



Campus IT Service Breakthroughs

The Office for Information Technology (OIT) is finishing up their three year strategic plan, which set aggressive targets for improving your satisfaction with their services. How well has the plan worked?

“Our future demands a permanent culture of innovation in how we do business – fundamentally approaching our processes in new and dynamic ways that preserve quality, and step up our service levels to our students and faculty.” - CU-Boulder Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano

Chancellor DiStefano and [others](#) have highlighted the looming crisis in higher educational funding in Colorado. In response, the Chancellor and Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer Kelly Fox created the [Office for Performance Improvement](#) (OPI) to design and implement innovative solutions that will position the University of Colorado Boulder not only to survive, but to thrive in an increasingly challenging budgetary environment.

One of the earliest activities the OPI was engaged to do was to implement a data-based strategic planning process called [Service Performance Excellence](#) to help the [Office of Information Technology](#) (OIT) achieve its goals. They are now completing this three year plan, and the results are coming in.

Strategic Intent 1 – Employee Empowerment

Often before an organization can work on improving their service, other more fundamental issues have to be identified and fixed. Early in the process it became clear that many OIT employees did not feel they had what was necessary to do their jobs. If the employees cannot do their jobs, it is likely that the organization will be unable to achieve any of its other objectives. Therefore, the first part of the OIT strategic plan was to assess and then improve their employees’ ability to do their job, or their “empowerment” as OPI terms it. One of their targets in this area was to go from 64.1% continuing employees stating that they are empowered to 90% and with at least a 95% response rate.

Each OIT supervisor with input from their employees identified specific things in their areas that were necessary for achieving at least 90% empowerment for their direct reports. In addition, OIT undertook two restructurings designed to improve the ability of its employees to get their jobs done. Instead of a drop in empowerment as you might have expected, each restructuring led to a jump in the empowerment rate. Finally OIT updated job descriptions and redefined the performance evaluation process in order to make the process as fair and objective as possible.

Here are the most current results from the online report that is automatically generated:

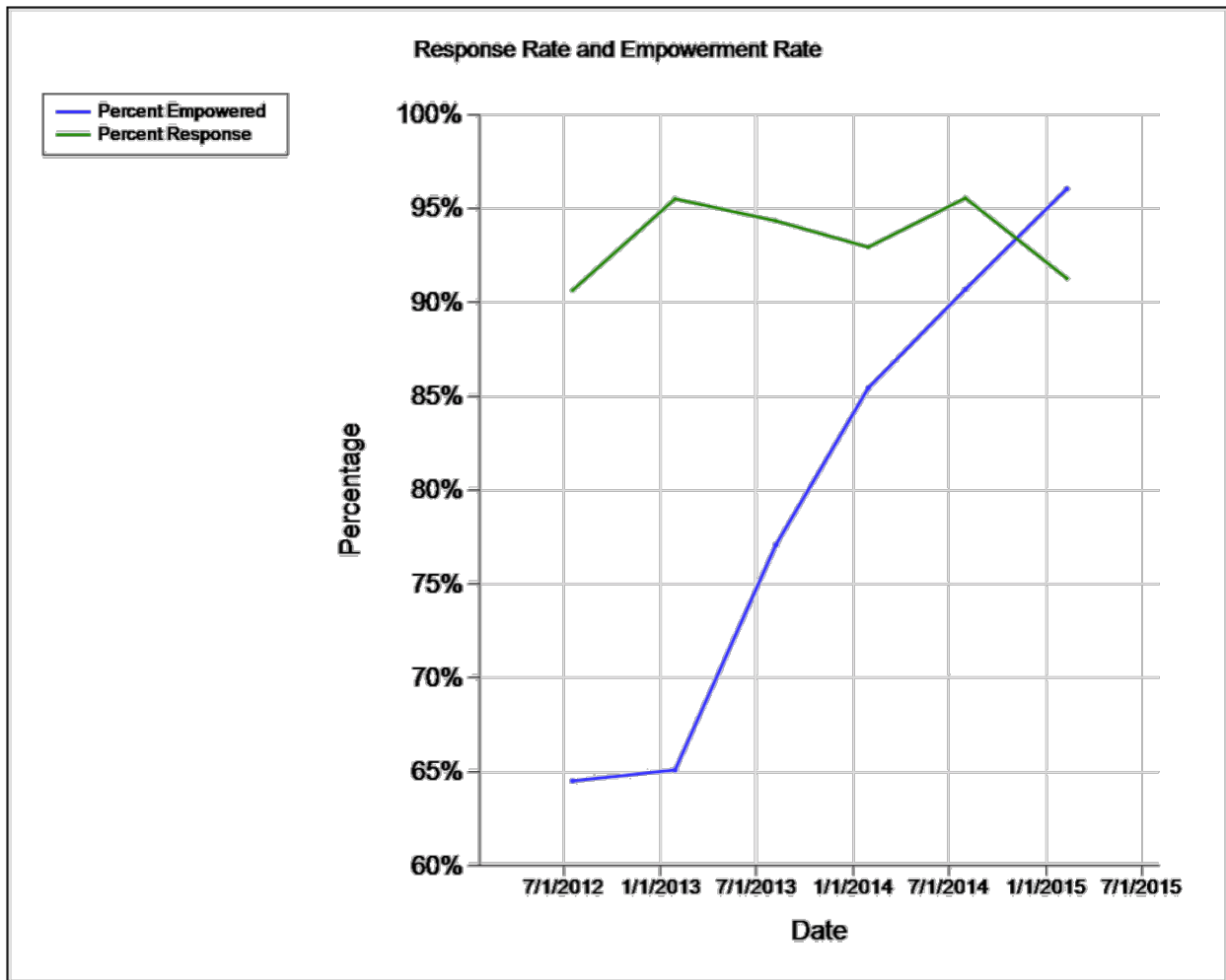


Figure 1 - Change in Empowerment and Response Rate for Continuing Employees

As you can see, they have achieved both objectives and now have a continuing work force that generally feels like they can do the job. Of course there is more to do, but this is a huge improvement and achieves their strategic goal.

Strategic Intent 2 – Point of Service Customer Satisfaction

Once employees are empowered, they can be more effective at performing the functions of the area and can turn their attention to improvement. The second area OIT chose to improve was in the customer satisfaction with the results of their “point of service” surveys. The surveys three years ago were not adequate to assess true satisfaction across all of OIT and could not identify areas to work on if the satisfaction needed to improve.

OIT developed and then deployed these surveys throughout the organization. If you have called 5-HELP or use any of OIT’s other short-duration services, you have received one of these surveys. At times, they did data analysis to determine the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and implemented changes intended to improve satisfaction. You can see the results on customer satisfaction in the following graph.

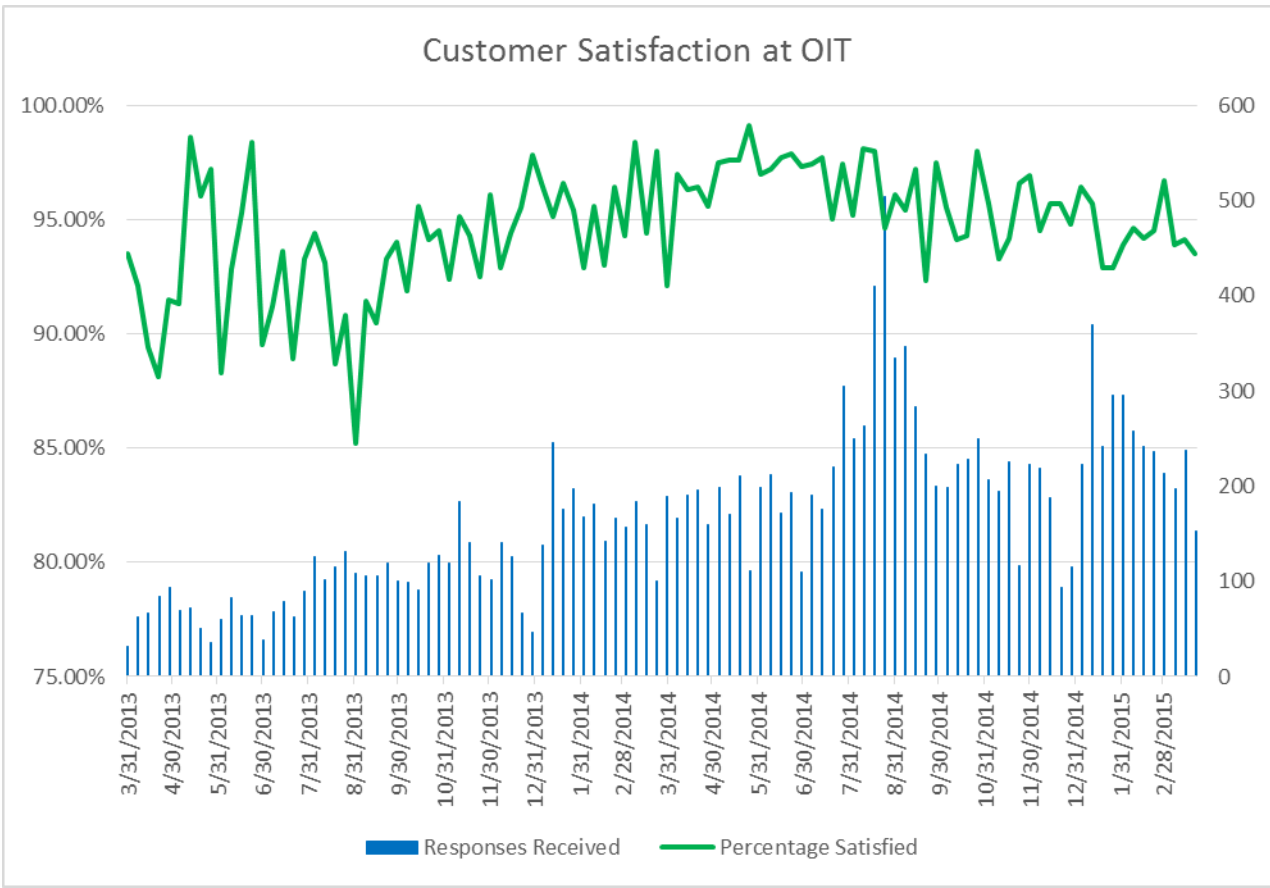


Figure 2 - Point of Service Customer Satisfaction and Response Volume by Week

Strategic Intent 3 – Overall Customer Satisfaction with OIT

OIT provides so much of the IT infrastructure on campus that these Point of Service surveys are not a complete picture of how well OIT is doing at meeting your needs. In order to understand that, OIT created an annual satisfaction survey to be sent to every staff, faculty, and research member as well as to student governance as representatives of the student body. This survey was designed to understand which services are being used, how satisfied people are with them, and how these relate with being satisfied or not satisfied with OIT as a whole. We have had two of these campus-wide surveys so far. The in-depth analysis of the first one identified a number of different areas that OIT needed to improve on as well as other areas where any degradation from current levels would strongly reduce customer satisfaction. Over the intervening two years, OIT has worked on a number of these, and as hoped, have seen the overall customer satisfaction increase as a result, as you can see in the next graph.

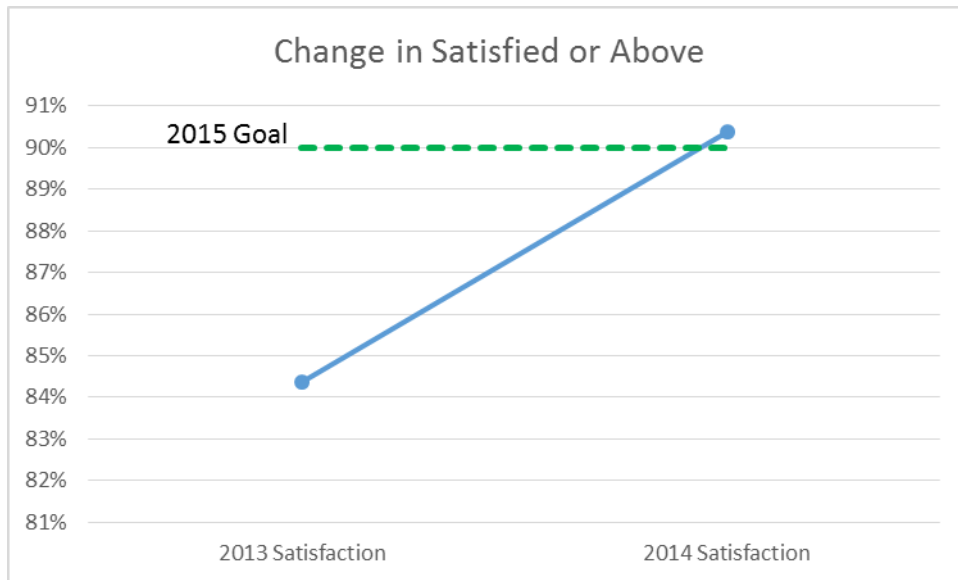


Figure 3 - Change in Annual Overall Satisfaction with OIT

Strategic Intent 4 – Understanding the Value of OIT

The last area identified to work on in their strategic plan was related to understanding how much value OIT provides to the campus. In some ways, this has been the most difficult initiative to complete. It requires understanding how other similar campuses provide their IT functions and then comparing critical factors like cost and satisfaction across these peer institutions. OIT has already made progress on this, implementing budgeting software and is in the process of purchasing time allocation software. They are on track to finish this last part of their first strategic plan over the remaining year of the original plan.

Conclusion

So the final score? OIT has reached their empowerment and customer satisfaction goals and is on track to finish its last strategic element by the next planning cycle. It is a real testament to how hard everyone at OIT has worked on accomplishing these goals while maintaining all the IT systems that are needed for much of the campus to function. In August and September of this year, OIT's management will review their accomplishments and then set their goals for the next three year cycle, so expect more improvement to come.

Strategic plans should not be aspirations, but rather a statement of what the organization will accomplish over the next planning cycle and the planning needed to do so. OIT is an example that these objectives, even as aggressive as the ones they chose, can be accomplished with good planning, data, and hard work.

OPI is working with a number of other organizations across the campus to help them plan how to accomplish similarly impressive results. OIT is doing its part in helping the Chancellor achieve his vision of increasing service levels through innovation.