Monitoring Services – Lessons from MVAA Service Charter Implementation

A Service Charter is a public document that notifies clients about a Ministry, Department and Agency’s (MDA) services, and outlines public rights and responsibilities, as well as relevant platforms for communicating with the MDA. It outlines Service Delivery standards through a series of commitments, entitlements, or promises, through which customers can expect and demand quality service as a right, and have their complaints addressed if services are not satisfactory. The charter describes services provided by the MDA, service pledges describing the general quality of service delivery that customers should expect, expectations to be treated by staff with openness, fairness, courtesy, and professionalism, and outlines service standards (or service delivery targets) for key aspect of a service, such as timeliness, access and accuracy. The Lagos Motor Vehicle Administration Agency (MVAA) was among the pilot MDAs to develop a Service Charter in 2012.

How did MVAA succeed?

Personal Commitment, Effective Monitoring, Effective Coordination

Following the development of its Service Charter, Service Delivery Officers (SDOs) and Service Improvement Officers (SIOs) were identified across its service windows and were introduced to the Service Charter initiative. This campaign for service improvement started with its immediate past Permanent Secretary (PS), Mr. Akin Hanson who passed the baton to the new General Manager, Mr. L. A. Lawal in August 2015. A major success factor for MVAA’s service improvement was the demonstration of commitment by the leadership of the MDA. According to the SDOs, the leadership believed in forming teams, and exhibited leadership in championing service improvement. For instance, the PS was noted for personally monitoring services independent of the monitoring teams, which helped to ensure that the clients were promptly attended to as planned. Also, effective coordination of activities helped MVAA in attaining its set objectives.

Learning, Partnerships and Innovation

MVAA has been able to achieve improved services through automation of its products and services. The agency has automated a number of services, in partnership with the private sector (banks, telecoms and IT companies), and key agencies including the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), the Vehicle Inspection Service (VIS), Lagos State Driver’s Institute and security agencies such as the Nigerian Police, Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), State Security Service (SSS) and Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA).

MVAA now has over 95 service windows known as Licensing Stations spread across the state, which has increased the number of vehicles registered. The major reason for this increase is the reduction in processing time and improved access for the
various licenses. A major improvement was also recorded in issuance of Driver’s Licenses, which was made possible through the automation of the MDA’s processes and supported by a robust database of vehicle owners, thus reducing both processing times and documentation. An unexpected backlog of uncollected permanent licenses has been experienced this year such that MVAA had to embark on publicity announcements to ask customers to pick up their licences. The backlog was experienced as a result of customers envisaging the normal long period of processing but with the improvement in the MDA’s processes and services, driver’s licences were produced much faster.

Through revision of its operations and the quest to improve access to its various services, MVAA created more jobs and eliminated the activities of touts in the various processes. MVAA was able to achieve results in this area by training, re-orienting, accrediting and registering former touts as licensing agents, once they became familiar with MVAA standards of operations.

MVAA is deeply committed to improving customer access to information. All stipulated fees are clearly and openly displayed at all service windows. This has increased trust and improved the relationship between the agency and its customers.

One Stop Centre, Oshodi
Establishment of the MVAA One-Stop Centre in Oshodi is a major achievement of the Service Improvement Plans of MVAA. The MVAA One-Stop Centre, which runs on e-commerce, is designed to provide all the services and products of the Agency from a single and highly efficient point. The centre houses all the MVAA service partners and ensures that customers are able to move seamlessly through the various transaction stages, thus saving time and improving the efficiency of the process. The trained personnel guide the users through their transactions from the screening of documents at the reception areas to the final point at every stage of the process. From this centre, customers can obtain registration forms, complete the forms, make payments, undergo other screening requirements, MVAA plans to build five additional One-Stop Centres spread across the state’s five administrative divisions.

Lessons
The lessons learned by MVAA in its journey to improve its services show the important and vital role of monitoring services. Though enhancing the competencies of staff and stakeholders helped the agency to meet customers’ expectations, monitoring compliance to service standards set the pace for better results. The stakeholders also noted that monitoring should be routine and seamless for both the operators as well as the management. Motivation of MVAA staff, partners, stakeholders (including the agents) and customers of its various services will go a long way in ensuring that these achievements are surpassed in subsequent years. Staff must be rewarded for good performance, customers must feel motivated to comply without waiting for enforcement, and partners and stakeholders must be encouraged to keep the standards set by the agency. Instituting decentralized stakeholders fora around the 95 service windows, including the One Stop Centre could provide an avenue for motivating the various stakeholders, while creating an in-road for exchange of information in its campaign for service improvement. MVAA over the years has improved in its documentation and record keeping, however, new strategies to improve the tracking of service delivery time and its feedback mechanism would help the agency to track the attainment of its service standards and key performance indicators.

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