10-point scale where “10” meant “Strongly Agree”.
 - 7 staff persons stated more neutral opinions. 15 staff members disagreed—rating 4 or less where “1” meant “Strongly Disagree”.
- When asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement “MCS has not compromised safety in any way because of the current approach to enforcement,” 34 of 59 staff members agreed—rating agreement “7” or more on the 10-point scale.
 - 13 members expressed more neutral opinions. 14 staff members disagreed—rating 4 or less where “1” meant “Strongly Disagree”.
- More than 6 in 10 staff members felt customer respect for the duties they perform had “Improved somewhat” as a result of the unit’s new approach to dealing with customers. 16 staff members felt respect had stayed about the same and 7 members said it had decreased.

Further Opportunities for Progress

- Transition of an organization to a broader customer-focused service orientation from one that has been traditionally more singularly focused on enforcement can be difficult and in many

instances generate uncertainty. To counterbalance organizational growing pains, a strong program that communicates support and recognition of staff efforts in making the transition provides an opportunity to more quickly and smoothly achieve progress.

- The time of transition offers a good opportunity to assess new ideas, programs and approaches on the customer side and staff side. To achieve the best possible assessment low-cost internal procedures need to be gathering feedback on a consistent basis.
- The apparent disparity in the distribution and receipt of Customer Service Survey cards points to an opportunity to more closely link distribution to each and every point of customer contact. MCS should consider possible internal options to monitor rates of returns from each of MCS's work locations and staff persons versus tracked customer contacts. If distribution is skewed to certain customer contacts or locations, a true assessment of customer attitudes can not be obtained.

REGULATORY INFORMATION

Familiarity and Preferred Sources

Familiarity with federal and state trucking regulations is identical to what it was in 2003.

- On a 10-point scale where 10 is "Extremely familiar" down to 1 "Not at all familiar," the average rating for both assessment years was 6.5. Also consistent with the 2003 assessment, agricultural drivers rated their familiarity significantly less than both independent carrier and business operators.
- MCS staff rated agricultural operator familiarity with federal and state trucking regulations significantly lower than what the agricultural operators rated themselves (average 4.4 versus average 5.9, respectively). Staff ratings of all operators are similar to the group's self-ratings (Figure 15).
- Operators most familiar with regulations were significantly more likely to rate overall MCS performance the highest. This implies an informed customer is among the best customers.

Sources operators stated would be most useful to stay informed of rules changes are consistent with sources mentioned as most useful in 2003.

- The three sources mentioned by the greatest proportion of operators included: newsletters (90%), the motor carrier handbook (78%), and inserts to truck registrations and license renewals (78%).

Use and Evaluation of Provided Tools

Requests of MCS staff for regulatory or permit information is at the same level as seen in 2003. Significantly more business operators stated they had made requests than all other operators.

- Less than one half (43%) of all operators reported making a request at sometime. Nearly all of these (94%) stated the request was handled in a friendly and courteous manner. This compares to 88% in 2003.

- More than one-half of all operators (52%) stated it was easy to get consistent information from all MCS sources—rating ease on a 10-point scale where 10 meant “Extremely easy”. Agricultural operators and those operators located in Zone 4 reported significantly higher ratings than in 2003 (Figure 16).
- When asked how clearly most operators were able to communicate their needs, MCS staff reported significantly lower ratings compared to 2003. On a 10-point scale where 10 meant “Very clearly down to 1 “Not at all clearly, the average rating in 2006 was 6.6 compared to 7.2 in 2003.

The Motor Carrier Handbook was revised as a result of information obtained in the 2003 assessment survey. The revised Commercial & Agricultural Vehicle Handbook was rated higher for user friendliness and ease of understanding (Figure 17), but significantly fewer operators were familiar with the newly revised 2005 publication.

- 35% of all operators stated they were familiar with the 2005 handbook. In 2003, 55% of all operators stated they were familiar with the then available motor carrier handbook. It should be noted that in 2003, the question was not asked about being familiar with a specific year handbook.
- Handbook familiarity declined significantly in all three operator segments. Agricultural operators were the least familiar (28%)—as was the case in 2003.
- Agricultural operators were significantly less familiar with the handbook than were independent operators (28% versus 42%, respectively). This was true also in 2003.
- 79% of those operators (126) familiar with the 2005 handbook stated they had a copy. 17% stated they did not and 4% didn’t know.
- More than 8 in 10 operators reported having access to the Internet. Several had access in multiple locations (Figure 18).
- Familiarity with the www.sdtruckinfo.com website is very limited and varies by segment and how recent an operator has had contact with MCS staff.
 - 20% of all operators (456) are familiar with the site.
 - Significantly fewer agricultural operators are familiar than are all operators (14% versus 20%, respectively).
 - Significantly fewer operators whose most recent contact with MCS staff has been 25 months or longer are familiar than are operators who had contact in the past 24 months 6% versus 23%, respectively).
- Of the 89 operators familiar with the www.sdtruckinfo.com website, three-quarters reported having used it.
- The 67 operators who had used the site were asked to rate ease of locating information on the site. Using a 10-point scale where 10 meant “Very Easy” down to 1 “Not at All Easy,” 37 operators rated the site a “7” or greater, 24 operators rated it “5” or “6,” and 5 operators rated it “4” or less.

- More operators reported visiting the Motor Carrier Services website than that of the sdtruckino.com site—103 versus 89 operators.
- 92% of the 103 operators visiting the MCS website stated they found what they were looking for.

Figure 15: Operator Familiarity with Federal and State Trucking Regulations (n = 456)

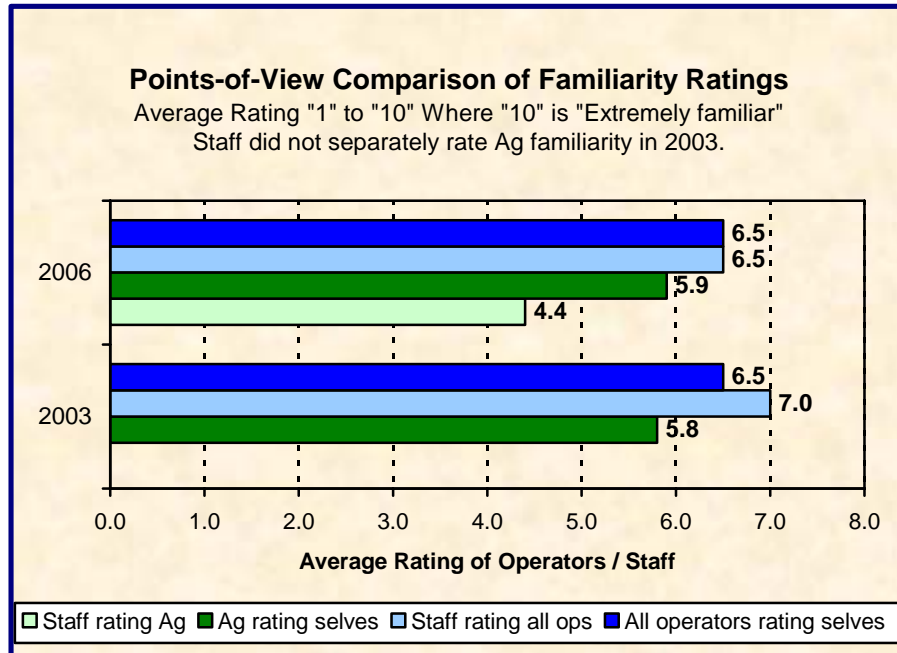


Figure 16: Operator Rating Ease in Getting Consistent Information From All MCS Sources (n = 456)

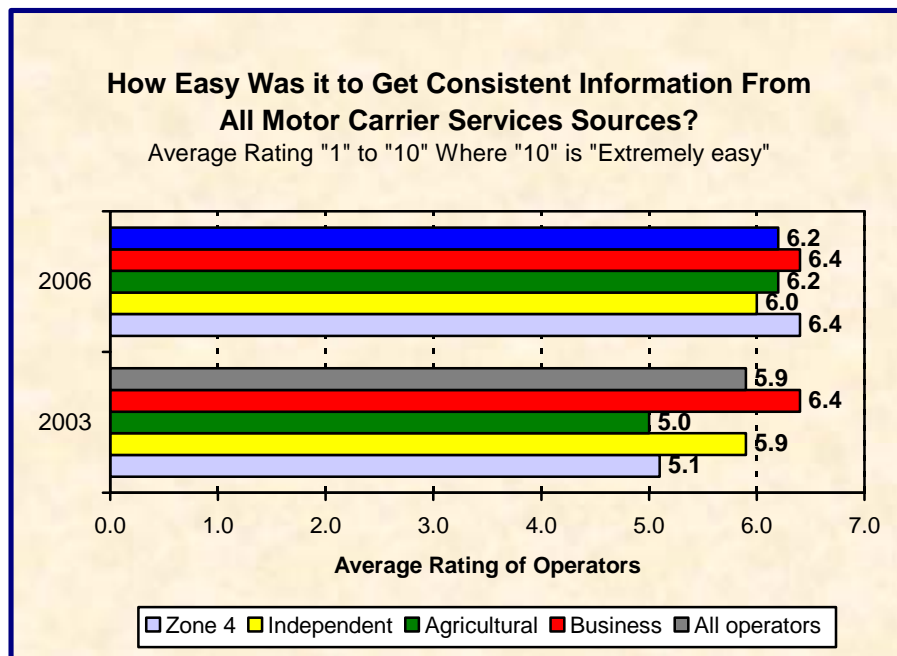


Figure 17: Operator and Staff Assessment of Motor Carrier Handbook (*n* = 159/251 and 59/60)

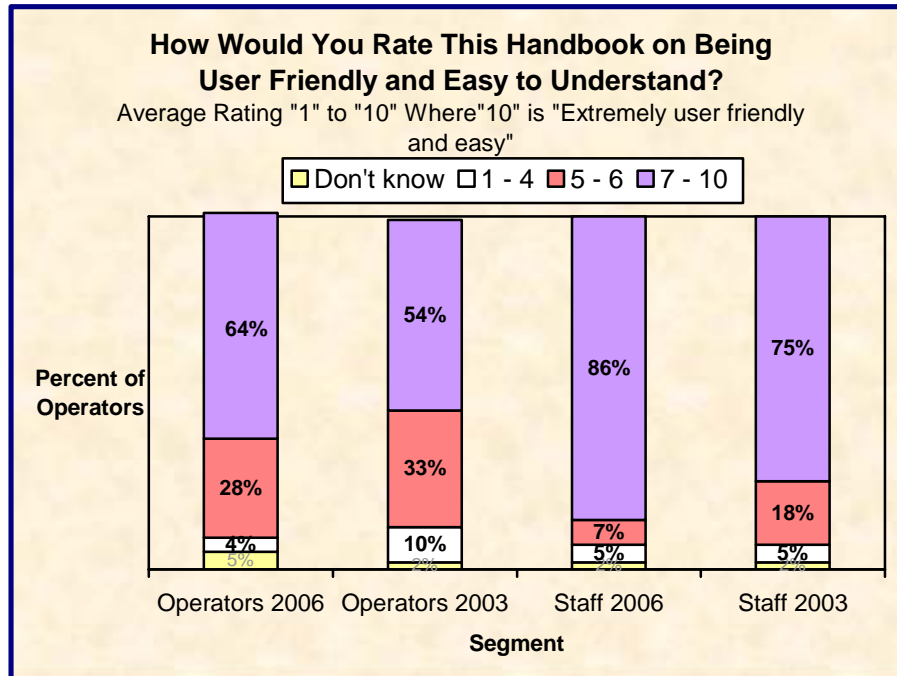
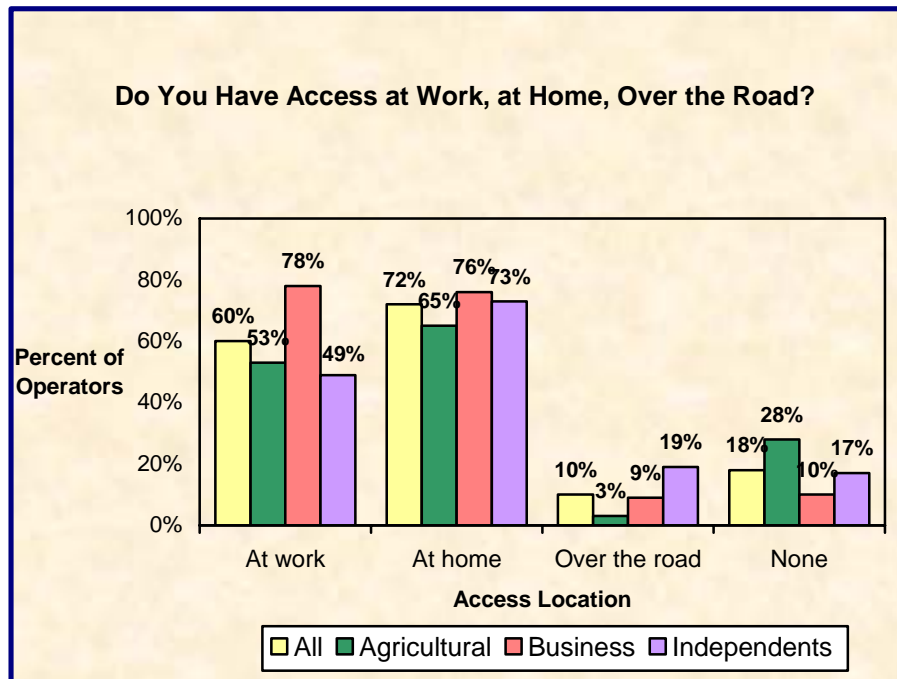


Figure 18: Operator Access to Internet (*n* = 456)



Further Opportunities for Progress

- As noted in the findings, an operator familiar with the rules and regulations is significantly more likely to rate MCS performance higher than an operator who is less familiar. MCS should seek to identify more opportunities for reaching the less informed operators.

- Based on staff assessments in 2003 and 2006, agricultural operators are in the greatest need of outreach efforts to help them become more familiar with federal and state regulations for operating a truck. 2006 data indicates more agricultural operators are using as their primary vehicle larger trucks capable of hauling heavier loads.
- The agricultural segment of operators was the least likely to possess a 2005 Commercial & Agricultural Vehicle Handbook and have access to the Internet. Less than 3% of all operators stated they were members in an agri-business association or cooperative. Non-traditional means of outreach may present further opportunities to reach this important segment. MCS should explore alternative means such as informational signs and/or handouts at grain elevators, feed and implement stores, etc.
- The opportunity to create a more broad-based approach to customer communications exists. Staff ratings of how clearly an operator is able to communicate an information need or request is significantly lower in 2006 than it was in 2003. The new 2005 Commercial & Agricultural Handbook will need to gain further familiarity. Use of the www.sdtruckinfo.com and MCS websites will need to be further stimulated.

AUTOMATED CUSTOMER SERVICE TOOLS

Awareness, Use and Interest

Questions regarding automated service tools were asked of independent carriers and business operators. Awareness and use of electronic permitting and electronic screening is very limited, but a sizeable proportion of operators expressed interest in the service tools.

- Just over one-half (52%) of the operators (159 of 304) stated they were familiar with the ability to obtain permits online.
- Of those operators familiar with electronic permitting, 29 operators (18%) had obtained a permit online and found the process easy to use.
- 41% of those independent and business operators not familiar with electronic permitting (145) expressed interest in learning more about electronic permitting and considering in the future.
- Less than one-third (30%) of the operators (91 of 304) were familiar with availability of electronic screening available at the Jefferson Port of Entry. Familiarity varied with operators living in Zone 4. 20% were familiar in Zone 4, compared to 32% to 34% in the other three Zones.
- Of those operators familiar with electronic screening, 11 operators (12%) currently use this electronic screening service.
- 41% of those independent and business operators not familiar with or not currently using electronic screening (293) expressed interest in learning more about the electronic screening service and considering in the future.

Further Opportunities for Progress

- A program to encourage operators to visit available trucking websites in South Dakota would provide an opportunity to increase operator awareness of automated customer service tools available. MCS should look for opportunities to work with other state agencies and industry groups to mount a visit the sdtruckinfo.com site during a promotional timeframe that can be supported by cooperative communication efforts.
- Four in 10 operators not familiar or currently using the automated service tools expressing an interest in learning more about them and stating that they are open to future consideration of the services presents a solid marketing opportunity. MCS should make promotion of these services a priority when planning opportunities for customer communications and public outreach.
- When asked what method of staying informed of rule changes they would find most useful, nine in 10 operators stated a newsletter—in both 2006 and 2003. Finding a way to fund, develop, and disseminate an annual newsletter would afford an opportunity to accomplish several things, such as:
 - communicating MCS progress measures to customers annually;
 - informing customers of rule changes, service changes or additions etc.;
 - promoting and educating customers of benefits and use of electronic service tools;
 - recognizing and promoting aspects of a highly trained workforce;
 - featuring and communicating how MCS staff helped operators during the year;
 - educating customers on safe operation of trucks with special emphasis on current issues;
 - demonstrating partnership and cooperation initiatives with industry and agricultural organizations; and
 - informing inter-agencies and branches of state government.

CONCLUSIONS

Results of the 2006 Customer Assessment Survey indicate significant progress during the past three years in how each of the three segments (*Farmers and Ranchers; Drivers for Business; and Carrier Operators for Hire*) perceive MCS' interpersonal skills, professional knowledge and customer service. The key findings suggest six areas of opportunity for continued improvement in customer satisfaction:

- continue to apply customer focused training and service delivery programs;
- develop and make available independent learning materials;
- design and maintain a broad-based communications program;
- design an integrated low-cost internal performance appraisal program on all key measures;
- create a management supported employee performance development, awards and recognition program;
- establish an Industry-Government MCS Advisory Board.

Conclusions underlying support for recommended action in these six areas are outlined below.

Conclusion #1: *MCS has made substantial progress in transitioning to a strategy repositioned on being customer focused versus regulatory minded (Progress Opportunity Area 1).* However, there is still significant room for improvement. A multi-year strategy plan (road map) can best maximize probability of success in all six areas of opportunity.

Supporting data:

- More than one-half of all operators surveyed rated the degree of noticed change in MCS staff performance “5” or greater on a 10-point scale where 10 meant “A Lot of Change” and 1 “No Change at All”.
- More than one-half of the operators noticing change perceived its impact as being positive.
- Operator’s perceptions of over aggressive enforcement, strictness and discouragement of drivers from other states from entering South Dakota improved significantly, particularly with those operators expressing the highest frustration in 2003.
- Nearly one-third of all operators still have low perceptions of MCS staff being more ready to help than find fault.
- Operators in benchmark states expressed significantly more positive attitudes regarding trucking regulatory environment in their states than South Dakota operators expressed of South Dakota’s regulation.
- More than 6 in 10 staff persons felt customer respect for their performed duties had improved somewhat as a result of new approach in dealing with customers.

Conclusion #2: *Exposure to, familiarity with, and use of existing MCS tools and services aimed at assisting truck operators varies broadly by customer segment and size. Many customers are not as well informed as they should be on how to legally and safely operate their trucks on South Dakota roadways (Progress Opportunity Area 2).* Devising cost-effective ways to deliver customized materials that can be easily accessed and individualized would help support the wide range of customer training and information needs.

Supporting data:

- A number of interviewed stakeholders expressed the perception that it is harder for smaller operators to attend public education meetings. They identified the need to find a way to reach the “ma and pop” operations.
- Focus group participants felt those most familiar with trucking regulations were the larger, interstate carriers. Smaller carriers and independents spoke of an interest in compliance, but were burdened by the complexity of the laws.
- Focus group participants saw smaller operators as the least likely to have time to attend outreach efforts, but they were the group seen as in most need of educational efforts.
- Most focus group participants were willing to have more public service interaction with MCS, but would not take additional action to achieve it. The responsibility was placed solely with MCS.
- Both staff and agricultural operator assessments indicate this group has been and continues to be the most in need of educational outreach. As a group it has the lowest familiarity with trucking regulations.
- Staff assessment of how clearly an operator is able to communicate an information need or request is significantly lower in 2006 than it was in 2003.

Conclusion # 3: *Awareness and use of MCS provided information and communications could be much broader. Pathways to address communication needs of large operators and small “mom and pop” operators and all operators in between are needed (Opportunity Area 3).* A more informed customer is, in addition to operating safely and legally, more likely to be supportive of goals linked to the MCS mission. Message consistency and frequency are vital to effective communications. A more formalized effort at identifying and planning opportunities for broad-based communication with customer segments needs to be undertaken and its progress monitored over time.

Supporting data:

- Familiarity with the Commercial & Agricultural Handbook is significantly lower than what it was in 2003. Even at 2003 levels, only slightly over one-half of the operators were aware of it.
- Despite 8 in 10 operators having Internet access in one or more locations (work, home or over the road), less than one-quarter are familiar with www.sdtruckinfo.com or the MCS website.

- Slightly more than one-half the operators are familiar with electronic permitting. Less than one-third are familiar with electronic screening. 41% of those not familiar or currently using automated service tools are interested in learning more and are open to consideration in the future.

Conclusion # 4: *In order to sustain and further achieve management’s goal of improving customer service, progress needs to be both monitored and communicated on a more frequent basis (Opportunity Area 4).* Assessment of progress need not be limited to formal studies conducted every couple of years. Opportunities exist with every customer contact for monitoring progress. The real payoff is in identifying low cost ways to assess progress of an action plan linked to a formal assessment so that the plan can be calibrated as it is implemented over time. Consolidating customer feedback offers an opportunity to communicate progress internally and externally to staff, stakeholders and customers alike. Communication of results serves as a bond keeping all involved parties aware and supportive of service objectives.

Supporting data:

- Two-thirds of the MCS staff claimed to have distributed Customer Survey cards on every occasion they had to interact with a customer. The remaining staff stated they distributed cards on most occasions. Two-thirds of all operators stated they had not been given a card at the time of their most recent contact.
- Only 6% of all operators credited noticed changes with MCS policy and staff attitude changes.
- How recent operator contact with staff occurred was correlated to degree of perceived change. More recent the contact the higher was the degree of noticed change. This suggests ongoing observation measures can be helpful in assessing transitioning progress.

Conclusion # 5: *Staff transition from an “enforcement” to a “service” posture and orientation has taken root, but with growing pains. To sustain and achieve further progress a tangible ongoing employee program that communicates and manifests management support is needed (Opportunity Area 5).* There exists a general sense that management philosophy has changed. The focus on customer service is seen as support for whatever a constituent reports rather than assuming staff made good decisions. Staff feelings that actions need to be justified and supported by evidence that the correct decision was made is negatively impacting morale. Staff representation and participation in establishing and maintaining a management program for staff development and recognition can help counterbalance difficult changes in transitioning to a more customer focused service delivery.

Supporting data:

- Focus group discussions with staff indicated a general perception that management philosophy is to support whatever is reported by a customer rather than assuming good decision-making on the part of the inspector.
- Focus group discussions indicated that the inability to provide financial compensation or other tangible forms of recognition constrained the performance appraisal process, limiting its effectiveness.

- 34 of 59 surveyed staff members were in strong agreement that they had concerns about having their decisions second guessed by supervisors.

Conclusion # 6: *Baseline 2003 assessment recommendations that were collaboratively undertaken with trucking industry and related association representatives contributed to positive change and beneficial outcomes (Opportunity Area 6).* The most visible example was the redesign of the commercial vehicle handbook. This collaborative effort resulted in a new handbook judged by customers and staff to be more user-friendly and readable. It was judged a significant improvement over the previous version.

Supporting data:

- Stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions indicated that despite low attendance public education initiatives undertaken by MCS and the South Dakota Trucking Association (SDTA) were beneficial.
- The 2005 Commercial & Agricultural Vehicle Handbook was rated significantly higher for user friendliness and ease of understanding by all operators than the previous motor carrier handbook assessed in 2003.
- 20% of operators are familiar with the sdtruckinfo.com website. Three-quarters of operators familiar with the site have used it.

SUMMARY

By addressing needs and opportunities identified in the 2003 Assessment of Customer Satisfaction, MCS has had a positive impact on its customer base's perceptions of the Unit. Results of the 2006 Assessment of Customer Satisfaction indicated significant gains while at the same time several opportunities for further improvement were identified.

Motor Carrier Services management should evaluate each of these opportunities and set priorities that provide the best investment of the department's financial resources and staff's time. The summary conclusion is that continued improvement in any of these areas of opportunity will help **secure** enhanced cooperation between the trucking industry and South Dakota's regulatory agencies.

Operation secure can be defined as:

Strategize service planning

Continue to apply customer focused training and service delivery programs

Expand educational outreach

Develop and make available independent learning materials

Create consistent communications

Design and maintain a broad-based communications program

Utilize internal performance measures

Design an integrated low-cost internal performance appraisal program on all key measures

Recognize, enrich and support staff

Create an employee performance development, awards and recognition program

Establish Industry-Government Advisory Board.

Establish an Industry-Government MCS Advisory Board.

RECOMMENDED INITIATIVES TO PURSUE PRIORITY OPPORTUNITIES

The two-step planning process detailed in the previous section resulted in an *Action Plan* comprising nine recommended initiatives intended to address high priority opportunities. Priority opportunities were identified and supported by conclusions drawn from the *2006 Customer Satisfaction Assessment Survey*.

Below, a brief description of each recommended initiative is provided and organized by area of opportunity. A preliminary calendar showing anticipated time requirements and sequencing of initiatives follows the descriptions of the initiatives. This sequencing is based on workshop participant consensus. A more detailed “Action Outline” for each recommended initiative was developed by workshop participants. This collection of outlines is the basis for MCS’s *Action Plan* and appears in Appendix L of this report.

The research team recommends Motor Carrier Services management pursue the following nine initiatives.

COMMUNICATIONS

Recommendation 1. *Specify content and then develop a MCS communications plan.* The desired outcome is to have a single plan that drives all internal and external communication activities within Motor Carrier Services. The plan must be flexible allowing for review and updating as needed.

The first step in plan development requires a complete communications audit. The audit will inventory all existing means of internal and external communication by the Unit and within individual enforcement zones. In the process, all target audiences or communications touch points and key points communicated will be identified and documented. Review of audit findings will guide and provide a framework for shaping plan requirements. Required responsibilities include: a plan manager, communications advisor, agency advisory panel, plan contributors, and a final plan reviewer. The anticipated time required to complete the initial plan is 10 months.

Recommendation 2. *Design and develop a MCS newsletter for external distribution.* The desired outcome is to increase contact and feedback opportunities with multiple customer segments. Initially the newsletter will be designed as an annual publication. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, graphic designer, editor, content contributors, proofreader, and production coordinator. An outside publisher will also need to be identified. The anticipated time required to design and produce the first publication is 3 months.

OUTREACH

Recommendation 3. *Identify design requirements and then develop an enhanced web-based interactive reference tool.* The desired outcome is to construct a customer specific search engine that is compatible with the existing web site(s). Develop to address the needs of agricultural drivers first and then expand to other industry segments. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, web designer, communications advisor, an evaluator and internal and customer testers. The anticipated time required to develop first module for agriculture audience is 9 months.

Recommendation 4. *Design, produce and distribute a portable learning disc to educate drivers on basics of safe and legal operation of trucks.* The desired outcome is a standalone disc that is both media rich visually and well narrated. The design needs to support easy construction and easy updating.

The disc can be segment specific or generic to the entire trucking industry. Content should be general in nature. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, software designer, production coordinator for staff involvement, DOT technical advisor and coordinator for testing. The anticipated time required to design, produce and distribute the disc is 12 months. Some of the content development and production will be concurrent with the development of the web-based reference tool. Work will commence on the reference tool first. Total anticipated time required to complete is 12 months.

STAFF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

Recommendation 5. *Create a vehicle for staff engagement through publishing a motor carrier officer newsletter.* The desired outcome is to provide a vehicle to recognize staff while cultivating a feeling of ownership and input to work processes within the organization and individual enforcement zones. Content may include items such as recognition of awards, service longevity, birthdays, births and anniversaries. Required responsibilities include: project manager, staff editor and content contributors. The anticipated time required to design and establish the program is 9 months.

Recommendation 6. *Create a career enhancement program to identify and reward inspectors achieving specialized training and consistently performing beyond required and expected standards.* Evaluate and implement if successful a pilot program of flexible night/day scheduling at Ports to provide more family and personal time. To be considered successful, scheduling would need to have a neutral impact on customer service. The desired outcome is to retain a knowledgeable workforce by providing advancement opportunities and flexible work schedules. Create an atmosphere conducive to strengthening employee motivation and job satisfaction. Required responsibilities include: project manager for career enhancement program, Bureau of Personnel, budget personnel and Port managers for flexible scheduling. Anticipated time needed to design program is 9 months with possible 2 or 3 month period for evaluation.

MEASURES AND INDUSTRY

Recommendation 7. *Design a joint effort for MCS and the trucking industry for promotion of safe driving conditions around trucks on roadways.* The desired outcome is to better educate industry drivers and the general public on safe operation around larger vehicles encountered on South Dakota roadways. The approach will involve recruitment of industry partners and the design and dissemination of safety related educational content aimed at and appropriate for diverse public and industry audiences—younger drivers, older drivers, drivers of large recreational vehicles (motor homes), agricultural drivers, industry drivers etc. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, media consultant, safety consultant, and technical panel of agency and industry partners. The anticipated time required to develop the program is 12 months.

Recommendation 8. *Develop a program to demonstrate safety results linked to MCS activities.* The desired outcome is to raise awareness of MCS staff impact on traffic safety. The approach will entail the review of CMV crash history and related causation factors. From these data crash rates per vehicle miles traveled will be calculated. Required responsibilities include: a project manager, statistician and public information officer. The anticipated time required to develop the program is 4 months.

Recommendation 9. Establish an advisory team to examine the structure of fines for overweight trucks and their relationship to both safe driving conditions and protection of South Dakota’s roadway investment. Survey results indicated the greatest disparity in attitudes and perceptions of South Dakota truck operators with truck operations of neighboring benchmark states centered on the issue of overweight enforcement. A study on fine structure would be best directed by a research technical panel assembled by the DOT.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Table 6: Initiative Implementation Schedule

Initiative	2006			2007												2008												
	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	
2																												
5																												
3																												
1																												
4																												
8																												
7																												
6																												
9	to be determined																											

1	MCS communications plan	6	Career enhancement program / Pilot program of flexible scheduling
2	MCS newsletter for external distribution	7	Promotion of safe driving conditions around trucks on roadways
3	Web-based interactive reference tool	8	Program to demonstrate safety results linked to MCS activities
4	Portable learning disc for safe/legal basics	9	Advisory team to examine structure of fines for overweight trucks
5	Vehicle for staff engagement		

ADDITIONAL WORKSHOP CONSIDERATIONS

In preparation for the planning workshop, eighteen (18) potential initiatives were identified. All were presented for consideration by workshop participants. The process of review and prioritization of the alternatives lead to the development of the eight recommended initiatives previously described.

Other considered initiatives (Table 7) were rolled into the recommended set of eight initiatives or identified as elements that should be considered for incorporation. These additional initiatives are recorded here as a reference should MCS management wish to revisit one or more during the upcoming planning cycle.

The additional initiatives are referenced below to one or more of the final eight recommended initiatives. The number following the proposed initiative’s description indicates the final recommended initiative(s) to which each was seen as a relevant element for incorporation or consideration.

Table 7: Other Proposed Initiatives

Description Linked to Initiative	#
Communications strategy for dissemination of 2006 customer assessment results	1,2
Mechanism to build awareness and understanding of MCS electronically available services	1,2
Process for identifying meaningful touch points to communicate with agricultural / independent truckers	1
Process for identifying key points to communication role/mission of MCS to its customers	1
Support materials for electronic services	2,3
Advanced staff training and certification	5
Appraisal tools to measure customer service	2
Establishment of mechanism to leverage industry groups to achieve and support MCS mission goals	3,6
Examination of ways to strengthen the format, distribution and use of customer survey cards	1

APPENDIX A—AGRICULTURAL OPERATOR PROFILE

Characteristic	Choices	2003	2006
Type of commercial vehicle driven most often	Pickup or van	32%	22%
	Single unit truck	31%	9%
	Truck or tractor with 1 trailer	31%	59%
	Truck or tractor with more than 1 trailer	3%	9%
	Agricultural tractor or implements	3%	
Maximum gross weight –truck driven most often	Under 5 ton	32%	22%
	5 ton to 9 ton	7%	7%
	10 ton to 26 ton	33%	16%
	Over 26 ton	28%	55%
Miles driving a truck in a typical week on South Dakota roads	Less than 100	27%	22%
	100 to 199 miles	23%	19%
	200 or more	50%	59%
Type of agricultural operation	Primarily dairy	1%	
	Primarily livestock or poultry	23%	24%
	Primarily crops	29%	30%
	Balance of dairy, livestock and crops	14%	6%
	Balance of dairy or livestock or crops	33%	40%
Average number of acres farmed or ranched		3565	2796
Number years operating farm or ranch	Less than 1 year		
	One to five years	1%	7%
	Five to ten years	5%	7%
	Ten to fifteen years	9%	12%
	Fifteen to twenty years	8%	12%
	More than twenty years	77%	62%
Currently hold a commercial drivers license	Yes	34%	65%

APPENDIX B—BUSINESS OPERATOR PROFILE

Characteristic	Choices	2003	2006
Type of commercial vehicle driven most often	Pickup or van	16%	8%
	Single unit truck	40%	36%
	Truck or tractor with 1 trailer	38%	51%
	Truck or tractor with more than 1 trailer	3%	4%
	Other	3%	1%
Maximum gross weight –truck driven most often	Under 5 ton	11%	5%
	5 ton to 9 ton	9%	7%
	10 ton to 26 ton	34%	38%
	Over 26 ton	46%	51%
Types of roads typically driven for business purposes (multiple responses possible)	City streets or roads	66%	63%
	County or township roads	86%	79%
	State highways or freeways	96%	100%
Miles driving a truck in a typical week on South Dakota roads	Less than 500	60%	58%
	500 to 1999 miles	33%	33%
	2000 or more	7%	8%
Number of days a week typically drive a truck	One	10%	20%
	Two	12%	8%
	Three	7%	6%
	Four	9%	7%
	Five	33%	34%
	Six	20%	17%
	Seven	9%	9%
Percentage of drivers who have driven a truck more than ten years		66%	69%
Currently hold a commercial drivers license	Yes	78%	68%

APPENDIX C—CARRIER OPERATOR PROFILE

Characteristic	Choices	2003	2006
Type of commercial vehicle driven most often	Pickup or van	3%	1%
	Single unit truck	10%	5%
	Truck or tractor with 1 trailer	77%	84%
	Truck or tractor with more than 1 trailer	9%	9%
	Other	1%	
Maximum gross weight –truck driven most often	Under 5 ton		1%
	5 ton to 9 ton		1%
	10 ton to 26 ton	15%	9%
	Over 26 ton	85%	89%
Types of roads typically driven for business purposes (multiple responses possible)	City streets or roads	36%	37%
	County or township roads	63%	79%
	State highways or freeways	99%	93%
Miles driving a truck in a typical week on South Dakota roads	Less than 500	31%	32%
	500 to 1999 miles	45%	44%
	2000 or more	24%	22%
Number of days a week typically drive a truck	One	5%	2%
	Two	3%	1%
	Three	5%	7%
	Four	11%	13%
	Five	49%	44%
	Six	20%	20%
	Seven	7%	13%
Percentage of drivers who have driven a truck more than ten years		72%	70%
Currently hold a commercial drivers license	Yes	97%	93%
Classify the commercial vehicle they drive as	For hire	84%	100%
	Not for hire	16%	0%

APPENDIX D—MOTOR CARRIER SERVICES STAFF PROFILE

Characteristic	Choices	2003	2006
Work location	Port of Entry	58%	63%
	Mobile Crew	20%	24%
	Carrier Enforcement Office	15%	12%
	Zone Supervisor	7%	2%
Length of service with Motor Carrier	Under 10 years	52%	54%
	10 or more	48%	46%
Zone worked <small>Note: Due to rounding does not add to 100%</small>	Zone 1	30%	30%
	Zone 2	23%	20%
	Zone 3	23%	25%
	Zone 4	23%	24%
Gender	Female	13%	10%
	Male	87%	90%

APPENDIX E—BENCHMARK OPERATOR PROFILE

Benchmark surveys were conducted with business operators in four neighboring states bordering South Dakota. The states included: Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming. A total of 100 interviews lasting approximately 8 minutes were conducted with 25 operators in each state. To qualify a business had to require the use of a truck, or van with a gross weight of 8,000 or more pounds for shipping goods, freight, commodities or providing services. A profile of the 100 operators appears below. For comparison purposes, South Dakota business operator responses appear alongside those of the benchmarked operators.

Table 8: Benchmark Operator Profile

Characteristic	Choices	Benchmark	SD Business
Type of commercial vehicle driven most often	Pickup or Van	1%	8%
	Single Unit Truck	12%	36%
	Truck or Tractor with 1 Trailer	74%	51%
	Truck or Tractor with more than 1 Trailer	11%	4%
	Other	2%	1%
Maximum gross weight –truck driven most often	Under 5 ton	5%	5%
	5 ton to 9 ton	4%	7%
	10 ton to 26 ton	9%	38%
	Over 26 ton	81%	51%
States truck driven in within past three years	Minnesota	67%	Not asked
	North Dakota	67%	Not asked
	Nebraska	66%	Not asked
	South Dakota	71%	100%
	Wyoming	61%	Not asked
Gender	Female	14%	11%
	Male	86%	89%

APPENDIX F—FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

The following discussion guide was used with all three operator segments—agricultural, business and independent commercial.

Table 9: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Operator Version	
I. Introduction	[5 min.]
<p>A. Purpose of research/sponsored by SDDOT/ground rules/procedures</p> <p>B. Respondent introductions/name/occupation/# years as resident of SD</p> <p>C. Type of truck driven and roads driven on most often</p>	
II. SD Trucking Operation & Regulation—Sources of Information	[10-15 min.]
<p>A. Where and how do they learn about laws governing the use of commercial and non-commercial trucks in South Dakota?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How familiar are they with the laws of the State of South Dakota governing commercial and non-commercial trucking? 2. How many have seen or have a copy of the <i>2005 Commercial & Agricultural Vehicle Handbook</i>? Reactions to it. How does it compare to previous handbook? Who do they think provides the handbook? Where did they get their copy? <p>B. Where do they search for information on rules, regulations and changes governing operation of trucks on South Dakota roadways?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What sources do they use? What are they usually looking for? 2. Have they ever visited sdtruckinfo.com web site? If so, what were they looking for? What was their reaction to what they saw? 3. Explore membership activities (e.g. guest speakers, informational displays) that associations they belong to sponsor that help them safely and legally operate trucks on state roadways. What informational topics at these meetings would be useful? 	
II. Name Change / MCS Mission / Repositioning Outcome	[15-20 min.]
<p>A. Name Change Awareness / Reasons / Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Probe whether they can identify the group responsible for regulating trucks on South Dakota highways? How many were aware there was a name change a few years back? Anyone recall prior name? 2. Why do they think there was an organizational name change? 3. Explore what the current name communicates. List types of services mentioned. <p>B. Mission Awareness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read current mission statement. Review each component of the statement and elicit feedback on credibility and examples of staff performance or program offerings for each element in the statement. <p>C. Repositioning Outcome</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Probe how they characterize or describe the emphasis MCS places on enforcement versus customer service—fairness / balance. 2. Probe perceptions of truck safety today versus 3 or 4 years ago on South Dakota roadways. 	
III. Satisfaction with MCS Performance and Degree of Change	[5-10 min.]
<p>A. Interaction with Motor Carrier Services staff</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prior experience with MCE (show of hands). In last 3 or 4 years... how many stopped, fined or given citation? <p>B. Have participants rate performance. Explore reasons.</p> <p>C. Explore how MCS's performance today compares to 3 or 4 years ago.</p>	
IV. Truck Inspections and Enforcement Stops	[20-25 min.]
<p>A. How truck inspections and regulations are enforced. [HAND OUT A COPY OF WORKSHEET #1 TO EACH PARTICIPANT]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore how well each listed aspect of the inspection/regulation process is carried out. Probe for whether they have observed any change in the process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probe for limited examples of change. ▪ Good or bad change? Why? ▪ Further changes needed? 	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Are they familiar with the inspection level checklist brochure currently being used by MCS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ [PASS OUT SAMPLE] Does it help? How does it help? ▪ Any information missing that would be helpful? 3. Have any participants filled out a Customer Service Survey card and returned it to MCS? Reaction to card. Anything to add? 	
V. Personal Interactions with Enforcement Officers	[15-20 min.]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. [PASS OUT HANDOUT 2]. Review each characteristic on worksheet and determine group's perception of how well each characteristic currently describes the typical MCS officer. Ask about any changes noticed in past couple of years. B. Areas needing attention. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss what group sees inspectors doing less well, (if anything)—probe why—how to make better? 	
VI. Technology Tools and Public Outreach	[15-20 min.]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Electronic Permitting in South Dakota <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness. How first became aware. How many have used since it has become available? Impressions. 2. Suggestions for improvements? 3. For those who have not used it, what would it take to get them to try it? 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> B. Electronic Screening <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Previously aware? How did they first become aware? 2. How should South Dakota agencies promote electronic screening? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where would they expect to find out about it? ▪ What would they want to know about it? ▪ What would it take to get them to try it? 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> C. Public Presentations / Education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What industry or association presentations related to trucking have they attended in past couple of years? What topics were presented? Which were most useful? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did MCS officers/staff participate in any of the presentations? ▪ Which ones? How would they rate the value of their participation? 2. What subjects for seminars, published articles, public displays or outreach would be most beneficial for helping them operate safely and legally on South Dakota roads? 3. How can MCS best reach them to invite them to public education offerings? If they had time to attend, what would most likely motivate them to attend? 	
VII. Wrap-up/final comments/suggestions	[5 min.]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. What if any changes would you like to see in the way the Motor Carrier Services provides services unique to their use of the state's roadways? 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> B. Any additional comments or suggestions? 	

APPENDIX G—TRUCKING INDUSTRY TELEPHONE SURVEY

Operator Version												
<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME] with MarketLine Research. We are talking to truck drivers in South Dakota about trucking regulation in the state. We are not selling anything—this is strictly a market research study sponsored by the South Dakota Department of Transportation's Office of Research. We want to include your opinions. Let me assure you all your responses will remain confidential. [IF ASKED: DEPENDING UPON YOUR RESPONSES, INTERVIEW WILL LAST ABOUT 20 MINUTES].</p>												
<p>SAMPLE [QUOTA—114 interviews per Zone equally divided among three segments]</p> <p>Enter sample:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">1</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td>Zone 1 38 agricultural truck users from each Zone</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">2</td> <td></td> <td>Zone 2 38 carrier operators from each Zone</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> <td></td> <td>Zone 3 38 business operators from each Zone</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> <td></td> <td>Zone 4</td> </tr> </table>	1		Zone 1 38 agricultural truck users from each Zone	2		Zone 2 38 carrier operators from each Zone	3		Zone 3 38 business operators from each Zone	4		Zone 4
1		Zone 1 38 agricultural truck users from each Zone										
2		Zone 2 38 carrier operators from each Zone										
3		Zone 3 38 business operators from each Zone										
4		Zone 4										
<p>SCREEN FOR QUALIFICATION</p>												
<p>1. We need to make sure we talk to a variety of people in this study. Are you at least 18 years of age?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No [ASK TO SPEAK TO PERSON 18 OR OLDER, IF NONE, THANK AND TERMINATE] 												
<p>2. In what county do you live? [CHECK FROM LIST]</p>												
<p>3. How long have you been a resident of South Dakota?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than 6 months [THANK AND TERMINATE,] ▪ 6—12 months 20—25 years ▪ 1—5 years 25—30 years ▪ 5—10 years 30—35 years ▪ 10—15 years 35—40 years ▪ 15—20 years More than 40 years 												
<p>4. Do you or does anyone in your household or your immediate family work for: [IMMEDIATE FAMILY INCLUDES: PARENTS, CHILDREN AND UNCLES, AUNTS, BROTHERS, SISTERS OR GRANDPARENTS] [READ LIST]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The South Dakota Department of Transportation [THANK AND TERMINATE] ▪ The South Dakota Highway Patrol [THANK AND TERMINATE] ▪ The Motor Carrier Services unit [THANK AND TERMINATE] ▪ A newspaper, radio or TV station, or [THANK AND TERMINATE] ▪ A market research firm or public relations firm [THANK AND TERMINATE] ▪ None [CONTINUE] 												
<p>5. Which of the following statements best describes your primary occupation? [READ LIST, CHECK ONLY ONE]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You are an independent business person who drives a registered commercial vehicle that you own or lease and use to haul goods or freight from one location to another location [CONTINUE] 2. You work for a company whose business owns or leases a truck or van with a gross weight of 8,000 or more pounds for shipping goods, freight, commodities or providing services, or [SKIP to 6B] 3. You are engaged in farming or agriculture as your principle occupation [SKIP to 6A] 												
<p>Start of Independent Carrier Operator Screen</p>												
<p>6C. What type of commercial vehicle do you drive most often? [READ LIST]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pickup or Van ▪ Single Unit Truck ▪ Truck or Tractor with 1 Trailer ▪ Truck or Tractor with More than 1 Trailer ▪ Other <i>Specify</i> 												

6CB. Other type of commercial vehicle. [CLARIFY]
6CC. What is the maximum gross weight of the [RESPONSE FROM 6C] you drive most often? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under 5 Ton ▪ 5 Ton to 9 Ton ▪ 10 Ton to 26 Ton ▪ Over 26 Ton
7C. Would you classify the commercial vehicle you drive as...? [READ LIST] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for hire [CONTINUE] ▪ not for hire [TERMINATE] [NQE] ▪ [DO NOT READ] Don't know [CONTINUE]
7CB. Is your [RESPONSE FROM Q6C] operated... [READ LIST] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By a motor carrier company, or ▪ Do you own or lease and independently operate your own truck
[INDEPENDENT DRIVERS SKIP to Q9a] Start of Business Operators with Trucks Screen
6B. What type of vehicle does you or your company use most often for shipping or providing goods, freight, commodities or services? [READ LIST] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pickup or Van ▪ Single Unit Truck ▪ Truck or Tractor with 1 Trailer ▪ Truck or Tractor with More than 1 Trailer ▪ Other <i>Specify</i>
6BB. Other type of vehicle used for business. [CLARIFY]
6BC. What is the maximum gross weight of the [RESPONSE FROM 6B] you drive most often? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under 5 Ton ▪ 5 Ton to 9 Ton ▪ 10 Ton to 26 Ton ▪ Over 26 Ton
7B. Do you personally drive a company truck or van or are you involved in making decisions that affect scheduling or routing of trucks in shipping and receiving area? [CHECK ONE] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personally drive a company truck [SKIP to Q9a] ▪ Involved in scheduling or routing [CONTINUE] ▪ Drive and schedule or route [SKIP to Q9a] ▪ None of the above [ATTEMPT FIND QUALIFIED PERSON, IF NOT TERMINATE]
7BB. For shipping goods or freight, do you use trucks owned by the company or do you use for hire carriers? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use company owned trucks [SKIP to Q13] ▪ Use for hire carriers [SKIP to Q13] ▪ Use both company and contract haulers [CONTINUE] ▪ Neither [TERMINATE] [NQF]
[BUSINESS OPERATOR SKIP to Q9a] Start of Agricultural Truck User Screen
6A. Do you have a vehicle that you or someone working for you operates on county or state roadways for the purpose of moving agricultural equipment, commodities or products? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes [CONTINUE] ▪ No [TERMINATE]

7A. What type of vehicle do you use most often in moving agricultural equipment, commodities or products? [READ LIST]				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pickup or Van ▪ Single Unit Truck ▪ Truck or Tractor with 1 Trailer ▪ Truck or Tractor with More than 1 Trailer ▪ Other <i>Specify</i> 				
7AB. Other type of vehicle used for business. [CLARIFY]				
7AC. What is the maximum gross weight of the [RESPONSE FROM 7A] you drive most often?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under 5 Ton ▪ 5 Ton to 9 Ton ▪ 10 Ton to 26 Ton ▪ Over 26 Ton 				
8A. What type of agricultural operation do you have? Is it...? [READ LIST AND SELECT ONE]				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primarily dairy ▪ Primarily livestock or poultry ▪ Primarily crops ▪ A balance of dairy, livestock and crops, or ▪ A balance of dairy or livestock or crops 				
8AB. How many acres do you currently farm or ranch? [RECORD RESPONSE IN ACRES]				
[ASK ONLY COMMERCIAL TRUCKERS OR BUSINESS OPERATORS WHO DRIVE THEN SKIP to Q10]				
9a. For how many years have you been driving a [RESPONSE FROM Q6C COMMERCIAL OR FROM Q6B BUSINESS SCREEN]? [RECORD NUMBER OF YEARS]				
[ASK FARMERS OR RANCHERS ONLY THEN CONTINUE]				
9b. For how many years have you been operating your farm or ranch? [RECORD NUMBER OF YEARS]				
[ASK ALL]				
PART I. DRIVING BEHAVIOR				
10. How many days a week do you typically drive a commercial or non-commercial vehicle for work? [RECORD RESPONSE IN DAYS]				
11. Which of the following types of roads do you typically drive your [RESPONSE FROM Q6C or Q6B or Q7A] on? [READ LIST & CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City streets or roads ▪ County or township roads ▪ State highways or freeways [IF NONE SELECTED NOH, THANK AND TERMINATE] 				
12. Approximately how many miles do you drive a [RESPONSE FROM Q6C or Q6B or Q7A] in a typical week on South Dakota roads? [RECORD RESPONSE IN MILES]				
PART II. REGULATORY INFORMATION NEEDS				
13. Overall how familiar would you say you are with federal and state trucking regulations. Use a 10 point scale where '10' is extremely familiar down to '1' not at all familiar. You may use any number from 1 to 10.				
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;">Not at all familiar</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Extremely familiar</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 DK</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Not at all familiar	Extremely familiar	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 DK	
Not at all familiar	Extremely familiar			
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 DK				
14. How do you usually stay informed about changes in rules and regulations relating to the operation of trucks on South Dakota highways? [RECORD VERBATIM] [CLARIFY]				

15. Which of the following ways to stay informed of rule changes would you personally find most useful? [READ LIST]

- E-mails to your home or business
- Newsletter mailed to you
- Newsletter available at truck stops and rest areas
- A state motor carrier handbook
- Articles in trucking or other association newsletters
- Inserts accompanying truck registrations or license renewals
- Internet website
- Telephone number for information
- Informational booths at county and state fairs
- Local seminars, presentations
- Other, specify

15b. Other way mentioned. [RECORD VERBATIM] [CLARIFY]

16. Have you ever made a request for regulatory or permit information from Motor Carrier Services staff?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q17.]
- Don't know [SKIP to Q17.]

16b. When you needed to obtain enforcement information from Motor Carrier Services how easy was it to get consistent information from all Motor Carrier Services sources? Use a 10 point scale where '10' is extremely easy down to '1' not at all easy. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

Not at all easy								Extremely easy	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 DK

16c. Was your request for information handled in a friendly and courteous manner?

- Yes [SKIP to Q17.]
- No [CONTINUE]
- Don't recall [SKIP to Q17.]

16d. Please explain. [RECORD VERBATIM] [CLARIFY]

17. Are you familiar with the 2005 South Dakota Commercial & Agricultural Vehicle Handbook?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q20a.]
- Don't know [SKIP to Q20a.]

18a. Do you have a copy of the 2005 South Dakota Commercial & Agricultural Vehicle Handbook?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q18c.]
- Don't know [SKIP to Q19.]

18b. Where did you obtain it? [RECORD VERBATIM]

18c. Have you tried to obtain a copy?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q19.]

18d. Where did you try to obtain it? [RECORD VERBATIM]

19. How would you rate this handbook on being user-friendly and easy to understand? Use a 10 point scale where '10' is extremely user-friendly and easy down to '1' not at all user-friendly and easy. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

Not at all user-friendly and easy								Extremely user-friendly and easy	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 DK

20a. Are you familiar with the web site sdruckinfo.com?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q21a.]
- Don't know [SKIP to Q21a.]

20b. Have you ever used the site to obtain information?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q21a.]

20c. How easy was it to locate the information you were looking for on the site? Use a 10 point scale where '10' is very easy down to '1' not at all easy. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

Not at all easy	Very easy
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 DK	

20d. Why did you rate it [Rating from q20c]? [CLARIFY]

21a. Have you ever visited the South Dakota Motor Carrier Services website?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q22.]
- Don't know [SKIP to Q22.]

21b. Did you find what you were looking for?

- Yes
- No
- Refused

PART III. PERCEIVED CHANGE

22a. For the next series of questions, please think about your personal experiences and observations during the past year or two on truck regulation activities on South Dakota roadways.

How much change have you personally noticed in the past year or two in how Motor Carrier Services staff performs their duties at Ports of Entry and/or out on South Dakota roadways? Use a 10 point scale, where 10 is A Lot of Change down to 1 no change at all. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

No change at all	A Lot of Change
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 DK	

[ASK IF RATING IN q22a IS '5' OR GREATER]

22b. Would you characterize these changes as having a positive, negative or no impact on your ability to legally and safely drive your truck on South Dakota roadways?

- Positive impact
- No impact
- Negative impact
- No opinion

22c. What specific changes have you seen? [CLARRIFY AND PROBE]

22d. To what do you attribute the force behind the changes you have observed? [RECORD VERBATIM]

[ASK EVERYONE]

22e. What further change or changes would you like to see? [CLARIFY AND PROBE]

PART IV. SOUTH DAKOTA'S ENFORCEMENT OF MOTOR CARRIER REGULATIONS

Q. The next series of questions deal with South Dakota's enforcement of motor carrier regulations.

23. How uniform do you feel the enforcement of truck inspections is across South Dakota? Would you say enforcement is...[READ LIST]

- Very uniform
- Fairly uniform
- Not very uniform, or
- Not at all uniform
- Don't know [DO NOT READ]

24. How uniform do you feel the enforcement of weight restrictions and postings are across South Dakota? Would you say enforcement is... [READ LIST]

- Very uniform
- Fairly uniform
- Not very uniform, or
- Not at all uniform
- Don't know [DO NOT READ]

25. Would you say the current enforcement of laws for overweight trucks on South Dakota highways are too strict, not strict enough or about right?

- Is too strict
- Not strict enough
- About right [SKIP to Q26.]
- Don't know [SKIP to Q26.]

25b. Why do you say [Q25]? [CLARIFY]

Q. My next questions deal with how the State of South Dakota regulates trucks on its roadways. Again consider your personal experiences in the past year or two. After I read each of the following statements, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. Use a 10 point scale where 10 is strongly agree down to '1' strongly disagree. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

26. I feel the State of South Dakota... [ROTATE ISSUES]

- a. Does a good job of keeping unsafe trucks off state roadways
- b. Enforces trucking safety more aggressively than do neighboring states
- c. Enforces weight restrictions more aggressively than do neighboring states
- d. Focuses too much on generating extra revenue through fines for truck related violations
- e. Has too many truck regulations and exemptions that are open to interpretation
- f. Provides unfair operating advantages to special interest groups through exemptions in the law
- g. Has discouraged out of state truck operators from traveling through the state because of overly strict application of federal and state trucking regulations

PART V. TRUCK OPERATOR & MOTOR CARRIER STAFF INTERACTIONS

Q. Now I'd like you think about occasions when you might personally have contact with Motor Carrier Services staff. Some of these contacts may be influenced by personal characteristics. With this in mind, I'm going to read to you a list of characteristics that may or may not be important to what you see as the IDEAL Motor Carrier Services person to come in contact with.

27. For each characteristic, please tell me how important it is to you that this Motor Carrier Services staff person possess the characteristic. Use a 10 point scale, where 10 is extremely important down to 1 not at all important. How important is

[READ FIRST CHARACTERISTIC]?
[ROTATE LIST OF CHARACTERISTICS]

How important is...

- a. Treating you with respect
- b. Interpreting regulations fairly
- c. Willingness to listen
- d. Being knowledgeable and well trained
- e. Demonstrating good judgment and common sense
- f. Being lenient for honest mistakes
- g. Demonstrating a professional attitude

h. Being polite and courteous

27b. Which characteristic do you think is MOST important to a TRUCK OPERATOR? [REPEAT LIST IF NECESSARY]

28. Of the Motor Carrier Services personnel you have had contact with, how many exhibit this personal characteristic? Would you say...

- Most all
- Some
- Very few, or
- None
- [DO NOT READ] Don't know

PART VI. EVALUATION OF MCE PRACTICES & SERVICES

Q. My next questions deal with how, based on your personal experience in the past year or two, South Dakota's Motor Carrier Services staff currently interacts with drivers when enforcing South Dakota trucking regulations. After I read each of the following statements, please tell me how strongly you agree with each statement. Use a 10 point scale where 10 is strongly agree down to 1 strongly disagree. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

[ROTATE ISSUES]

29. *I believe the majority of the Motor Carrier Services staff...*

- a. Treat drivers of trucks in a respectful manner
- b. Try to interpret regulations fairly
- c. Show a willingness to listen
- d. Are knowledgeable and well trained
- e. Exercise good judgment and common sense
- f. Are lenient when coming across honest mistakes
- g. Approach their duties with a professional attitude
- h. Are polite and courteous
- i. Are more ready to help an operator than find fault
- j. Consider safety first when requiring a vehicle to stop

30. Thinking of the past year or two, would you say truck safety on South Dakota roadways has increased, decreased or stayed about the same?

- Increased
- Stayed about the same, or
- Decreased

31. How would you rate the job Motor Carrier Services does in helping drivers of trucks operate safely within the law? Use a 10 point scale, where 10 is an extremely good job down to 1 a very poor job. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

Very poor job											Extremely good job
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	

32. How would you rate the job Motor Carrier Services does in consistently applying and reasonably interpreting roadway regulations during truck stops? Use a 10 point scale, where 10 is an extremely good job down to 1 a very poor job. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

Very poor job											Extremely good job
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	

[ASK IF RATING '6' or LESS]

32b. Why do you rate it [Rating from q32a]? [CLARIFY]

33a. Overall how would you rate the job Motor Carrier Services does in performing its duties? Use a 10 point scale, where 10 is an extremely good job down to 1 a very poor job. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

Very poor job											Extremely good job
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	

33b. Why do you say that? [CLARIFY AND PROBE]

PART VII. PAST CONTACT WITH MOTOR CARRIER SERVICES

34. When was the last time you personally had contact for any reason with Motor Carrier services staff? Was it... [READ]

- Within the past year
- Within the past two years
- Within the past three years
- More than three years ago
- [DO NOT READ] Never had contract [SKIP to Q38a.]
- [DO NOT READ] Don't remember [SKIP to Q38a.]

35. Was the most recent contact for...?

[READ LIST AND CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- Permit/paperwork inspection
- Vehicle weighing
- Vehicle inspection
- Request for information, or
- Other, [SPECIFY]

35b. Other contact. [RECORD VERBATIM]

36a. Was the most recent contact ... [READ LIST]

- At a Port of Entry
- With a Mobile Crew [IF NEED DEFINITION SAY A TWO MAN CREW WITH SCALES]
- With a Motor Carrier Services Officer, or
- Some other way [SPECIFY]

36b. Other way [RECORD VERBATIM]

36c. Were you treated in a friendly and courteous manner?

- Yes
- No

36d. Thinking of the most recent contact, did motor carrier staff person handle the situation in a professional manner?

- Yes [SKIP to Q37.]
- No [ASK Q36b.]

36e. In your opinion, how was the contact unprofessional? [CLARIFY]

36f. In your opinion, what could have been done to make the contact more professional? [CLARIFY]

37a. Did the contact result in a ... [READ LIST AND CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- Violation of trucking regulations
- Warning being issued
- A fine
- An out of service determination
- Other, or [SPECIFY]
- No warning or citation [SKIP to Q38]

37b. Other contact result. [RECORD VERBATIM]

37c. Was the reason and cause for violation clearly explained to your satisfaction?

- Yes [SKIP to Q37e8.]
- No [CONTINUE]

37d. What information could have been provided to make it more understandable? [CLARIFY]

PART VIII. NEW SERVICES AVAILABLE

[SKIP THIS SEGMENT FOR AGRICULTURAL SEGMENT]

Q. The South Dakota Motor Carrier services Unit has introduced two new services in the past couple of years. I'd like to get your reaction to them.

38a. Are you familiar with the ability to obtain permits online from the South Dakota Motor Carrier Services Unit using a computer?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q39a.]

38b. Have you ever obtained a South Dakota trucking permit online?

- Yes [ASK Q38c.]
- No [SKIP to Q39a.]

38c. How easy was it for you to obtain the permit you were seeking? Use a 10 point scale, where 10 is very easy down to 1 very difficult. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

Very difficult Very easy
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 DK

[ASK IF 38c RATING IS '6' OR LESS, THEN SKIP TO Q39a.]

38d. What problems did you have in electronically obtaining the permit? [RECORD VERBATIM]

38e. Is this something you would like to learn more about and consider in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

39a. Are you familiar with electronic screening of trucks available at the Jefferson Port of Entry?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q39c.]

39b. Do you currently use this service?

- Yes [SKIP to Q39d.]
- No [CONTINUE]

39c. Is this something you would like to learn more about and consider in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

39d. If the state were to promote this service, where and how would you expect to find the information? [RECORD VERBATIM]

PART IX. DEMOGRAPHICS

Q. Finally I would like to ask you some questions for classification purposes. We collect this information to make sure we have gathered opinions from a variety of truck drivers.

40. Do you currently hold a commercial drivers license?

- Yes
- No
- Refused

41. Do you have access to the Internet at work or over the road? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

- At work
- At home
- Over the road
- None of the above
- Refused

42. If instructional videos dealing with legal and safe operation of trucks were available on a DVD disc, do you have access to a DVD player at home or at the office?

- Yes
- No

43. In what work or professional related organizations and associations are you a member? [CHECK ALL MENTIONS]

- Agri-Business Association
- Association of Cooperatives (SDAC)
- Association of Convenience Stores
- Associated General Contractor (AGC)
- American Trucking Association
- Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA)
- Petroleum & Propane Marketers Association
- South Dakota Trucking Association (SDTA)
- Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association (SC&RA)
- Truckload Carriers Association
- Other [SPECIFY]

43b. Other organization or association. [RECORD VERBATIM]

44. What is your home zip code?
[RECORD 5 DIGITS]
Refused

45. Thank you very much. That is all the questions I have.
[RECORD GENDER]

- Female
- Male

46. Did respondent make any additional comments?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No

47. Additional comments.
[RECORD COMMENTS]

48. [CLOSING FOR TERMINATION ON SCHREENING QUESTIONS]
Thank you, we have already filled out quota for this group. Have a good day!

APPENDIX H—MCS STAFF TELEPHONE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME] with MarketLine Research. We are talking to Motor Carrier Services staff about motor carrier enforcement activities in the state. This is department wide sanctioned market research study being conducted under the guidance of the South Dakota Department of Transportation's Office of Research. We would like to include your candid opinions. All your responses will remain totally confidential. [IF ASKED: DEPENDING UPON YOUR RESPONSES, INTERVIEW WILL LAST ABOUT 20 MINUTES].

[QUOTA—all 59 non-administrative staff of Motor Carrier Services]

PART 1. JOB BACKGROUND

1. In what Motor Carrier zone do you work?

- Zone 1
- Zone 2
- Zone 3
- Zone 4

2. How long have you been with Motor Carrier Services?

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Less than 6 months | 20—25 years |
| 6—12 months | 25—30 years |
| 1—5 years | 30—35 years |
| 10—15 years | 35—40 years |
| 15—20 years | More than 40 years. |

3. Is your work location...?

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| A port of entry | [weigh stations] |
| Mobile crew | [2 man crews with mobile scales] |
| Motor Carrier officer | [Officer patrolling roadways for violations] |
| Zone supervisor | |

PART II. REGULATORY INFORMATION NEEDS

4. On average, how familiar would you say part time truck operators are with federal and state trucking regulations? Use a 10 point scale where '10' is very familiar down to '1' not at all familiar. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Not at all familiar | Extremely familiar |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8 9 10 DK |

5. On average, how familiar would you say operators of trucks used for agricultural purposes are with federal and state trucking regulations? Use a 10 point scale where '10' is very familiar down to '1' not at all familiar. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Not at all familiar | Extremely familiar |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8 9 10 DK |

6. Do you ever receive requests for regulatory or permit information from truck operators?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [SKIP to Q8.]
- Don't know [SKIP to Q8.]

7. When operators make requests, how clearly are most operators able to communicate or convey what it is they are seeking? Use a 10 point scale where '10' is very clearly down to '1' not at all clearly. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Not at all clearly | Very clearly |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8 9 10 DK |

APPENDIX I—TRUCKING BENCHMARK TELEPHONE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME] with MarketLine Research. We are talking to Motor Carrier Services staff about motor carrier enforcement activities in the state. This is department wide sanctioned market research study being conducted under the guidance of the South Dakota Department of Transportation's Office of Research. We would like to include your candid opinions. All your responses will remain totally confidential. [IF ASKED: DEPENDING UPON YOUR RESPONSES, INTERVIEW WILL LAST ABOUT 20 MINUTES].

[QUOTA— 25 each state: Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming]

Start of Business Truck Operator Screen

1. Does your company's business require the use of a truck, or van with a gross weight of 8,000 or more pounds for shipping goods, freight, commodities or providing services?

- Yes [CONTINUE]
- No [THANK AND TERMINATE]

2. What type of vehicle does you or your company use most often for shipping or providing goods, freight, commodities or services?

[READ LIST]

- Pickup or Van
- Single Unit Truck
- Truck or Tractor with 1 Trailer
- Truck or Tractor with More than 1 Trailer
- Other *Specify*

2b. Other type of vehicle used for business. [RECORD VERBATIM] [CLARIFY]

2c. What is the maximum gross weight of the [RESPONSE FROM Q2]?

- Under 5 Ton
- 5 Ton to 9 Ton
- 10 Ton to 26 Ton
- Over 26 Ton

2d. In which of the following states have you or your employees driven a truck in the past three years?

[RECORD ALL MENTIONS]

- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Wyoming

PART I. ENFORCEMENT OF MOTOR CARRIER REGULATIONS

Q. The next series of questions deal with [INSERT STATE] enforcement of motor carrier regulations.

3. How uniform do you feel the enforcement of truck inspections is across [INSERT STATE]? Would you say enforcement is...[READ LIST]

- Very uniform
- Fairly uniform
- Not very uniform, or
- Not at all uniform
- Don't know [DO NOT READ]

4. How uniform do you feel the enforcement of weight restrictions and postings are across [INSERT STATE]? Would you say enforcement is

[READ LIST]

- Very uniform
- Fairly uniform
- Not very uniform, or
- Not at all uniform
- Don't know [DO NOT READ]

5. Would you say the current enforcement of laws for overweight trucks on [INSERT STATE] highways are too strict, not strict enough or about right?
- Is too strict
 - Not strict enough
 - About right
 - Don't know

PART II. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Q. My next questions deal with how the State of [INSERT STATE] regulates trucks on its roadways. Again consider your personal experiences in the past year or two. After I read each of the following statements, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. Use a 10 point scale where 10 is strongly agree down to '1' strongly disagree. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

6. I feel the State of [INSERT STATE]... [ROTATE ISSUES]
- a. Does a good job of keeping unsafe trucks off state roadways
 - b. Enforces trucking safety more aggressively than do neighboring states
 - c. Enforces weight restrictions more aggressively than do neighboring states
 - d. Focuses too much on generating extra revenue through fines for truck related violations
 - e. Has too many truck regulations and exemptions that are open to interpretation
 - f. Has discouraged out of state truck operators from traveling through the state because of overly strict application of federal and state trucking regulations

7. Overall how would you rate the job the state's agency responsible for inspecting and enforcing state and federal trucking regulations does in performing its duties? Use a 10 point scale, where 10 is an extremely good job down to 1 a very poor job. You may use any number from 1 to 10.

Very poor job										Extremely good job
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK

[ASK Q8 IF SD SELECTED IN Q2d]

8. In your opinion, how different are the trucking regulations in South Dakota compared to [INSERT STATE]? Would you say very different, somewhat different, not very different or not at all different?
- Very different
 - Somewhat different
 - Not very different
 - Not at all different

[ASK IF SD SELECTED IN Q2d]

9. Would you characterize enforcement of trucking regulations in South Dakota compared to [INSERT STATE] as being more strict, less strict or about the same?
- More strict [CONTINUE]
 - About the same [SKIP to Q11]
 - Less strict [SKIP to Q11]

10. Why do you say that? [RECORD VERBATIM]

[ASK EVERYONE]

11. Finally, what is your zip code? [RECORD FIVE DIGITS]

12. Thank you very much. That is all the questions I have.

[RECORD GENDER]

- Female
- Male

APPENDIX J—STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS WORKSHOP AGENDA

Large Conference Room, Dept. of Public Safety
11:00 am—3:00 pm
August 22, 2006

Participants

Susan Barta, Bureau of Personnel
Sgt. Gene Barthel, MCS
Dale Bertsch, Office of the Governor
Sgt. Scott Brown, MCS
Secretary Tom Dravland, DPS
Capt. Pat Fahey, MCS

Dave Huft, DOT
Sgt. Scott Knisley, MCS
Sgt. Brad Millard, MCS
Col. Dan Mosteller, SDHP
Jane Shrank, Driver Licensing Program

Facilitators

Dave Bender
John Schamber

1. **Introductions**

2. **Opening remarks**

- a. Captain Pat Fahey
- b. Secretary Tom Dravland

3. **Historical background**

- a. 2003 Assessment Conclusions—David Huft
- b. 2003 Results-based Initiatives—Captain Pat Fahey

4. **Overview of workshop process**—John Schamber

working lunch

5. **Where we are now**—Dave Bender

- a. Key 2006 Assessment Findings
- b. How did the 2003 initiatives work? (accomplishments to-date)
- c. Questions & Answers

6. **Opportunities for further progress**—Dave Bender

- a. Identified opportunities and possible ways to pursue
- b. Group discussion of factors supporting and challenging pursuit outcomes

session break

7. **Where do we want to go?**—Group discussion

- a. Examining merits of possibilities and prioritizing long-term aims

8. **How do we get there (what's in the roadmap)?**—Dave Bender

- a. Overview of an example of an *Action Outline*

9. **Closing observations and remarks**—Group discussion

- a. Individual participant comments
- b. Closing remarks—Secretary Tom Dravland

APPENDIX K—ACTION PLANNING WORKSHOP AGENDA

Associated General Contractors Meeting Room

8:30 am—4:00 pm

September 13, 2006

Participants

Susan Barta, Bureau of Personnel

Sgt. Gene Barthel, MCS

Darlene, Barto, MCS

Brooke Bohnenkamp, Public Information Officer DPS

Sgt. Scott Brown, MCS

Capt. Pat Fahey, MCS

Sgt. Noel Gabriel, MCS

Rodney Halvorson, MCS

Dave Huft, DOT

Sgt. Scott Knisley, MCS

Sgt. Brad Millard, MCS

Pat Rabenberg, MCS

Alyce Rude, MCS

Hal Rumpca, DOT

Facilitators

Dave Bender, MarketLine Research

John Schamber, MarketLine Research



Agenda

8:30 – 9:30 am	Explanation of workshop goals	5 min
	Elements of culture change	5 min
	Review of 2006 Assessment Survey Conclusions	10 min
	Introduction to <i>SECURE</i> opportunities for pursuit	10 min
	Recap of priorities identified at Strategic Directions meeting	10 min
	Explanation of Action Outline format and team assignments	20 min
9:30 – 11:30 am	Team building of Action Outlines for assigned areas of pursuit	120 min
11:30 – 12:30 pm	Lunch break	60 min
12:30 – 3:10 pm	Team presentations and group build for pursuit approaches	160 min
	Break after 2 nd presentation	15 min
3:25 – 3:55 pm	Best approaches – sequencing, scheduling and measuring	30 min
3:55 – 4:00 pm	Overview of Next Steps	5 min

Action Planning Workshop

APPENDIX L—ACTION OUTLINES FOR IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a compilation of *Action Outlines* completed during the September 13th Planning Workshop. They are organized by opportunity areas for pursuit.

COMMUNICATIONS PURSUITS

MCS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Objective: To specify the content requirements and develop a format for which all MCS communications can be guided and formalized.

Possible Approach: Develop MCS agency communications plan that is flexible allowing for review and updating as needed.

Desired Outcome: Formulate a single plan that can drive all internal and external communications activities within Motor Carrier Services.

Steps to Achieve Pursuit:

1. Conduct a full communications audit to inventory all existing internal and external communication elements. Identify what is working and what is not.
2. Identify current target audiences and communications touch points.
3. Review audit findings to guide development of framework for plan.
4. Identify key audiences—owner/operators, mom & pop, industry groups, employees etc.
5. Identify grass root opportunities to broaden communication outlets—elevators, farm & home shows, rest stops, cafes, weigh stations etc. Compile a calendar of events that provide communication opportunities.
6. Develop process for communication flow—identifying who writes, reviews, designs format, and controls distribution. What needs to be centralized versus decentralized?
7. Identify mass communication opportunities—radio, TV, print, web, CD and others.
8. Identify and develop message / campaigns for targeted audiences and specific issues.
9. Prioritize message / campaigns.
10. Develop list of guidelines of “How To” to get messages out.
11. Establish timeline for accomplishing communication goals.
12. Establish an ongoing internal review process to assess what works.
13. Identify alternative sources for funding communication efforts, i.e. piggybacking, coop and public service.

Responsibilities: A plan manager, communications advisor, agency advisory panel, plan contributors, and a final plan reviewer.

Cost Components: Staff resources (project manager, content contributors, etc.), communications adviser, production costs and media placement

Time Requirements: The anticipated time required to complete the initial plan is 10 months.

MCS NEWSLETTER FOR EXTERNAL DISTRIBUTION

Objective: To design and develop a newsletter for communication with customer segments and industry.

Possible Approach: Develop an annual newsletter that reaches desired audiences and conveys both traditionally and electronically appropriate information as identified within the communications plan.

Desired Outcome: Increase contact and feedback opportunities with multiple customer segments.

Steps to Achieve Pursuit:

1. Identify intended target audiences and appropriate means of distribution for each.
2. Design a format that will support intended content, means of distribution and will appeal to all intended audiences.
3. Design and incorporate mechanism for reader response and identify method for compiling, assessing and sharing reader feedback.
4. Identify a staff editorial group to solicit and or contribute to content.
5. Identify timeline and requirements for meeting copy, layout and production steps.
6. Develop a plan for distribution.
7. Seek out opportunities for partnerships or promotional ties to defray production costs.
8. Identify effort in MCS communications plan.

Responsibilities: project manager, graphic designer, editor, content contributors, proofreader, and production coordinator. An outside publisher will also need to be identified.

Cost Components: Initial graphic design, staff resources, production and distribution costs.

Time Requirements: The anticipated time required to design and produce the first publication is 3 months.

OUTREACH PURSUITS

WEB-BASED INTERACTIVE REFERENCE TOOL

Objective: To identify design requirements and then develop an enhanced web-based interactive reference tool—an interactive search engine for quick, “, retrieval of information for operating a truck safely and legally on South Dakota roadways.

Possible Approach: Address initial content to agricultural customer segment first while design features are tested and refined and then roll it out to other industry segments.

Desired Outcome: The desired outcome is to construct a customer specific search engine that is compatible with the existing web site(s).

Steps to Achieve Pursuit:

1. Research existing Missouri website to identify development steps, issues, costs and time.
2. Survey other states, associations and industries for best in class examples or prototypes.
3. Bring together a staff design team. Involve current webmasters for existing trucking sites.
4. Conduct requirements gathering to determine what each industry segment needs.
5. Develop qualifying questions for each specific customer segment.
6. Explore possibilities for web designer and technical expertise required.
7. Develop a testing plan and identify staff who would be involved.
8. Identify possible advertising and/or promotional ties.
9. Provide a link to all information needed.
10. Incorporate guidelines for promotion and use in MCS communications plan.

Responsibilities: Project manager, web designer, communications advisor, an evaluator and internal and customer testers.

Cost Components: Initial search engine design, requirement gathering (meetings with different associations and organizations), outside technical expertise, prototype testing, staff resources, federal involvement and ongoing program maintenance and updating.

Time Requirements: The anticipated time required to develop first module for agriculture audience is 9 months.

PORTABLE LEARNING DISC

Objective: To design, produce and distribute a portable learning disc to educate drivers on basics of safe and legal operation of trucks.

Possible Approach: The disc can be segment specific or generic to the entire trucking industry. Content should be general in nature. Disc should include educational content covering weights and inspection process. Platform decision needs to be made to produce DVD playable on computer, TV or both.

Desired Outcome:

The learning tool needs to be a standalone disc that is both media rich visually and well narrated. The design needs to support easy construction and easy updating.

Steps to Achieve Pursuit:

1. Review existing regulatory and/or industry for media based learning tool offerings.
2. Contact CVSA. Get DVDs of inspections, load enforcement etc.
3. Identify industry required information and training by asking representatives what they need.
4. Identify a staff work team supported by communications advisor and media development technical advisor.
5. Select a multimedia design firm to assist in disc production.
6. Develop a user testing protocol.
7. Determine a distribution plan and identify possible alliances or cooperative ventures to support production and distribution costs.
8. Allow for distribution by download from Internet and existing trucking and regulatory web sites.
9. Incorporate guidelines for use and distribution in MCS communications plan.

Responsibilities: a project manager, software designer, production coordinator for staff involvement, DOT technical advisor and coordinator for testing.

Cost Components: staff resources, DVD design costs, content production costs, outside technical expertise, prototype testing, disc duplication costs if distribution is both electronic and physical, and packaging and distribution costs.

Time Requirements: The anticipated time required to design, produce and distribute the disc is 12 months. Some of the content development and production will be concurrent with the development of the web-based reference tool. Work will commence on the reference tool first. Total anticipated time required to complete both initiatives is 21 months.

STAFF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

VEHICLE FOR STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Objective: To identify and establish a mechanism that serves to motivate staff to become more engaged in the organization.

Possible Approach: Design and create an internal monthly or quarterly MCO Newsletter that recognizes positive personal and professional achievements. Items for recognition could include: longevity, birthdays, births, anniversaries, new hires, safe driving awards etc.

Desired Outcome: Design and create an internal MCO Newsletter that serves to motivate and engage inspectors by providing a platform for ownership and input to processes within the overall organization and individual enforcement zones.

Steps to Achieve Pursuit:

1. Examine employee newsletters of other state agencies, e.g. BOP.
2. Involve a staff project team to determine plan for format, design, production and distribution.
3. Identify process for submission of content and supervision of compilation.
4. Communicate to staff purpose of newsletter and types of desired articles, notices etc. and process for submitting material.
5. Anyone can be a contributor, but one staff person needed to serve as coordinator.
6. Incorporate guidelines for use and distribution in MCS communications plan.

Responsibilities: A project manager, staff editor and content contributors.

Cost Components: Staff resources, monthly or quarterly production costs and postage if mailed.

Time Requirements: The anticipated time required to design and establish the program is 9 months.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM AND PILOT PROGRAM OF FLEXIBLE NIGHT/DAY SCHEDULING

Objective: To identify and reward inspectors achieving specialized training and consistently performing beyond required and expected standards. To identify a means of providing MCOs more time for personal needs and family.

Possible Approaches: Create a career enhancement program for the staff to recognize career advancement with specialized training. Reward and/or recognize the motivated inspector for attending advanced training and receiving certification. Evaluate and implement if successful a pilot program of flexible night/day scheduling at Ports to provide more family and personal time.

Desired Outcome: The desired outcome is to retain a knowledgeable workforce by providing advancement opportunities and flexible work schedules. Create an atmosphere conducive to strengthening employee motivation and job satisfaction. Train and retain knowledgeable inspectors. Provide promotional opportunities tied into educational opportunities for motivated inspectors. Provide flexible scheduling opportunities that allow for more family and personal with the goal of increasing employee commitment and improving morale.

Consideration: Advanced certification, in of itself, is not viewed as reason for added monetary compensation. Individual advancement needs to be linked to consistent performance that exceeds required and expected standards. For a flexible scheduling program to be considered successful, scheduling would need to minimally have a neutral impact on customer service.

Steps to Achieve Pursuit:

1. Lay out career enhancement plan identifying levels and areas of education to obtain certification levels which would result in more responsibility.
2. Develop monitoring plan to compensate additional responsibilities—does not include 8 week training and level 1 inspection which are hiring requirements.
3. Evaluate how much each level is worth to Unit objectives and highway safety.
4. Skill areas to consider include: motor coach, hazmat, cargo tanks, dye fuel, field training inspectors, public education, hazmat specialist and pot accident inspection.
5. Develop plan for 6 month pilot of flexible scheduling program.
6. During 6 month period evaluate attitudes and performances standards.
7. Consider possibility of closing two ports down when traffic is low—base on review of past traffic count data.
8. Plan to do additional inspections when more inspectors are available.
9. Examine flexibility for night/day schedules—possibly provide night differential pay.
10. Sergeants insure inspection levels are meeting objectives and evaluate schedule based on these objectives.

Responsibilities: a project manager for career enhancement program, Bureau of Personnel, budget personnel and Port managers for flexible scheduling.

Cost components: BOP and budget personnel required to determine costs for career enhancement initiative, no cost for flexible scheduling initiative.

Time Requirements: Conduct a 9 month trial and evaluation using two ports for flexible scheduling. Concurrently the staff enhancement program would require 12 months to develop and put in place.

MEASURES AND INDUSTRY

PROMOTION OF SAFE DRIVING CONDITIONS AROUND TRUCKS ON ROADWAYS

Objective: To design a joint effort for MCS and the trucking industry for promotion of safe driving conditions around trucks on roadways.

Possible Approaches: Design a safety program (no zone, educating on operating around trucks—following distance, load identification, winter driving, etc.). Recruit industry partners (SDTA, FMCSA, Ag associations, insurance industry, media, drivers licensing, driver's education programs and DOT). Jointly create a safe driving program aimed at educating motor carrier operators.

Desired Outcome: The desired outcome is to better educate industry drivers and the general public on safe operation around larger vehicles encountered on South Dakota roadways.

Steps to Achieve Pursuit:

1. Identify staff person to lead project.
2. Identify and contact potential partners.
3. Look at established safety programs already in circulation—gathering ideas.
4. Conduct workshop with small group to establish education plan.
5. Have Drivers Licensing include items of safety around large vehicles in the testing process and update manuals to include safety information.
6. Secure grant from Highway Safety to help fund program cost.
7. Establish list of target audiences for safety education program.
8. Hire media consultant or bring in public information officer from Dept. of Public Safety.
9. Have media propose ideas on promoting campaign.
10. Work with industry to develop “responsible trucking” program within the trucking industry.
11. Contact Accident Records for information about accidents involving larger CMVs.
12. Identify promotional and media aspects of safety program in MCS communications plan.

Responsibilities: A project manager, media consultant, safety consultant, and technical panel of agency and industry partners.

Cost components: Staff resources, industry resources, media time and production costs.

Time requirements: The anticipated time required to develop the program is 12 months.

PROGRAM TO DEMONSTRATE SAFETY RESULTS LINKED TO MCS ACTIVITIES

Objective: To develop a program to demonstrate safety results linked to MCS activities.

Possible Approaches: Review CMV crash history starting at 2001 through 2006. Review causation factors involving CMVs. Communicate information learned to staff and public information officer. Calculate crash rates per vehicle miles traveled.

Desired Outcome: The desired outcome is to raise awareness of MCS staff impact on traffic safety.

Steps to Achieve Pursuit:

1. Contact Accident Records for crash statistics during desired period.
2. Analyze statistics for established trends.
3. Report results to MCS staff.
4. MCS can target areas learned from causation factors to reduce CMV accidents.
5. Repeat and update review of records annually.
6. Identify program in MCS communications plan.

Responsibilities: A project manager, statistician and public information officer.

Cost components: Staff time and resources.

Time requirements: The anticipated time required to develop the program is 4 months.

REVIEW OF CUSTOMER SURVEY CARDS

Objective: To examine ways to strengthen format, distribution and use of customer survey cards by staff.

Possible Approaches: Continue deployment of survey cards. Restructure questions asked. Create new format and layout. Increase response and return of cards.

Desired Outcome: The desired outcome is make distribution and returns more customer friendly with better reporting.

Steps to Achieve Pursuit (was not identified as a priority pursuit, but steps outlined):

1. Conduct workshop with zone personnel and MCS staff
2. Restructure questions to be more specific.
3. Develop seasonal variations of the survey card.
4. Identify mechanism to provide results to staff.
5. Examine how results are communicated to customers.
6. Establish drop box or P.O. Box at Port locations.
7. Obtain feedback from staff and customers on frequency of distribution and examine for influence of fatigue factor.

Responsibilities: A project manager and zone reps.

Cost components: Staff resources, printing costs, postage and/or production costs for drop boxes.

Time requirements: The anticipated time required to develop the program is 3 months.