



Customer Service and Operations Committee

Board Information Item IV-A

December 5, 2013

Customer Service – New Initiatives

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number: 200493 Resolution:

Yes No

TITLE:

Customer Service Initiatives

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Overview of customer service improvements and plans for a new Customer Care Program.

PURPOSE:

To provide the Customer Service and Operations committee with an update of Metro's customer service improvements and provide an overview of plans for a new Customer Care Program.

DESCRIPTION:

As part of the Customer Service Action Plan launched by the General Manager/Chief Executive Officer in Fall 2011, customer service improvements throughout WMATA have been ongoing during the past two years. Customer satisfaction surveys help us gauge the effectiveness of our programs, and will guide us as we move forward with a new Customer Care Program. The program, which is currently under development, will define standards and policies for the customer experience on bus, rail and MetroAccess.

Key Highlights:

- WMATA has undertaken a Customer Service Action Plan to improve each step on the path of a passenger's day-to-day journey with Metro.
- Dozens of actions have been completed to improve customer service, ranging from changing communications practices to improving rail car reliability, training station managers, and improving bus schedules.
- A new Customer Care Program is being developed. The same matrix approach used to prioritize safety at Metro will be applied to improve the customer experience.
- Customer satisfaction numbers reflect actions being taken, and will help to guide future efforts to improve customer service.

Background and History:

Approximately two years ago, the General Manager/Chief Executive Officer launched an Authority-wide Customer Service Action Plan designed to improve the day-to-day

customer experience. More than 100 actions were implemented throughout Metro to improve customer service, ranging from changing communications practices to replacing and rehabilitating escalators, training station managers and improving bus schedules.

Development of the plan began in Fall 2011, with staff examining the system from the perspective of our customers and identifying key customer touch points within each step of their journeys with Metro. Research was conducted with customers and employees to define good customer service and to identify priorities. The research results identified areas where Metro performed well, as well as areas where Metro needed to better concentrate efforts.

With the research in hand and a better understanding of customer priorities, a Customer Action Plan was developed. Just as a customer's journey crosses many departments of Metro, the plan contains action items from various Metro disciplines, including Rail, Bus, Metro Access, Metro Transit Police, and Communications.

Discussion:

Customer Service Improvements

The following are examples of the customer service improvements that have been completed as part of the Customer Service Action Plan:

Rail:

- Station Managers remain outside of the kiosk during rush hours, resulting in a positive perception and approachability
- Improved rail car cleanliness by increasing off-peak cleanings and standardizing best practices
- Completed station lighting improvements at Judiciary Square (entire station), mezzanines at Gallery Place/Metro Center/Bethesda
- Installed new staircase at Bethesda to improve customer experience in station.
- SmarTrip® upgrades:
 - SmarTrip® card dispensers on every mezzanine
 - Exitfare machines can now add value to SmarTrip®
 - Online AutoReload becoming more popular
 - 720,000 riders now have SmarTrip® web accounts, up 60% from a year ago

Bus:

- “We Care” Bus Operator training focusing on customer service completed by nearly 75% of operators
- Launched the “We Care, Too!” customer service training for bus management staff
- Installed Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) on all buses to increase security
- Introduced new bus maps
- Installed new bus stop signs

MetroAccess

- Successfully transitioned to a new service provider
- Created online fare calculator for MetroAccess passengers
- Conducted sensitivity training for dispatchers and operators
- Purchased new vehicles
- Installed MetroAccess stop signs at major rail locations

Metro Transit Police (MTPD):

- Introduced MyMTPD TexTips to reach MTPD via text message
- Recruited and hired additional MTPD officers to enhance bus security detail
- Launched Respect Your Ride student outreach to address youth behavior on the system

Communications

- New Passenger Information Display (PID) hardware and enhanced PID software
- Improved communications protocols to customers
 - Growth of MetroAlerts to 93,000 subscribers
 - Improved Nextbus accuracy and bus location information
 - Station kiosk signs at point of entry
 - Redesigned mobile website with one touch to popular items and MTPD

Incident Handling:

- Improved communication between Rail Operators Communication Center (ROCC) and Bus Operators Communication Center (BOCC) during incidents
 - All RAIL & BUS managers receive alerts to mobile devices
 - RAIL managers are sent directly to an incident
 - Station Managers now have digital radios to communicate to Central during major incidents
- MTPD deployment adjusted to manage pending incidents

Call Center:

- Extended Customer Service Call Center hours by two hours; now open until 7pm on weekdays
- Decreased Hold Times:
 - For Customer Relation calls: Average hold time decreased by 23% from 76 seconds to 58 seconds
 - For Customer Information calls: Average hold time decreased by 46% from 26 seconds to 14 seconds
- Implemented a customer call back program targeting approximately 100 customers per month to ensure satisfaction with issue resolution

Customer Care Program

While staff continues working on improvements under the Customer Service Action Plan, we are now ready to take the next steps for improving customer service.

When the General Manager unveiled his Business Plan in September 2013, he announced that we are developing an Authority-wide Customer Care Program. The same matrix approach used to prioritize safety at Metro will now be applied to improve the customer experience.

The Customer Care Program will define standards and policies that establish what the customer experience should be on bus, rail and Metro Access. As part of this process, staff will identify which customer-facing positions are responsible for service handling and determine if these positions have the right job descriptions, tools, training, and accountabilities. Metro staff will also review industry best practices, as well as models outside transit, to inform the program development.

The Customer Care Program will work to ensure that efforts throughout the Authority are designed and coordinated to ensure WMATA is meeting the customer satisfaction KPIs for rail and bus.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction surveys have now been conducted for all of FY2013, as well as the first quarter of FY2014. This allows us to compare the most recent performance with performance from the same time period in the previous year.

The General Manager has proposed a customer satisfaction KPI for bus and rail at 84%. This means 84% of customers on average need to rate the question, "Overall, how satisfied were you with this last bus/rail ride?" as '5' (very satisfied) or '4' (somewhat satisfied). This quarter (July-September 2013), rail achieved its goal, but bus fell just shy of the target by 3%.

There are two highlights in this report. The first is that customers have noticed an improvement in station manager approachability, and the second is that nine out of ten customers who talk with bus operators believe them to be knowledgeable and courteous.

Bus Results:

WMATA research staff interviews 387 bus customers every quarter. The following are the percentage of bus customers who gave Metrobus either a '5' or a '4' on being satisfied with their last bus ride:

- July-September, 2012: 84%
- January-March, 2013: 82%
- April-June, 2013: 82%
- July-September, 2013: 81% CURRENT

The items that most affect customer satisfaction among bus customers are:

- Cleanliness of bus
- Timeliness of bus
- Cleanliness of bus stop

- Driver greets and acknowledges patron upon boarding the bus

Other notable results from the Metrobus customer satisfaction survey from respondents include:

- 76% of customers say their bus operator greeted them upon boarding (same as previous quarters)
- 84% believe the bus operator is approachable if they had a question or needed information (same as previous quarters)
- 90% of customers who interacted with a bus operator believed them to be knowledgeable and courteous
- Usage of NextBus rose to 30% this quarter

Rail Results:

WMATA research staff interviews 387 rail customers every quarter. The following are the percentage of rail customers who gave Metrorail either a '5' or a '4' on being satisfied with their last rail ride:

- July-September, 2012: 80%
- January-March, 2013: 84%
- April-June, 2013: 86%
- July-September, 2013: 84% CURRENT

The items that most affect customer satisfaction among rail customers are:

- Security in the rail station
- Security in the transfer station

Other notable results from the Metrorail customer satisfaction survey from respondents include:

- 79% of customers say they believe station managers are approachable which is a very large increase from last quarter (where only 69% said the same)
- 79% of customers rate stations as being clean (an increase)
- 72% of customers rate trains as being clean (an increase)
- 76% of customers note a smooth ride (an increase)

Uptick In Incident Response Performance:

The efforts to improve incident response resulted in a positive reaction from customers following the August 30th incident on the Red Line that required a closure from Ft. Totten to the NoMa/Gallaudet U station during morning rush hour.

Nearly 2,000 riders who were affected by the incident participated in a brief survey. Riders gave WMATA kudos for an incident well-handled and well-communicated. Commute times during this incident inconvenienced riders minimally. Two-thirds of riders said their commute was within 20 minutes of their normal commute time. Announcements appeared to work well. Rail car operators were heard most often by riders on the system, almost 50% more than either in the stations or on the PIDs.

When asked where they saw Metro employees helping customers, 73% said at the transfer station (Ft. Totten), and 40% at their entry station. Of those who saw a Metro employee, 96% said they either found the employee helpful or didn't interact with them. The Ft. Totten transfer worked well for many riders; however, their comments noted a few opportunities for improvement including setting escalators to flow in the optimal direction.

The challenge in this incident was that despite early announcements through the media, six out of 10 riders arrived at the station without knowing to anticipate a disruption.

More recently, Red Line riders were inconvenienced by significant delays during three rush hours periods over the span of a week. Customer feedback from more than 900 riders impacted in those incidents showed that the trend has continued with fewer complaints regarding information and more focus on length of delays. However, we also know that certain station-specific announcements were inadequate and we are working to improve that going forward with more tailored information.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Project Manager:	Lynn Bowersox
Project Department/Office:	CSCM

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	Fall 2011 – present: Customer Service Action Plan developed and action items undertaken
Anticipated actions after presentation	Fall 2013 – ongoing: Customer Care Program being developed to define Authority-wide standards and policies for the customer experience.



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Customer Service Initiatives

Customer Service and Operations Committee

December 5, 2013



Purpose

- To provide the Customer Service and Operations Committee an overview of Metro's customer service initiatives
- Review customer satisfaction metrics
- Outline plans for a new Customer Care Program



Customer Service Action Plan

- Initiated by the General Manager in Fall 2011
- Addresses all aspects of a rider's day-to-day interactions with Metro
- Includes more than 100 actions
- Carried out over past two years

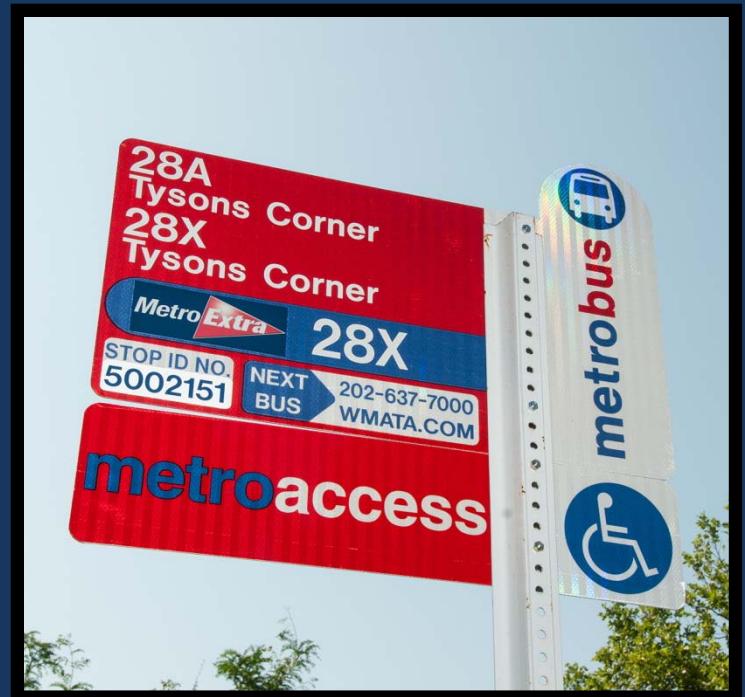


Rail Improvements





Bus Improvements





Metro Access Improvements





MTPD Improvements

The smartphone screen shows a text message from 'mymptd' to 'mymptd'. The message content is: 'There is an unattended bag under the seat in car 6044, Red Line just departed Union Station.' Below the message, a note says: 'Your txt was sent to Metro Transit Police. If this is an EMERGENCY, call 202-554-2121 or 911. Msg&Data rates may apply. Txt HELP for help or STOP to cancel.' At the bottom, it says: 'We have received your message and are sending officers now. Thank you.'

**SEE SOMETHING?
TEXT SOMETHING!**

Now you can send non-emergency messages to Metro Transit Police at

**MyMTPD
(696873)**



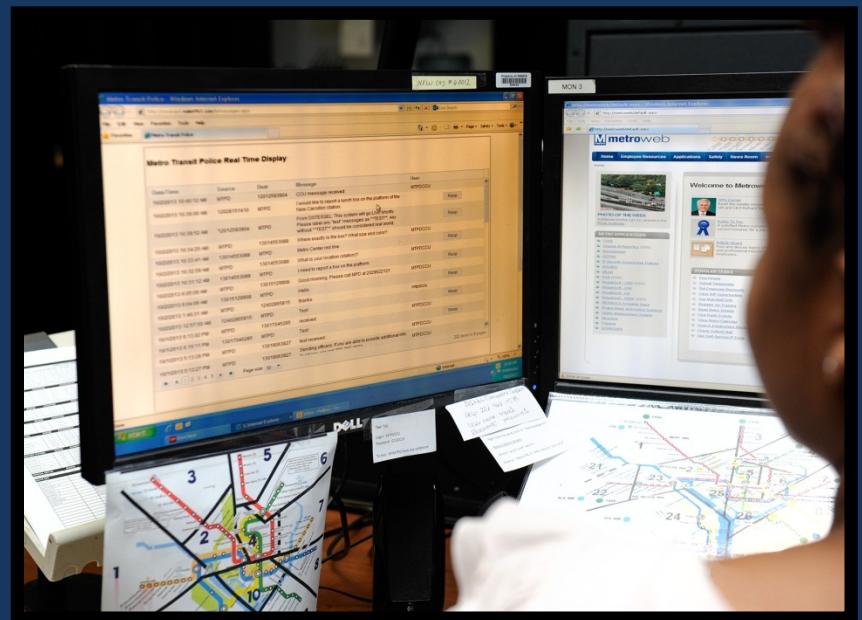


Communications Improvements



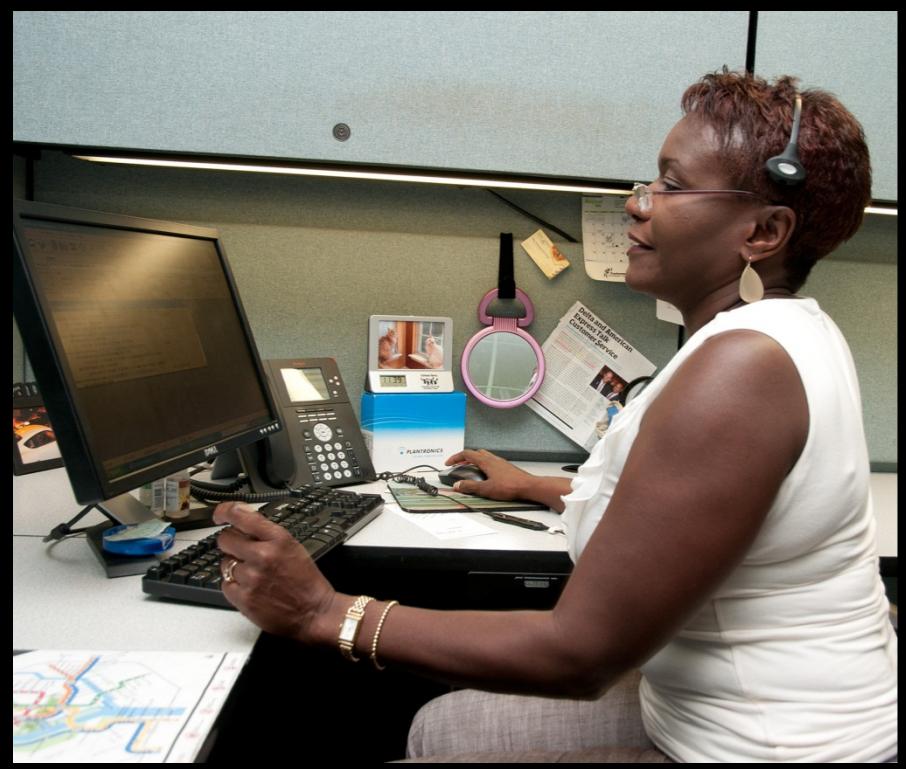


Incident Handling Improvements





Call Center Improvements

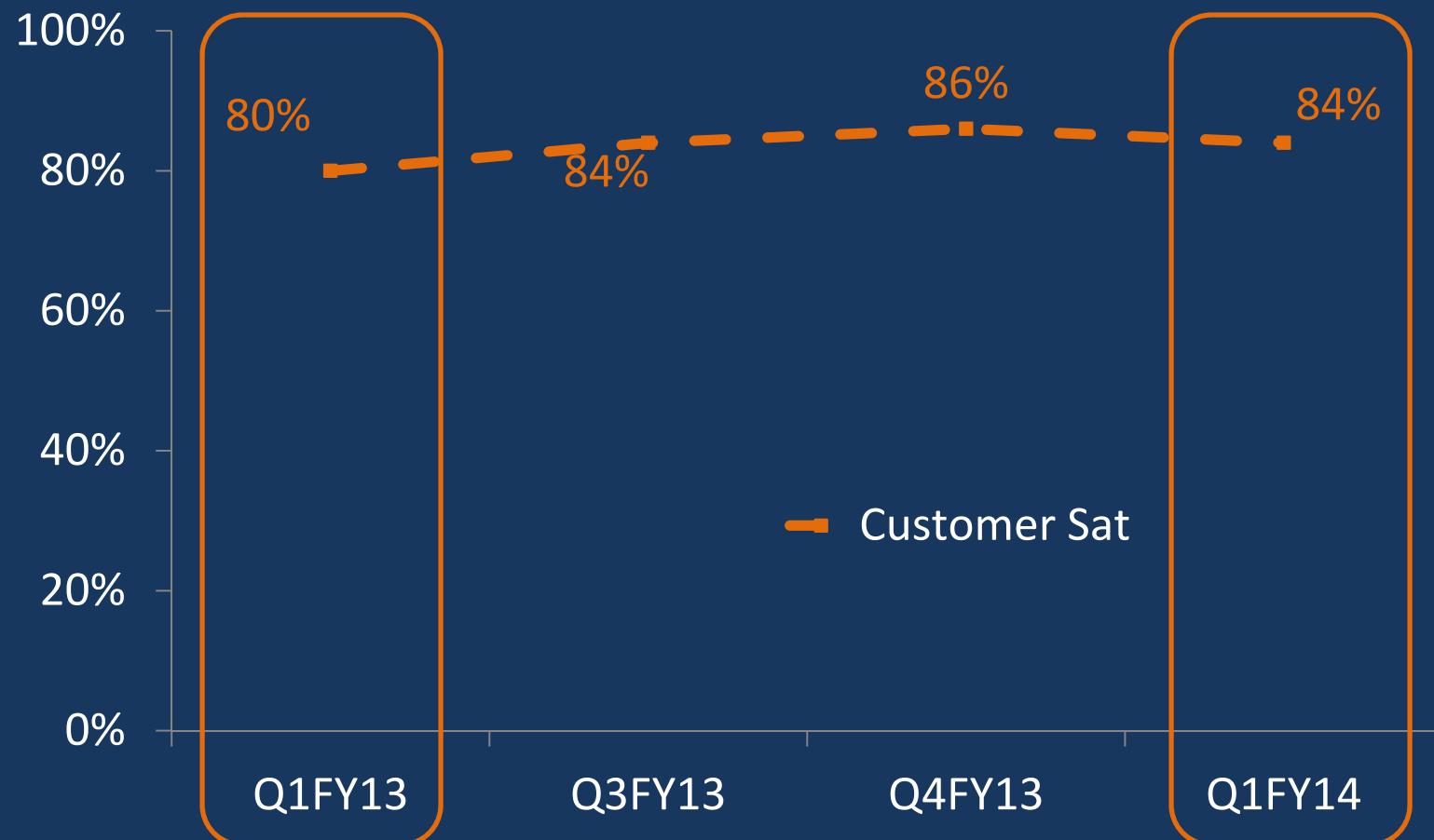


Exceeding targets for customer hold times





Rail Customer Satisfaction: Increase from Same Time Last Year-AT TARGET





Frontline Service Delivery – Improved Approachability

Station Managers: 12% of customers noted a station manager interaction

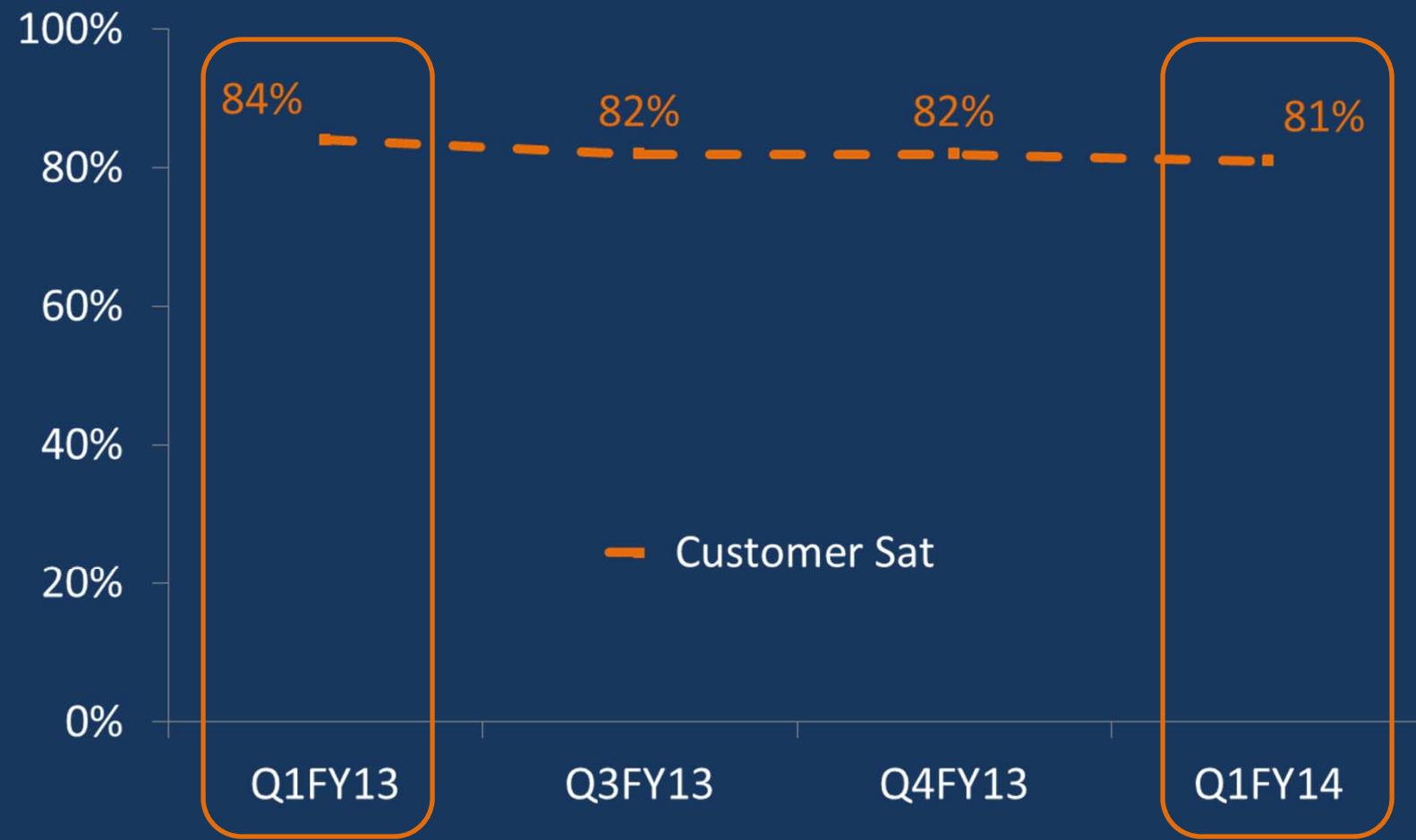
- 74% met expectations
- 14% did not meet expectations

	<u>Q1FY13</u>	<u>Q1FY14</u>	
Approachable	69%	79%	(Improve)
Knowledgeable	78%	78%	(No change)
Courteous	75%	83%	(Improve)





Bus Customer Satisfaction: Decline from Same Time Last Year





Frontline Service Delivery – No Change

Bus Drivers: 8% had an interaction with bus driver

- 75% met expectations
- 13% did not meet expectations

	<u>Q1FY13</u>	<u>Q1FY14</u>
Approachable	83%	84% (No change)
Knowledgeable	81%	90% (Increase)
Courteous	87%	90% (Increase)
Operator greeted when boarding	75%	76% (No change)





Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Customer Satisfaction

Top Two Box

Target

BUS	81%	84%
RAIL	84%	84%
METRO	59%	60%
ACCESS		



Customer Care Program

- Convene inter-departmental working group to define consistent standard across all modes
- Ensure program supports customer satisfaction KPIs

