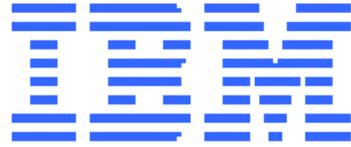


Appendix A



City of Ottawa

3-1-1 Mystery Calling Program

December 2007

Final Report

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1 Executive Summary

This report presents the overall results from a “mystery calling program” conducted by IBM's Global Business Services on behalf of the City of Ottawa during the late fall of 2007. The mystery calling program was designed in collaboration with the Office of the Auditor General to evaluate the service levels and performance of the City's 3-1-1 information service.

The goal of the program was not to evaluate the individual performance of 3-1-1 agents but rather to evaluate the customer services levels of the City's 3-1-1 service (e.g., response time, availability, appropriate language, courteousness) as well as the service outcomes (e.g., accuracy, did individuals obtain what they needed) across hours of service.

A total of one hundred calls were made to the 3-1-1 call centre (twenty-five different questions asked four times each) over a period of 4 weeks from late October to late November 2007. The calls were spread out over the call centre's hours of operation, with the majority of calls made during core hours of operation. While the ratio of calls generally reflects the current call pattern, instructions were given by the City to over-sample during non-core hours in order to be able to gauge the consistency of service across hours of operation.

Given the relatively small sample size, the results of the project are directional in nature, particularly in relation to any sub-analysis of results. These results, however, do reveal some important insights into the performance of the 3-1-1 call centre.

- There is significant room for improvement in the accuracy of the answers being provided. Overall, only 39% of responses were considered “fully correct”. While another 31% of responses were considered “partially correct”, it is of concern that the responses in 30% of the calls were incorrect.
- There are some notable differences in accuracy depending on the type of information. For example, there were no “fully correct” answers provided by agents in 7 of the 25 questions tested.
- There are a number of inconsistencies in the overall service quality and in call handling. While the overwhelming majority of calls were answered using the standard greeting (91%), it is notable that 9% were not. When it came to call closures, there was even more inconsistency with only 35% of calls ending with the standard call closing. It is also concerning that a number of agents did not initially provide their name or did not provide their correct first name.¹ Transfers were also often not made without giving callers the appropriate context (“I am transferring you to XYZ for...”). When agents could have transferred callers to frequently called numbers during core hours, they often did not and rather just gave the number with instructions to call it directly.
- Despite the inconsistencies however, the agents were seen as being professional, with only 5% of calls being assessed as lacking professionalism.

¹ While the results were not designed to examine the performance of any one agent, the names provided by the agents were still recorded by the callers in order that the type of agent could be used at the analysis stage (i.e. full-time, part-time, and casual). During the interview process, callers were either given no name or a false name in 20 of the 100 calls made.

- The reliance on the website as a resource that callers and agents can use to find additional information appears correlated with a higher level of accuracy. Calls where agents made mention of the website involved a much higher level of accuracy (79% compared to 32% where no mention was made).
- Staff type does appear to make a difference in call accuracy, although there were no consistent patterns. While full-time agents are the least likely group to have provided inaccurate answers, they were also less likely to have provided “fully correct” answers. Part-time agents were the group most likely to have provided inaccurate answers (50% of the time).

Based on the results of the mystery calling program, recommendations include:

1. Examine the issue of implementing a formal quality call monitoring program. Without one it is hard to accurately gauge if agents are following the procedures and protocols set out for them.
2. Review training practices to determine areas of weakness for the 3-1-1 call centre. Offer frequent training courses to help improve accuracy. These could be detailed foundational courses or refresher sessions on specific topics. Include learning plans as part of developmental discussions with employees if this is not already the case.
3. Use the information obtained from this program as baseline data to start building a repository of performance. Perform similar assessments (ideally using larger sample sizes²) on a regular basis to track performance and give staff a relatively quick feedback mechanism. Benchmarking is a best practice useful for long term trends analysis. The data obtained can be used to help improve city offerings as well as the performance of the 3-1-1 call centre.

² It should be recognized that unless the sample size is increased, the next iteration of mystery calling should reduce the emphasis on sampling non-core calls.

2 Introduction

The City of Ottawa's 3-1-1 call centre is intended to offer residents easy and efficient access to non-emergency municipal government services through a single three-digit number. The call centre operates 24 hours a day. "Core" hours are from 7am-7pm Monday-Saturday and "non-core" hours cover the rest of the week (i.e. 7 pm to 7 am Monday-Saturday and all day Sunday). During core hours, clients can expect to reach a 3-1-1 agent when they call with an information or service request. During non-core hours, callers receive a message asking them to call back during core hours unless it is an emergency. However, the centre is staffed during non-core hours and anecdotal evidence prior to the start of the project suggested that calls during non-core hours were sometimes answered.

The City engaged the services of IBM's Global Business Services as a neutral third party to design and implement a "mystery calling" program. The purpose of this program is not to deceive but rather to provide objective evaluations in real life situations. The use of a neutral third party reduces any perception of internal criticisms or targeting.

The mystery calling program is a variation on the well established market research technique of using "mystery shoppers" to test the service quality of client facing organizations. In this program, individuals telephoned the 3-1-1 service posing as a citizen with a specific question. It was unknown to the call centre that the client was actually a researcher collecting data about how the transaction was handled. As outlined in the methodology section within this report, the research team rated each transaction and pooled the results of all transactions to determine overall service quality

This report outlines the key findings from the mystery calling program and will serve as one input into a wider City of Ottawa 3-1-1 internal audit process. This report includes the following sections:

- **Methodology:** Describes the design of the mystery calling program, the sample used, analysis and how to interpret the data tables.
- **Key Findings:** Details the main findings of the program.
- **Conclusion:** Includes recommendations and lessons learned.
- **Annex:** Includes questions and target answers and a copy of the call schedule. Copies of the verbatim transcripts and data tables are included under separate cover in related documents.

3 Methodology

3.1 Program Design

In collaboration with the City of Ottawa, IBM Global Business Services designed a question bank of 25 questions (scenarios) and target answers. The scenarios were created from the City's data on previous call patterns to include the most commonly asked type of questions and to reflect, where possible, actual call volumes. The nature of the mystery calling program demanded that the calls be "information based" versus "service request based" (i.e. a question could ask how to book a skating rink but could not actually book one). Service request based calls would trigger an actual service request and city resources would be assigned to action the request. Thus, information based questions ensured that city resources were not assigned fictitious "service requests" because of the mystery calling program.

The ideal or target answer to each scenario was researched and reviewed in collaboration with the client project manager. Answers were developed based on City of Ottawa material (i.e. publicly available information on the City's website; information from the City of Ottawa *3-1-1 Contact Centre New Employee Training Manual*, and information provided by the client's project manager). Answers were categorized according to two levels: "essential response elements" and "additional response elements". Simply stated, the "essential response element" is the baseline for an acceptable response. The "additional response element" is that response which adds extra value and increases the overall customer service experience. Typically, additional response elements result from a call centre agent "probing" the caller to ensure they have elicited all necessary information before providing a more complete or detailed response.

In addition to designing the question and answer scenarios for each individual question, the assessment criteria for service level evaluation for every public contact point were chosen. Each scenario was evaluated according to the following standard call elements:

- Time to answer (i.e. hold time in the queue before reaching an agent);
- Call time with agent (i.e. length of time on phone with agent from start to finish);
- Language of call (i.e. was the call answered in English or French?);
- Standard Greeting and Close (as outlined in the City of Ottawa *3-1-1 Contact Centre New Employee Training Manual*);
- Permission to put on hold/Time spent on hold (as outlined in the City of Ottawa *3-1-1 Contact Centre New Employee Training Manual*);
- Professionalism/Attitude of Agent (a rating on a 3 point scale by the mystery caller);
- Accuracy of Response (i.e. provision of the "essential response elements" and "additional response elements");
- Transfer/Referrals (where applicable)
- Reference to City of Ottawa website; and
- Accuracy of Referral (where applicable).

3.2 Program Administration

The 25 scenarios were used at four different intervals/times during the month long (October 29th, 2007- November 25th, 2007) calling cycle to provide insight into the consistency of response and service levels. Based on historical call volume data, 25 of the calls were in French and 75 in English. For the purposes of the evaluation, the calling period was divided into two time periods:

1. Core hours: defined as Monday-Saturday from 7 am – 7 pm.
2. Non-core hours: defined as Monday-Saturday from 7 pm – 10 pm and all day Sunday (mystery calls were only made between the hours of 7 am – 10 pm).

17 of the 25 scenarios were only asked during core hours (4 times each for a total of 68 calls) and the remaining 8 were asked during both non-core and core hours (2 times during core hours and 2 times during non-core hours for a total of 32 calls).

The 8 questions asked in both core and non-core hours (“core/non-core” scenarios) were chosen in order to compare how call centre agents responded to the same scenario across the range of service hours. The “core/non-core” scenarios (question numbers 7, 8, 14, 16, 17, 21, 24, and 25) were selected for their suitability for asking during non-core/core hours. The proportion of these scenarios asked in non-core hours versus core hours was 16% (or 16 calls out of the 100 call that were made). This number was purposely higher than actual call volumes in order to evaluate the consistency of call handling in non-core hours (outlined as an objective by the City).

3.3 Program Analysis Approach

Using real-time notes made during each call on a data capture form, the callers transcribed the full script of each call immediately following the call's termination. The transcribed data capture form was then reviewed by the program grader and the response elements were assigned a grade of fully correct, partially correct or incorrect. As per the city's objectives, fully correct responses were those that provided all of the essential response elements (the baseline acceptable answer) while partially correct answers were those that provided some of the essential response elements. The provision of all essential response elements meant the response met the expectation for accuracy. Partially correct responses gave some correct information and certainly pointed the caller in the right direction, but as they could leave callers with incomplete or misleading information, these answers were not fully accurate.

Following review and grading, the results were inputted into a statistical software package, SPSS, for further analysis. In consultation with the client project manager, data table banners were created for SPSS which allowed comparison by call period (core versus non-core hours; language of call, etc.); by topic; and by accuracy levels. The resulting data tables, in conjunction with anecdotal qualitative data, were then used to determine the key findings in the following section of this report.

3.3.1 Weighting

Call question topics from the mystery calling program were compared against call volumes provided by the City of Ottawa for the same period. Service requests and certain types of calls, such as employee phone numbers, were excluded from the comparison. As expected, some topics were over represented while others were under represented. Additionally, a conscious decision was made to over-sample during non-core hours. Typically weighting factors would be introduced that bring the topics in the sample into alignment with the topics based on volume of calls represented. Upon further review, the decision was made not to weigh the data because a major section of the analysis focuses on service levels which are not impacted by a weighting scheme by topics. Accuracy, which would be the main criteria influenced by the weighting, fluctuated by about only 2% when the weighting was applied. Thus, when examining the individual questions by themselves, it is preferable to look at un-weighted results.

3.3.2 Margin of error

The margin of error associated with the overall results for the study is +/- 9.8% at the 95% confidence interval. Results by categories or sub-groups will have a significantly higher margin of error. Because of the small sample size/response rates across categories, it is not possible to make a strong statistically definitive statement concerning the differences between categories. As such, results by sub-groups should be interpreted as informative and pointing in the right direction.

Nonetheless, the results of the program are informative. While sample sizes are not large enough to support definitive statements, consideration of the areas where results did not meet expectations is still valuable and warrant investigation. Additionally, this study is not a typical public opinion survey, but rather a survey designed to be administered within a controlled measurement framework. Questions were pre-selected, a script was followed, and callers were trained in a consistent way. Thus if results indicate 91% provided the standard greeting, although this may not pass a rigid statistical significance test, the fact is that 9% did not provide a standard greeting. And this was experienced by callers. Thus the results indicate areas where improvements are possible.

4 Key Findings

Key findings have been grouped according to accuracy, service quality, hour of call (“core/non-core” scenarios) and staff type. Within these categories, data was analyzed to gain deeper insights into trends and potential training opportunities. Note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

In all, calls were answered 87 times out of 100.

Table 1: Calls made versus calls answered

	Total	Core hours	Non-core hours
Calls made	100	84 ³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 during weekdays • 14 during the weekend 	16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 during weekdays • 6 on the weekends)
Calls answered	87	83	4
Calls not answered	13	1	12

In the 13 instances where no answer was given, the caller was either unable to reach an agent (for example, they were calling during non-core hours and received an automated message asking them to call back during regular business hours), or they reached an agent but were asked to call back during regular business hours. Calls not answered were not graded for accuracy; therefore the analysis of accuracy is based on 87 responses.

The number of non-core calls was purposely over sampled in order to understand if calls during non-core hours were handled consistently.

4.1 Accuracy

Accuracy was determined by three levels: “fully correct” answers; “partially correct” answers; and “incorrect” answers. “Fully correct” answers were those in which the agent gave all of the essential response elements. “Partially correct” answers contained only parts of the essential response elements. In these cases, the answer was correct but incomplete. “Incorrect” answers contained none of the essential response elements.

Accuracy rates include only those questions for which a response was received.

Overall, fully correct responses were given 39% of the time during the calling period. The number answered correctly increases to 70% if “partially correct” responses are included. Incorrect responses accounted for 30% of total responses given. The high inaccuracy rates suggest opportunities for “refresher” training in both city related subject matter and in “customer friendly” transfer/referral procedures. For example, callers inquiring about public skating times should certainly be provided with the direct number to access that information for future reference, but they should also be given the skating information they request during the call; not

³ In one instance, during core hours of operation on a Saturday, a caller reached an agent who indicated they were having “technical difficulties” and asked the caller to call back during the weekday.

simply directed to another number. While call handling metrics are critical, it is important that they be balanced against what makes sense from the client's perspective.

4.1.1 Question Topics

The table below shows accuracy levels by question.

Table 2: Accuracy by question

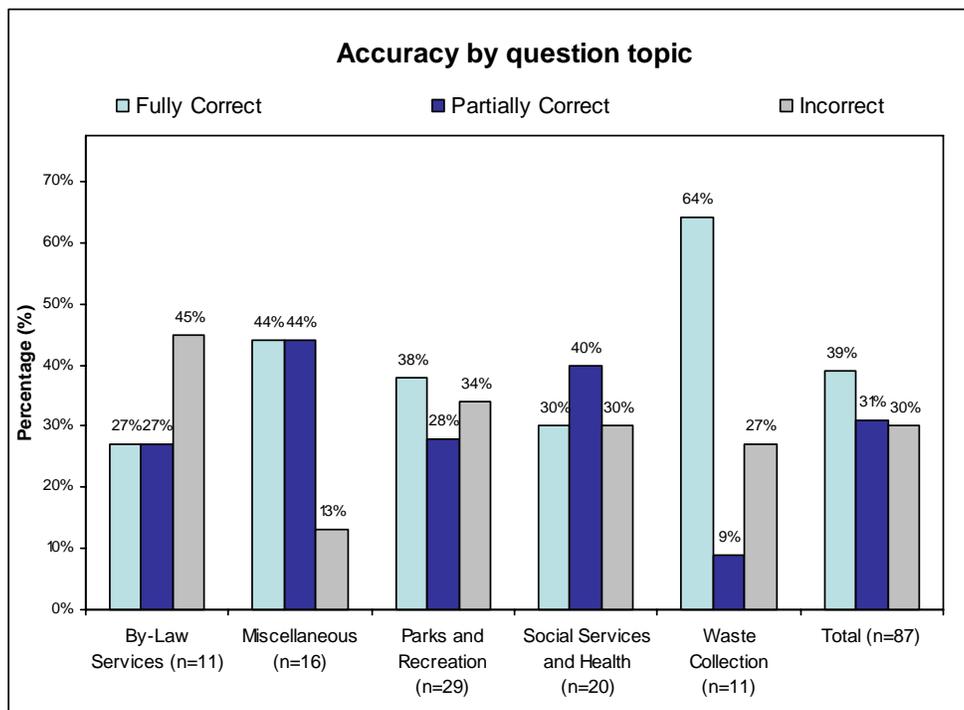
ACCURACY BY QUESTION	
100% Accuracy rate (Fully correct answer every time question was asked)	75% Accuracy rate (Fully correct answer three times out of four)
Q4: How much is a marriage license and how do I get one? Q16: Put a freezer I am throwing out to the curb? Q24: On assistance and wants to sign child up for programs.	Q9: Where is the nearest public swim? Q11: What do I have to do to get a birth certificate ?
67% Accuracy rate (Fully correct answer two times out of three)	50% Accuracy rate (Fully correct answer two times out of four)
Q17: New to Ottawa. Is there a composting program here? Q21: What types of plastics are acceptable for recycling?	Q6: Honour my grandfather and perhaps plant a tree in his name. Q10: Where can I cross-country ski without going to Gatineau? Q14: I want to hold a flu vaccine clinic for my employees. Q18: How do I file a complaint against the City? Q22: I am selling my house. Is there anything needed by the City?
33% Accuracy rate (Fully correct answer one time out of three)	25% Accuracy rate (Fully correct answer one time out of four)
Q1: I want to put a pool in. How tall does my fence need to be? Q8: I am organizing a hockey game, can I rent ice?	Q2: Hi, do I need to register my cat? Q3: Permit for Christmas party, which prevents noise complaint. Q5: When and where can I take my kids to a public skate? Q20: What facilities are there for my son's party?
0% Accuracy rate (Never obtained a Fully correct answer)	
Q7: Can I walk my dog in the park after dark off leash? Q12: What are my childcare options? Q13: Tell me of any assisted living facilities in the city? Q15: When is the next Baby Wellness clinic? Q19: Can you tell me the cheapest playgroups in my area? Q23: Could I speak to building permits please? Q25: Want to run a soccer program for kids on City fields.	

The accuracy results by question can be a source of valuable information to those who design the 3-1-1 call centre's training programs and knowledge base. For example, 7 questions were not answered "fully correct" every time they were asked. This may indicate training gaps within the training program or its coverage, or that the information was not readily accessible.

However, when looking at the 12 questions that were fully accurate at least 50% of the time, this indicates that the training is on the right track and perhaps refresher courses on key aspects would be an appropriate course of action.

When grouped according to broad topic categories, questions relating to by-law services, social services and health scored below average on accuracy. Questions on waste collection or miscellaneous topics (questions 4, 5, 22 and 23) scored above average. The table below shows accuracy by question topic.

Table 3: Accuracy by question topic⁴

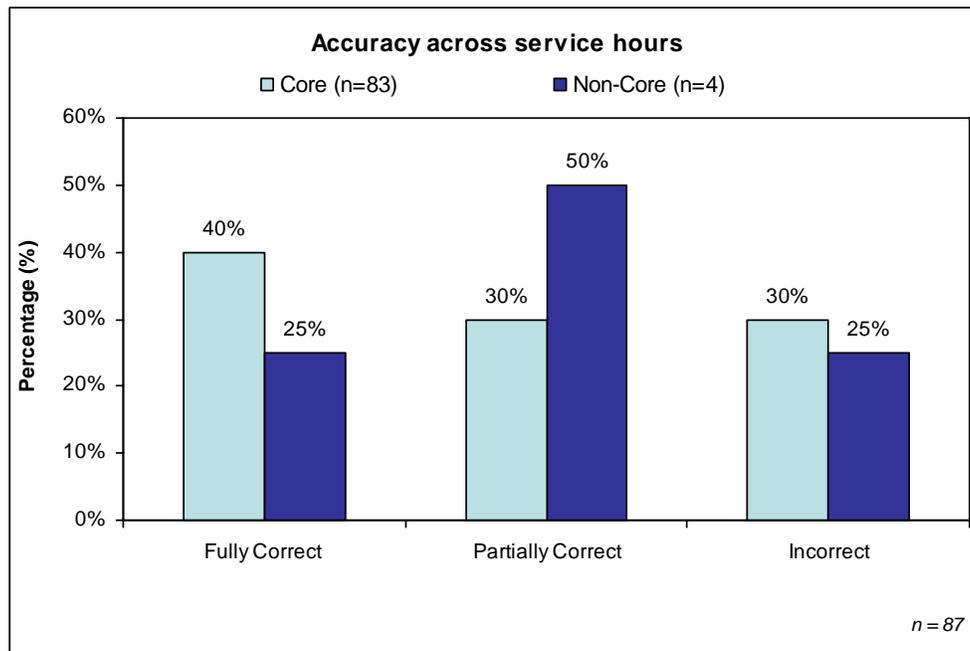


4.1.2 Service hours

In contrast, the overall accuracy rates show an interesting difference when viewed across hours of service. Calls during core hours were more likely to be fully correct than during non-core hours (40% versus 25%). However, these results should be interpreted with a degree of caution given the small sample size (n=4 non-core calls).

⁴ Results may not add up to a 100% due to rounding.

Table 4: Accuracy across service hours



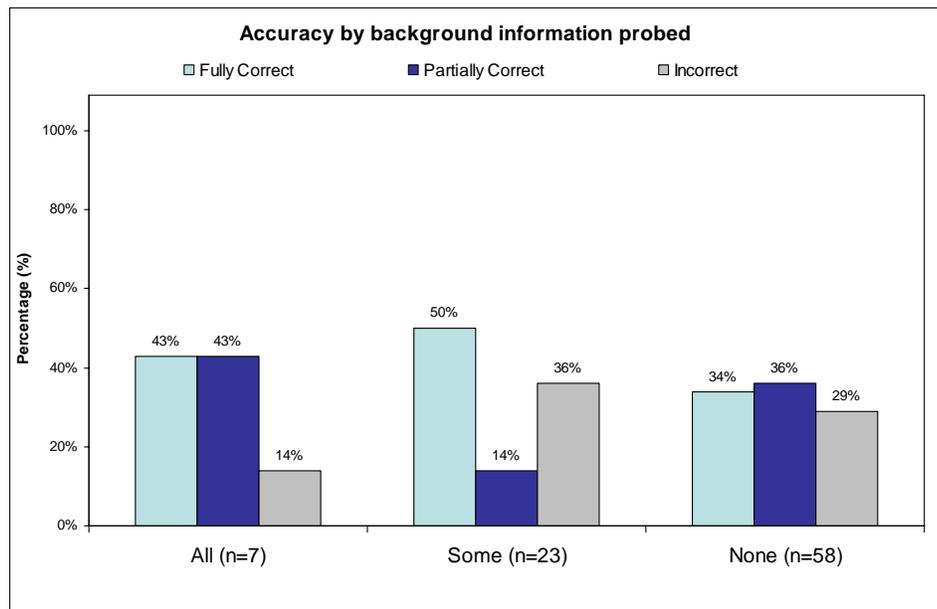
4.1.3 Call Characteristics

As expected, accuracy rates were affected by probing; provision of additional response elements; call transfer rates and use of the “hold” feature. For example:

- While almost one-third of agents did probe for background information (n=29), most agents did not probe the caller before answering the question (67%, n=58).
- In cases where the agent probed for all background elements before answering (n=7), 43% of answers were considered fully correct.
- In cases where the agent probed for some background elements before answering (n=23), 50% of responses were fully correct.
- When agents probed for some or all background elements (n=7+23 for a total of n=30) the fully correct response rate is 48%, a 14% point increase in accuracy over responses where no probing (n=58, 34%) occurred.

Taking time to probe and ask questions of the caller to gain a better understanding appears to have a positive influence on the accuracy rate.

Table 5: Accuracy by background information probed



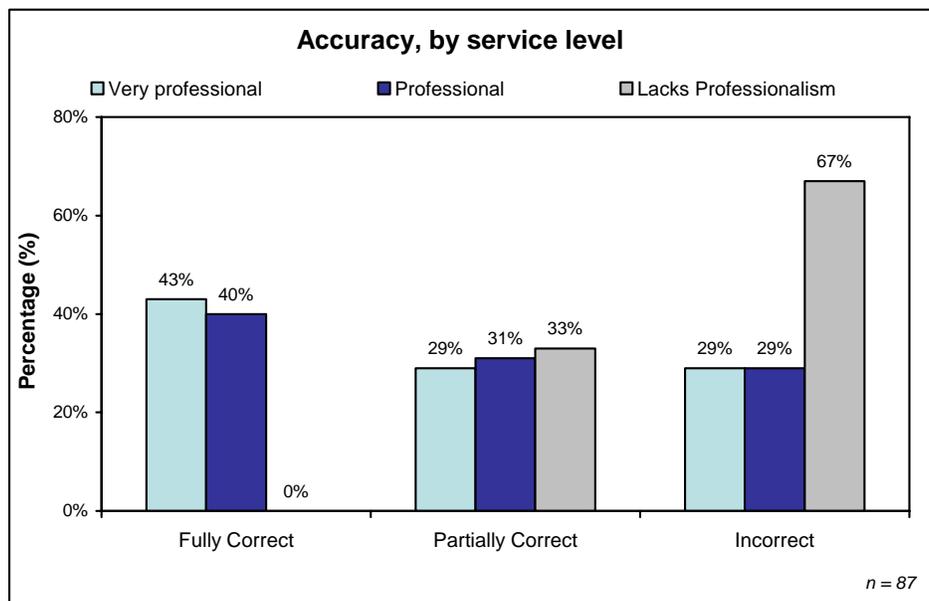
- Those calls where the agents referenced the city’s website demonstrated much higher accuracy rates (fully correct responses) than those that made no mention of the website (79% versus 32%). Referencing the website should be encouraged as it not only offers benefits in terms of accuracy but also educates callers about other avenues to access information in the future.
- Twenty-nine calls were transferred in total. Thirty-four percent (34%) of these transferred calls were graded as incorrect. When calls were transferred, they were sometimes transferred to the wrong area; were given a “cold” transfer⁵; or were simply given the new number and asked to call back themselves.
- The hold feature was not used often by call centre agents (n=10). However, callers reported instances where agents conducted research on the line versus putting the caller on-hold. This is not a generally accepted best practice. In those few cases where the hold feature was used, agents were less likely to provide an incorrect answer (20% incorrect using hold versus 31% incorrect without using).
- Fully correct responses were received in 42% of English language scenarios and in 30% of French language scenarios. However, 30% of English language scenarios were rated as partially correct versus 35% for French language scenarios.

⁵ As outlined in the “3-1-1 Contact Centre New Employee Training Manual”, “warm transfers” are preferred whenever possible to “cold transfers”. Cold transfers occur when callers are simply transferred to another number without the agent staying on the line to make sure the transfer is appropriate and completed to the caller’s satisfaction (warm transfer). In cases where the transfer is to a voicemail, agents are advised to inform the caller of this fact in advance .

4.1.4 Professionalism

Not surprisingly, professional service levels positively impacted accuracy. For calls where an answer was provided and the caller considered the service to be lacking in professionalism, inaccuracy rates were higher (67% and n=3). Calls with professional or very professional service levels were more likely to be accurate.

Table 6: Accuracy, by service level



4.2 Service Quality

As illustrated in the previous section, one measure of quality service in a call centre environment is accuracy of response provided. But service quality is also measured by what is commonly referred to as the “caller experience”. Caller experience can be defined by a number of elements that together create a positive, negative or simply unremarkable experience for the caller. These elements include:

1. Use of standard greetings and closings. (Consistent greetings and closing statements are opportunities to showcase professionalism and strengthen corporate branding).
2. Agent self-identification (Agents can identify either by name or another type of identifier).
3. Use of hold feature. (Inevitably situations will arise where placing callers on hold is unavoidable. However, the use of industry best practices on hold management addresses this aspect of the call experience that can be frustrating for callers⁶).
4. Use of transfers/referrals. (Inaccurate referrals impact citizen perceptions of call centre competencies and increase service costs through unnecessary repeat calls.).

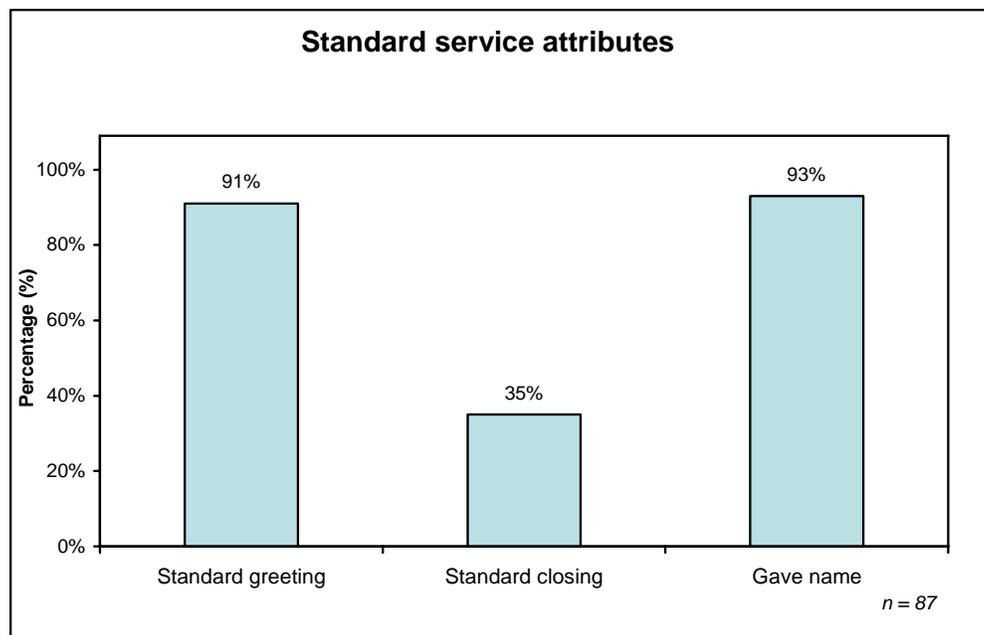
⁶ For example, is permission asked before a caller is placed on hold? How long are callers left on hold before the agent checks back in? Are callers thanked for holding? How holds are comparatively used can also provide insight into agent knowledge and familiarity with subject matter.

5. Overall level of professionalism. Assessing professionalism can often be a more subjective evaluation. To add more precision, a 3 point rating scale was developed to help callers assess the professionalism of the agent during the call⁷.

According to the City's 3-1-1 training manual, there are procedures in place to govern many of the elements listed above⁸. In some cases, it is clear that these procedures are being followed, while in others, the procedures are being applied less consistently.

For example, in the table below agents provided a standard greeting in 91% of cases but only 35% of cases had a standard closing (see table below). Both elements are clearly outlined as part of standard call handling procedures in the 3-1-1 call centre⁹. In 93% of cases, agents identified themselves with a name (although not all of these names could be associated with an actual agent).

Table 7: Standard service attributes



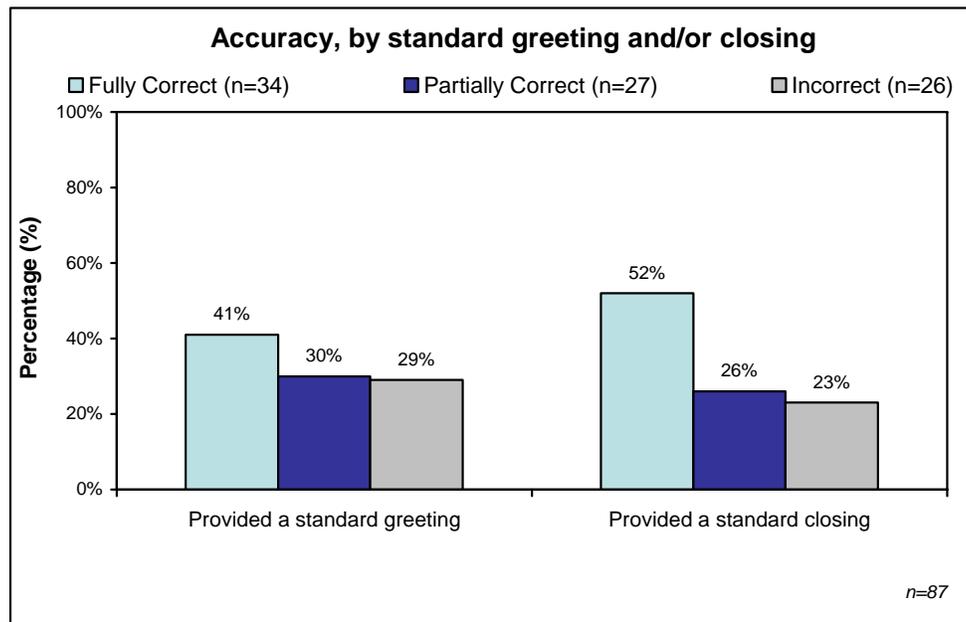
The table below shows that accuracy rates in cases where a standard greeting was provided are similar to the overall accuracy rates (41% fully correct versus 39%). However, cases where standard closings were provided showed slightly higher accuracy ratings (52% fully correct versus 39%).

⁷ The scale provided guidelines for evaluating a number of criteria (i.e. greeting/closing, tone, pronunciation/language; conversation, etc.). Callers were advised to consider the call in light of each criterion and the overall "sense of the call" in order to determine professionalism. (For example, was the call technically correct with respect to the different criteria but the caller was left feeling rushed?).

⁸ City of Ottawa "3-1-1 Contact Centre New Employee Training Program Manual Modules 4", call handling procedures, page 5.

⁹ City of Ottawa "3-1-1 Contact Centre New Employee Training Program Manual Modules 4", page 22.

Table 8: Accuracy by standard greeting and/or closing



4.2.1 Originating Language of Call

Another indicator of service quality is whether or not calls are answered in the language in which the call originated. Most calls (93%) were immediately answered in the language originally specified by the client (French or English). However, it is of concern that 7% did not answer in the specified language, especially when the callers have to select their preferred language before their call is answered.

4.2.2 Call Length

While call length can sometimes be an indicator of call quality, no clear trends emerged with respect to call length and accuracy or call length and service quality. Eighty-three percent (83%) of calls were 4 minutes or less while 6% (n=5) were 7 minutes or more.

4.2.3 Hold

Although the incidence of agents using the hold feature was minimal (11% of calls (n=10) were placed on hold), this is not necessarily representative of whether or not agents checked references or researched an answer. Several callers anecdotally reported that agents conducted research while they were online with the call, without placing the caller on hold.

However, for those 11% of calls that were placed on hold, the majority of callers (80%) were kept on hold for 2 minutes or less. Although asking permission to put on hold seems not to be done systematically by any of the staff types, for those callers who were placed on hold, 60% were asked permission and 40% were thanked for holding. Finally, as noted in the previous

section, although the hold feature was not used frequently and the sample size was small, the results suggest that those agents who used it were more likely to provide a correct (fully correct and partially correct) answer (80%) than those who did not (69%).

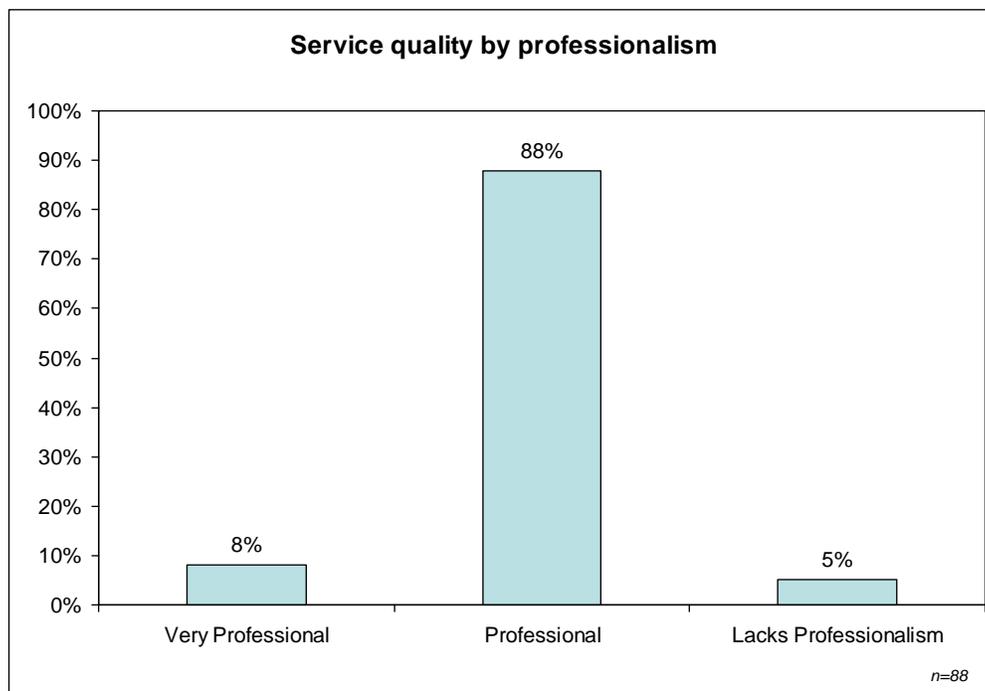
4.2.4 Transfers/Referrals

One third of calls were transferred or referred (n=29). Of this number, 34% were incorrect (transferred to the wrong place or transferred when the call subject matter was within the expected knowledge domain of 3-1-1 agents). Additionally, no transfers were “warm transfers”. In some cases, callers were not even transferred directly during core hours but rather were given the number and advised to call directly themselves (e.g. question 8 week 2; question 13 weeks 1 and 4; question 14 week 1; question 15 week 4).

4.2.5 Professionalism

Finally, professionalism is another determinant of service quality. As demonstrated in the table below, only a small percentage (n=4) was considered to lack professionalism. In those cases, the caller considered the call to be unpleasant in nature and/or the agent to be unhelpful (e.g. question 1 week 1; question 6 week 1; question 17 week 2; question 12 week 3). In the 4 cases where the agent was determined by the caller to be unprofessional, 2 of the responses provided were incorrect, 1 response was partially correct, and in 1 case a response was not provided.

Table 9: Service quality by professionalism



4.3 “Core / Non-Core” Scenarios

A sub-segment of scenarios was chosen in order to provide insight into how call centre agents responded to the same scenario across hours of service. Scenarios were chosen based on their suitability for asking during both non-core/core hours. A total of eight scenarios were chosen:

- Question 7 (walking dog off leash after dark),
- Question 8 (ice rental),
- Question 14 (flu vaccine clinic),
- Question 16 (disposal of freezer),
- Question 17 (composting program),
- Question 21 (acceptable plastics for recycling),
- Question 24 (child programs while on assistance), and
- Question 25 (running a soccer program on city fields).

These were asked 4 times each (two times during core hours and two times during non-core hours) for a total of 32 calls (24 English and 8 French). A large number of non-core calls were not answered (callers either reached a recording asking them to call back during core hours, or were asked by the answering agent to call back during core hours). While the small response rate for the calls made in non-core hours makes it difficult to draw any strong statistical conclusions below, what is of note is that the non-core calls were not treated consistently.

Citizens should expect to either be able to consistently reach an agent during non-core hours when they call or to consistently reach a recording asking them to call back unless it is an emergency. Anything else is an inconsistent service experience for the caller.

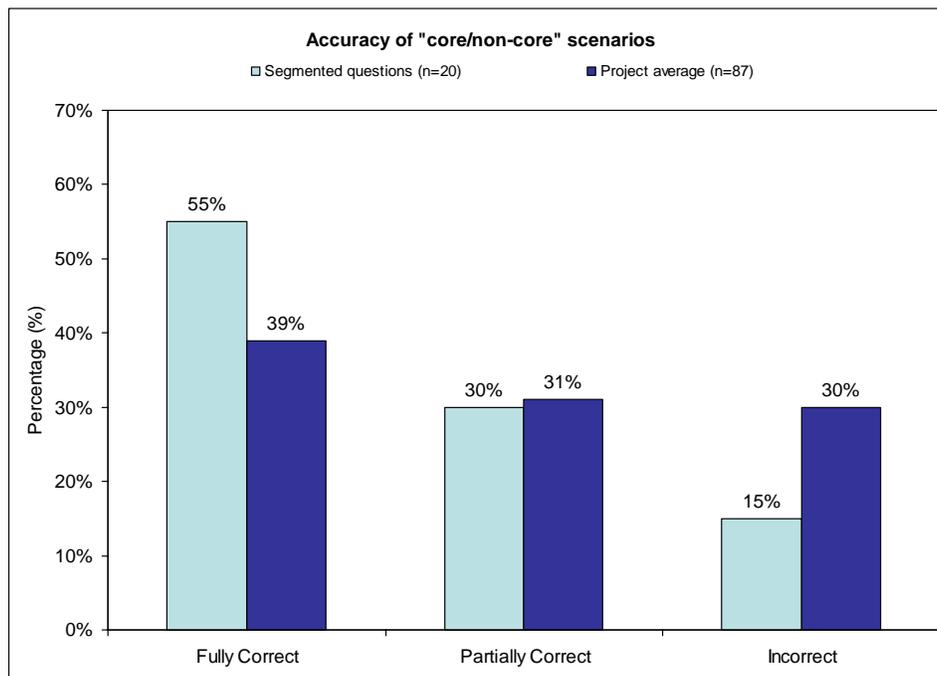
Table 10: “Core/Non-Core” calls made versus calls answered

	Total	Core hours	Non-core hours
Calls made	32	16	16
Calls answered	20	16	4

4.3.1 Accuracy

As shown in the table below, the accuracy results from the “core/non-core” questions are dissimilar to overall accuracy rates because agents performed better, as a general rule, on the questions chosen for this sub-segment.

Table 11: Accuracy of “core/non-core” questions



Other findings include:

- Given the sample size (English n=16 and French n=4), caution should be used in comparing accuracy rates between those “core/non-core” scenarios asked in English versus those asked in French. Sixty-three (63) percent of “core/non-core” English language questions were considered fully correct and 25% of French. For the program as a whole, this number was 42% (English) and 30% (French).
- 10% of agents answering the “core/non-core” scenarios mentioned the City of Ottawa website compared to 16% of agents overall.
- 25% of agents answering the “core/non-core” scenarios probed for some or all background elements versus 34% overall.
- 85% of agents did not provide additional response elements for “core/non-core” scenarios versus 77% who did not for the overall results.

4.3.2 Service Quality

Service quality for “core/non-core scenarios” was similar to the overall project results. For example:

- Referrals of “core/non-core” scenarios were consistent with the overall results (35% versus 33%). Similarly, these transfers were always “cold”.
- Agents answering “core/non-core” scenarios used hold slightly less (15%) than the overall results (20%). Again, anecdotal evidence suggests that agents did do research while on the phone with the callers, thus avoiding the use of hold.

4.4 Staffing Type

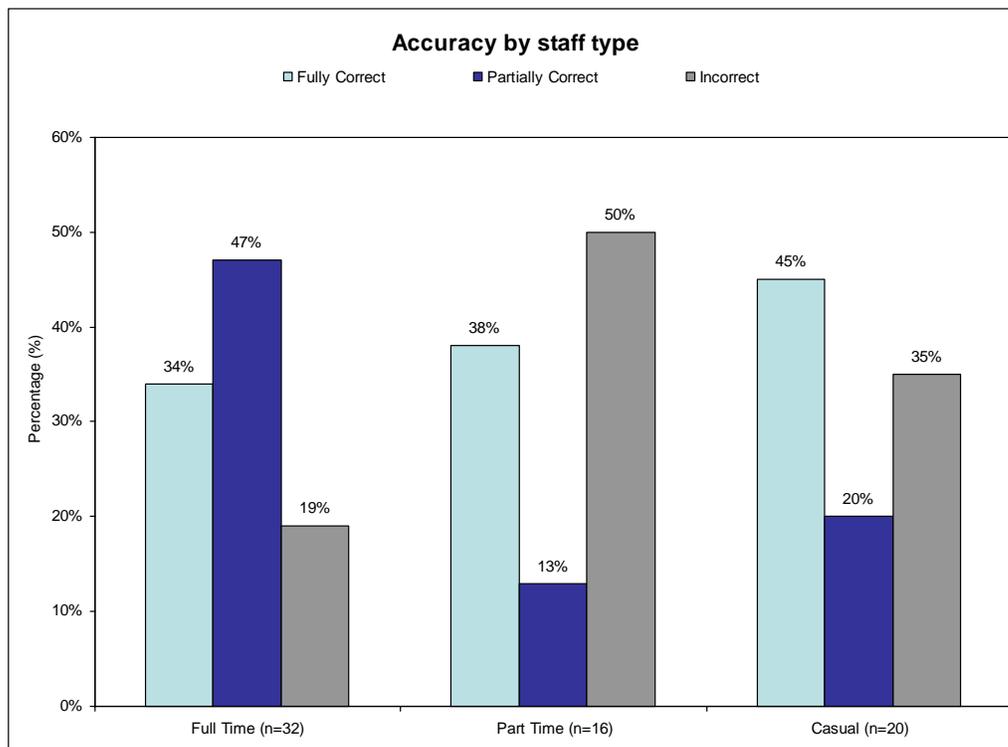
Where possible, agent names were tracked during the mystery calling program to enable responses to be aggregated according to staff type (part-time, full-time and casual staff). The goal was not to identify individual agents or their performances but rather to understand possible training implications or operational requirements for different staff categories.

In a number of cases (n=20), the agent names provided were not able to be linked to a staff category (i.e. no name provided or a false name given¹⁰).

4.4.1 Accuracy

As illustrated in the table below, casual staff (n=20) was most likely to provide a fully correct answer followed by part-time staff (n=16) and then full-time staff (n=32). However, when fully correct and partially correct responses were combined, full-time staff was the most accurate group with 81% accuracy (and by extension, this group was less likely to provide an incorrect response). At 50%, part-time staff (n=16) had the highest number of incorrect responses.

Table 12: Accuracy by staff type



As noted earlier, in 20 instances agents failed to provide their name or gave a false name. In these cases, staff type could not be ascertained. Thus total n=68 for this table.

¹⁰ During calls, callers asked for the agent's name if it was not provided. Following the completion of the calling period, the City provided an agent schedule against which the provided names were matched where possible. Matched names were then associated with staff categories to determine if there were training requirements for specific groups.

4.4.2 Service Quality

In terms of standard greetings and closing, most staff groups were in line with the program average (91% standard greetings and 35% standard closings provided).

Table 13: Standard greetings and closings

Staff Type	Percentage that provided standard greeting	Percentage that provided standard closing
Full-time	91%	28%
Part-time	88%	38%
Casual	95%	35%

As noted earlier in the report, the incidence of “hold” functionality during calls was low and there are not any clear patterns amongst staff types. As such, it is hard to draw any strong conclusions.

Part-time staff was more likely to transfer or refer calls (50%), then casual staff (30%), and full-time staff (22%). The overall average for transfers was 33%. And, as noted earlier, all transfers were “cold”.

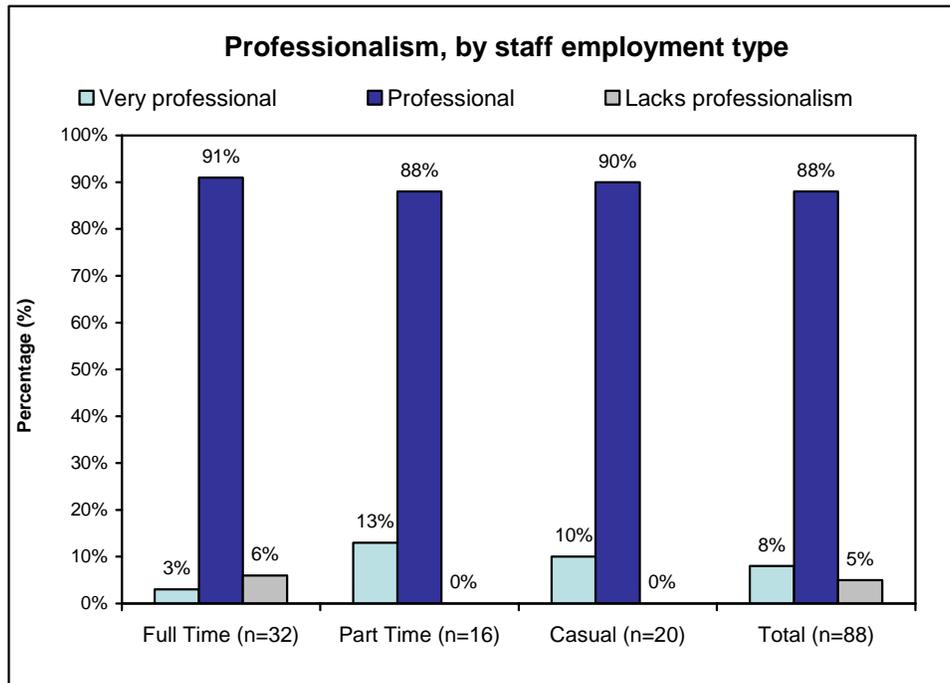
As there was no clear trend with respect to call length and accuracy or call length and service quality, it is not possible to report on these factors by staff type.

The table below shows professionalism by staff employment type/category as well as overall levels. In most cases, callers considered agents to be professional. There was no correlation found between staff type and professionalism.

As noted previously, in 20 instances agents failed to provide their name or gave a false name and thus staff type could not be ascertained. In those scenarios where agents could not be identified; 10% were considered very professional; 80% were considered professional and 10% were considered unprofessional.

Note that overall, only 5% of calls were considered unprofessional.

Table 14: Professionalism by staff employment type



5 Conclusions

In all research projects there is a trade-off between sample size and budget constraints. This is to be expected and this project was not an exception. This was the first time for the project and, while moving forward larger sample sizes would be ideal to get a bigger results base for analysis, the results obtained by this study provide valuable direction with respect to accuracy and service quality. As an independent assessment of the quality of responses (and not an evaluation of individual performance), the results revealed some interesting insights into the performance of the 3-1-1 call centre.

5.1 Accuracy

Overall accuracy rates were low - 39% of responses were considered fully correct. Although this number increased to 70% when partially correct answers were included, partially correct answers only point callers in the right direction. From a cost and efficiency perspective, as well as a customer service perspective, this is not sufficient.

Callers only received a fully correct answer 100% of the time for three questions out of twenty-five. For seven of the questions out of twenty-five, callers never received a fully correct answer (Table 2). There is clearly room for improvement.

Although staff type does appear to make a difference in call accuracy, no consistent patterns emerged in this project. The casual staff category was most likely to provide a fully correct answer followed by the part-time staff category and the full-time staff category. However, the full-time staff category had the lowest incorrect rates of all staff categories (or the highest combined rate for fully and partially correct answers), and was less likely (19%) to give an incorrect response than the overall average (30%).

There appears to be a correlation between referencing the City's website and accuracy. Those calls where the agents referenced the city's website were more likely to provide fully correct responses than those that made no mention of the website (79% versus 32%). Providing references builds credibility with callers and also provides an opportunity to educate them on alternative (and more cost effective) information resources in the future.

Although results hinted that probing helps reduce inaccuracy, the correlation was not as strong as expected (14% points increase in fully correct responses). What was clear was that probing of calls by 3-1-1 agents is limited overall.

Although calls during core hours were more likely to be correct than non-core hours, the correlation between accuracy and hours of service can only be considered directional at this point given the small sample size of non-core calls (n=4) in the "core/non-core scenarios". However, once the city implements a formal quality call monitoring program, it is an area worthy of further investigation.

5.2 Service Quality

Agents answered 93% of calls in the language of the originating call. Given the centre is a bilingual service, this is an important point. Anything less than 100% should not be acceptable given the current menu selection.

Although the 3-1-1 call centre has procedures in place for call handling (everything from holds to transfers to how callers should be greeted and terminated), the results of the project indicate these procedures are inconsistently applied. For example, why did only 93% of agents give their names? (Some callers had to be prompted to provide a name.) Why did agents give false names during 20/100 calls? Why did only 35% of agents use the standard closing statement? Inconsistent application of these procedures results in unpredictable service experiences for callers.

Another area where procedure was not followed consistently was the use of transfers and referrals. While not desirable, it is understandable that some transfers may have been “cold” because of high call volumes. However, results from the project show that all transfers/referrals were cold. Further, some agents did not transfer callers to the correct number required but rather provided the number and asked callers to call the number directly. This suggests a training gap, or that transfers as a metric are not desirable. (Metrics are crucial in call centre environments but they must be “caller friendly”). As a group, part-time staff transferred more than any other staff category. This too may suggest a training gap (lack of knowledge or discomfort with the material or how to access it).

Despite these inconsistencies, agents were ranked as generally professional. Only 5% of calls were rated as lacking in professionalism.

Finally, a segment of the mystery calling program was designed to test the consistency of service in core hours versus non-core hours. While many calls were not answered in non-core hours (n=12), some were (n=4). Additionally, some Saturday calls (considered core hours of service) were answered by agents who subsequently asked the caller to call back during the week. In both of these situations, the caller experience is inconsistent and this can lead to dissatisfied clients and a perception that the call centre is unreliable.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of the mystery calling program, recommendations include:

- Examine the issue of implementing a formal quality call monitoring program. Without one it is hard to accurately assess if agents are following the procedures and protocols as defined by the 3-1-1 call centre.
- Review training practices to determine areas of weakness. Offer frequent training courses to help improve accuracy. These could be detailed foundational courses or refresher sessions on specific topics. If it is not already practice, include learning plans as part of developmental discussions with employees.

- Use the information obtained from this program as baseline data to start building a repository of performance. Perform similar assessments (ideally using larger sample sizes¹¹) on a regular basis to track performance and give staff a relatively quick feedback mechanism to help improve performance. Benchmarking is a best practice useful for long term trends analysis. The data obtained can be used to help improve city offerings as well as the performance of the 3-1-1 call centre.

¹¹ It should be recognized that unless the sample size is increased, the next iteration of mystery calling should reduce the emphasis on sampling non-core calls.

6 Annex

6.1 Call Schedule

The following table outlines the call schedule for the evaluation period. Numbers/letters in italicized red font denote questions where the call was made in French. Non-core hours were defined as Monday-Saturday from 7pm-10pm and Sunday from 7am-10pm.

Table A: Question Calling Schedule for October 29th, 2007 – November 25th, 2007

Legend

	Non-core
Week #	A, B, C, D
1	16, 08, <i>24</i> , 25
2	21, 14, 17, 24
3	<i>17</i> , 07, 21, <i>14</i>
4	07, 25, <i>16</i> , 08

Week #	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.
1	<i>06</i> ,11,19,	02,07,20,22	<i>03</i> ,13,18, <i>A</i>	<i>04</i> ,09,14, <i>B</i>	10,15,17, <i>05</i>	<i>01</i> ,12,21,23	<i>C,D</i>
2	<i>07</i> ,18,23, <i>A</i>	01, <i>08</i> ,19, <i>B</i>	<i>09</i> ,11,20,25	<i>10</i> ,12,16,05	04,13, <i>22</i> , <i>C</i>	<i>02</i> ,03,06,15, <i>D</i>	
3	HOLIDAY	05,09, <i>13</i> ,16, <i>B</i> , 04, 08, <i>12</i> , <i>A</i>	01,02,22,19, <i>C</i>	06, <i>15</i> ,18,23	03, <i>11</i> ,20	10,24, <i>25</i> , <i>D</i>	
4	03,15,17,22	04,10,11, <i>23</i>	06,12, <i>19</i> ,24	01,13, <i>20</i> , <i>A</i>	02,14, <i>21</i> , <i>B</i>	05,09, <i>18</i>	<i>C,D</i>

6.2 Questions and Target Answers

This section contains the questions asked during the mystery calling program and the targeted answers against which agents' responses were measured. The questions and targeted answers were designed in collaboration with the client project manager. Following the completion of each week's calls, the responses were reviewed and graded by the project team. At the end of the calling program, the results were reviewed in their entirety with the client project manager and adjustments made where appropriate to ensure a consistent approach.

Details on the data capture form and measurement criteria can be found in the final "3-1-1 Mystery Calling Program Research Design Report" (October 2008). The verbatim transcripts can be found in the "3-1-1 Mystery Calling Program Annex-Verbatim Transcripts" (December 2008).

Table B: Questions and Target Answers

Q	Text of question	Essential background elements	Essential Response Elements	Additional Response Elements	References/ Notes
1	I just bought a house and want to put a pool in our yard next year. How tall does my fence need to be?	In-ground pool Orleans	Minimum of 5 feet high and maximum height of 7 feet	Fence must be close-boarded, chain link or other approved design, to reasonably deter children from climbing it to gain access to the fenced-in area. Advise that a permit is required and that there is a \$150 fee. Gates in fence surrounding pool must be equipped with a self-closing and latching device located at the top and inside of the gate, and be lockable.	http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/bylaws/a_z/pool_enclosures/index_en.html
2	Hi, do I need to register my cat?	It's old and becoming more housebound but still goes outside occasionally.	Yes, must ensure that it wears numbered metal tag provided through registration service, especially when it is outdoors.	Tags expire each year on April 30. Must be renewed before hand. Can get registration form from client services locations, certain retailers or vets. Probe to determine cost estimate for client (cost varies depending if pet sterilized or has microchip). Need to provide proof of sterilization and micro-chipping	http://ottawa.ca/residents/animal_care/cats_dogs/registration/index_en.html
3	I have a big Christmas party at my house every year and there have been some complaints about noise in the past. Someone told me I could get a permit for a night that would make it okay. Do you know anything about this?	Party is inside on a Saturday night. Complaints in past due to live band playing music etc. Live in a single detached home in a residential neighbourhood and not a townhouse or condo.	Normally by-law states no excessive noise after 11 pm. However, you can apply for a noise by-law exemption if the event is deemed a special event (i.e. noise up to 1 am). The application must be made in writing to the Director of By-law Services sixty (60) days prior to the special event. Application fee of \$50. Inspection/monitoring fee of \$60.	Application needs to contain following details: name and address of applicant and organization represented; Source of the sound or vibration in respect of which the exemption is sought; Provision of Noise By-law from which the exemption is sought: start/end date and time of event; duration for which permit sought; location; rationale; contact number and name of person supervising event. Plus you may be required to provide proof you have notified affected parties. Forward the completed application request to: Director, By-law Services, 110 Laurier Avenue West, 1st floor Heritage Building, Ottawa, ON, K1P 1J1. Mail code 01-22	http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/bylaws/a_z/noise/exemption_en.html http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/bylaws/a_z/noise/index_en.html Noise By-law BY-LAW NO. 2004-253
4	How much is a marriage license and how do I get one?	Getting married in two weeks. One party is divorced.	Cost is \$140. You have to fill out an application and bring it to any CS location. You will need to bring two pieces of original ID.	ID can be birth certificate or valid passport or Canadian citizenship card or record of immigrant landing AND one piece of government issued photo ID. If under 21, you must show birth certificate. Under 16-17 requires parental consent. If you are divorced, you will need to provide original or a court-certified copy of your certificate of divorce, or a final decree or final judgment.	http://ottawa.ca/residents/permits/marriage/index_en.html
5	Can you tell me when and where I can take my kids to a public skate?	Live in Orleans.	Skating sessions are available for family skates and public skates (any of the following are correct):	For family skates, children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. For general public skates fees are as follows: Free for children 2 and under; \$1 for children 2-4; \$2 for children under 17 and adults up to 65; \$5.95 for 2 children and 2 adults	http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/skating/index_en.html http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks

Q	Text of question	Essential background elements	Essential Response Elements	Additional Response Elements	References/ Notes
			<p>Option 1: Bob MacQuarrie Recreation Complex (Formerly Orléans Recreation Complex) – Orléans. From Oct-March: Mondays from 2-2h50 PM; Wednesdays from 7-8h50 PM; Thursdays from 10-10h50 AM; Friday from 7-9h20 PM; Sundays from 1-2h50 PM</p> <p>Option 2: Ray Friel: TBD/Client info required.</p> <p>Option 3: Blackburn Arena. From Oct-March: Fridays from 7-8h50 PM and Sundays from 1-1h50 PM (family skate) and 2-2h50 pm (public skate)</p>	(family). For specialized skate sessions, fees are similar: 2\$ for children 5-17; \$5 for adults (18+). Call Public Skating Information Line before you go (613-580-2666) because sessions may be cancelled at the last minute and there are some dates where facilities are closed due to holidays/tournaments, etc.	<p>recreation/skating/schedules/index_en.html</p> <p>http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/skating/fees_en.html</p> <p>Code of conduct - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/skating/rules_en.html</p>
6	I want to do something in honour of my grandfather who passed away last year, perhaps plant a tree in his memory. Can I "buy" a tree or donate money for the city to plant a tree in is honour in a local park?	Not decided exactly what but was thinking about a plaque at the bottom of the tree.	Yes you can. Refer caller to Forestry Services staff (Warm transfer preferred: get caller's phone number in case there is a disconnect Advise caller to stay online. Transfer call with caller on the line. Cold transfer-advise caller of transfer and if there is a voicemail box that the transfer is to a vm. Transfer call.)	\$400 for commemorative tree. Plaque must be purchased by family Plaque installed by City staff at no additional charge .	http://ottawa.ca/residents/healthy_lawns/forestry/commemorative_en.html
7	Can I walk my dog in the park after dark off leash?	Park is Central Park (Clemow).	No, in Central Park , dogs are only allowed between Bank and Lyon Streets and dogs leashed between Bank and Clemow from 1 Apr until 31 Oct noon-4 pm 7 days a week.	Other parks in the city do allow dog walking off leash (for example: Sylvia Holden Park on Bank Street / Holmwood).	http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/animal_care/cats_dogs/dogs/parks/index_en.html and http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/animal_care/cats_dogs/dogs/parks/ottawa_en.html
8	I am organizing a hockey game, can I rent ice?	Need ice time for late December	Yes you can rent ice. Transfer caller to city wide	Casual bookings are done on a first-come-first-served basis once the seasonal allocation process is	List of arenas - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks



Q	Text of question	Essential background elements	Essential Response Elements	Additional Response Elements	References/ Notes
		2007 and it doesn't matter where in the city.	allocations (613-580-2595 from 8h30-4h30 m-f OR advise caller they can send a request by e-mail at mailto:sports@ottawa.ca . Warm transfer preferred.	completed. Rental rates range from \$102-\$175 an hour depending on prime or non-prime hours.)	_recreation/facilities/arenas_en.html http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/facilities/rentals/rental_rates_en.html#P2_312
9	I want to take my young niece swimming. Where is the nearest public swim?	I live in Riverside South She is 16 months old.	<p>Any of the following are close to Riverside South (check with particular facility for holiday hours or special events that impact swims).</p> <p>Deborah Anne Kirwan pool. Family / leisure swims are as follows: Monday 6-7h30 PM and/or 7h30-9 PM; Tuesday and Thursday 6h30-8 PM; Wednesday 7-8h30 PM; Friday 5—6h30 PM and/or 6h30-7h30 PM; Saturday 12h30-2 PM and/or 2-3h30 PM or 5h30-7h30 PM; Sunday 12h30-3 PM and/or 3-7 PM</p> <p>Sawmill Creek Pool. Family and leisure swim times are as follows: Monday from 3h30-4h30 PM; Tuesdays from 9-10 AM; Wednesdays from 1-2 PM and/or 3h30-4h30 PM; Thursdays from 9-10 AM; Friday from 5-6h30 PM (female only); Saturday from 1-3 PM; Sunday from 1-3 PM and/or 7-8 PM</p> <p>Nepean Sportsplex Pool. Family and leisure swim times are as follows: Monday and Friday from 10-11 AM</p>	Also there is a wave pool in Kanata Fees: for children under 2 it is free and fees range from \$4.05-\$4.60 per adult depending on the pool.	http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/facilities/pools_en.html Hours of Public Swim - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/swimming/schedules/east/index_en.html http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/swimming/fees_en.html

Q	Text of question	Essential background elements	Essential Response Elements	Additional Response Elements	References/ Notes
			<p>and/or 12-1h30 PM; Tuesday from 12-1h30 PM and/or 6h30-7h30 PM; Wednesday from 10-11 AM and/or 12-1h30 PM and/or 6h30-8h30 PM; Thursday from 12-1h30 PM; Saturday from 10-11 AM and/or 1-3h30 PM and/or 6h30-8 PM; Sunday from 12-3 PM and/or 6h30-8 PM</p> <p>Walter Baker Complex. Family and leisure swim times are as follows: Monday from 11h30-1 PM and/or 2-3 PM; Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9h30-10h30 AM and/or 11h30-1 PM; Wednesdays from 11h30-1 PM and/or 2-3 PM and/or 6-7h30 PM; Fridays from 9h30-10h30 AM and/or 11h30-1 PM and/or 6-7h30 PM; Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4h30 PM and/or 6h30-8 PM</p>		
10	Where can I cross country ski without having to go to Gatineau?	Live downtown.	You can go to the Terry Fox Cross-country Ski Centre at Mooney's Bay Park, (2960 Riverside Drive). It will open in mid December 2007 (weather permitting).	For more information on City pathways, refer caller to http://www.pathwaystohealth.on.ca/ or pick up a pathway maps at any City of Ottawa Client Service Centre. The Terry Fox Cross-country Ski Centre number is 613-247-4883. Registration is now ongoing for lessons beginning in January 2008. For more information, call the Centre, or check out the programs in the Fall 2007/Winter 2008 Recreation Guide or for more detailed information, visit: http://ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/seasonal/fw/xc_skiing/index_en.html .	http://ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/seasonal/fw/xc_skiing/index_en.html
11	I am due to have a baby and I know I have to get a birth certificate. What	It is my first child and it is due in 4 weeks and	First you must register the birth and then apply for a birth certificate. There are	The birth must be registered before child's first birthday. The City of Ottawa does not provide any notification once the child has been	http://ottawa.ca/residents/permits/birth_registration/index_en.html

Q	Text of question	Essential background elements	Essential Response Elements	Additional Response Elements	References/ Notes
	do I have to do?	will be born in Ottawa. I live in Hunt Club and have internet access.	two birth registration options – online or hard copy form With the online option you can register the birth, apply for the certificate/SIN online at the same time If you are applying off-line, you need to fill out a hard copy of the birth registration form and certificate and send it in to the city (Division Registrar 110 Laurier Avenue West Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1) or drop it off to a Client Service Centre. There is a \$34 birth registration fee.	registered however, you should receive a Notice of Birth Registration from the Office of the Registrar General of Ontario three to four months after sending in the Birth Registration Form. This notice is a courtesy letter from the Province you can use to ensure that all information about your baby is correct. You have 60 days from the date of registration to make corrections; any changes after this period will be subject to a fee. For more information, please call the Office of the Registrar General of Ontario at 1-800-461-2156 or visit its Web site.	Call the Office of the Registrar General of Ontario at 1-800-461-2156 or visit its Web site.
12	I am going back to work in a few months after the birth of my child. What are my childcare options?	I want a licensed day care centre. I need fulltime care (8-5). Native tongue is English but open to French daycares. Work downtown but live in Blackburn Hamlet. Would prefer daycare by work. DO NOT qualify for subsidized daycare.	Transfer to Centralized Waiting List Information: 613-248-3605 for placement on the centralized waiting list and more information. Warm transfer preferred.	The City of Ottawa has recently mandated Child Care Information, a City-funded non-profit service to extend the Child Care Centralized Waiting List to all licensed child care centres and home child care agencies within the City of Ottawa boundaries. Beginning in January 2006, any parent/guardian seeking licensed child care services will be able to call one telephone number to obtain a registration form.	http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/childcare/index_en.html List of all licensed daycare facilities - http://ottawa.ca/cgi-bin/apps/childcare/childcare.cgi?action=list&lang=en&orderby=es_name&es_name=&es_address=&es_city=&es_pc1=&es_pc2=&Search=Search
13	I think I may need to put my dad in an assisted living facility as he is getting to old to take care of himself. Can you tell me about any facilities or programs the city has?	Dad is 82 and can still function by himself but very frail and can foresee him needing help with personal hygiene moving	Transfer the call to Community Care Access Centre - 613-745-5525. Warm transfer preferred.	The City owns and operates four Long-Term Care Homes: Centre d'Accueil Champlain – 275 Perrier Ave. ; Garry J. Armstrong – 200 Island Lodge Rd. ; Peter D. Clark – 9 Meridian Pl.; Carleton Lodge – 55 Lodge Rd. Provide additional information on other housing supports.	http://ottawa.ca/residents/seniors/housing_using_en.html and http://ottawa.ca/residents/housing/long_term_care/index_en.html

Q	Text of question	Essential background elements	Essential Response Elements	Additional Response Elements	References/ Notes
		forward. Mentally starting to forget things (turning off the stove, etc.)			
14	I am a small business owner and want to organize a flu vaccine clinic for my employees. Can I do that?	10 employees in a small business consulting firm in downtown Ottawa.	Refer caller to Ottawa Public Health Information at 613-580-6744. Warm transfer preferred.	Workplaces are responsible for organizing and administering the flu vaccine to their employees if they have an on-site clinic. Please note that the Ministry of Health and Long Term care are advising workplaces that clinics should not be held before November 12, 2007.	http://ottawa.ca/residents/health/environments/workplace/flu/index_en.html
15	When is the next baby wellness clinic?	Live in Kanata by ScotiaBank Place. Baby is 3 months old.	There are 2 options close to you: Every Monday at the Pretty Street Community Centre 2 Pretty Street, Stittsville 1:30 to 3 p.m. and/or every Tuesday at the Glen Cairn United Church 140 Abbey Hill Road Kanata 9:30 to 11 a.m.	Provide caller with information on other new baby supports – i.e., breastfeeding.	http://ottawa.ca/residents/health/support/hbhc/birth/well_baby_en.html
16	I have a freezer I want to throw out. Can I just put it on the curb on garbage day?	I live in the Glebe. My freezer doesn't work. I am not sure of make, model or age of freezer – at least 10 years old.	No. The City does NOT pick up household appliances such as stoves, refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, dryers, dishwashers, hot water tanks, furnaces, oil tanks, etc. at the curb.	These appliances contain recyclable parts that can be reused. Residents must make their own arrangements to have them taken away. Check the Yellow Pages under "recycling" for a list of businesses providing this service, or take them back to participating Take it Back! retailers - Electronic or Household. Remember all refrigerators, freezers, air conditioning units and dehumidifiers must have refrigerant removed and must be tagged by a certified technician prior to being brought to the landfill site. Any items that are not tagged will be refused entry into the site. Check the Yellow Pages under "recycling" for a list of businesses providing this service.	http://ottawa.ca/city_services/recycling_garbage/special_items/index_en.html#9
17	I am new to Ottawa. Is there a composting program here?	I live in an apartment building downtown.	No, the City does not currently have a comprehensive composting program. However, there is a pilot composting program but the downtown area does not fall within the	Refer caller to Ottawa.ca to obtain more information on the pilot program. Refer caller to ottawa.ca information on home composting and vermi-composting.	http://ottawa.ca/city_services/recycling_garbage/compost/index_en.html

Q	Text of question	Essential background elements	Essential Response Elements	Additional Response Elements	References/ Notes
			boundaries of the pilot.		
18	My son cut his leg on broken glass at a city park. How do I file a complaint against the City?	Brewer park. I cleaned up all the broken glass. Had to take him to CHEO for "butterfly" stitches.	The City has a claims office that investigates and responds to all claims made against the City and its insurers. If you have sustained a loss you believe the City is responsible for, you can file a claim with the City. If you have any questions, please contact the City's general claims line at 613-580-2655 (TTY: 613-580-2401) or send an e-mail to claims@ottawa.ca .	Prepare your notice of claim in writing, and ensure it contains the following information: The name, address and telephone number of the person making the claim; the date, location and approximate time of the incident; the apparent cause of the damage suffered (to the extent it is known); the nature of damaged suffered (i.e. personal injury, property damage, loss or property, expenses incurred, etc.); and the date of the claim or notification. Once you have compiled this information, submit it to the City by mail (City of Ottawa, Risk Management at 100 Constellation Crescent, 4 th Floor, West Tower Nepean, Ontario K2G 6J8) or via email at claims@ottawa.ca or via fax at 613-580-2654. The Claims Office will ensure your claim is acknowledged, investigated, tracked, evaluated and resolved.	http://ottawa.ca/city_hall/claims/index_en.html
19	I want to take my 2-year old daughter to playgroup but I don't want spend a lot of money. Can you tell me the cheapest playgroups in my area?	I live in Westboro and am not on Ontario Works (OW). Looking for a parent participation playgroup – not drop off but not sure if want a specific type of playgroup (i.e. dance, crafts, etc.). Just want information at this stage.	Complete listing of specific types of activities for your toddler can be found in pages 14-25 in the Parks and Recreation Guide or on the City of Ottawa website. Suggest calling facilities directly for details. In your area these MAY include: Hintonburg Community Centre (613-798-8874), Plant Recreation Centre (613-232-3000), DoverCourt (613-798-8950), or McNabb (613-564-1070).	In your area there are a number of facilities that may offer playgroups including: Bellevue (merivale and baseline) offers playgroups with drop-in fees (\$5.50/session) Mondays-Fridays. Call 798-8917 for more information. Dovercourt has 1/week sessions for 8 weeks for 1 hour each week (~\$85/8 weeks). Call 798-8950 for more information. Hintonburg Community Centre has programs as well (~\$50/10 weeks).	List of recreation facilities - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/facilities/rec_centres/index_en.html Recreation Guide - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/programs/guide/index_en.html Playgroups - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/programs/guides_pdf/fw_07_08/preschool_en.pdf
20	I want to rent a City facility for my son's birthday party. What are my facility options and what are the rates? I live in Westboro.	Son is 10 and there are between 12 and 15 kids. Not sure what we want, just asking about choices	You need to contact the facility directly to rent space/room (Plant Recreation Centre at 613-232-3000). You can find more information on facilities in the Parks & Recreation Guide or on the City of	Facilities for your area may also include: Hintonburg Community Centre (613-798-8874), DoverCourt (613-798-8950) and/or McNabb (613-564-1070). Rental rates range from \$18-\$25/hour based on ½ gym or small room with no liquor. Contact facility for exact details.	http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/facilities/rentals/bday_packages_en.html http://ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/facilities/rentals/rental_rates_en.html



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21	What types of plastics are acceptable for recycling and which ones are not?	I know that the majority of food and drink containers are recyclable.	<p>Ottawa website.</p> <p>The following are acceptable: plastic bottles, jars and jugs; tubs and tub lids (yogurt, sour cream, hand cleaner, margarine containers); milk and juice cartons. The following are not acceptable: styrofoam containers; styrofoam packaging; all plastic bags; bakery and produce plastics such as strawberry or cake containers; hard plastics such as dishes, cups, toys, make-up jars, plastic buckets, laundry baskets; motor oil bottles. IF IT'S NOT A PLASTIC BOTTLE, JUG, JAR, TUB OR TUB LID - IT'S NOT RECYCLABLE.</p>	<p>The City of Ottawa's recycling program can only accept high-density plastic materials because at the present time there are no viable/sustainable markets for lower density plastics. In other words, no one has found a product to make out of the lower density plastics, therefore they cannot be recycled through the City's Blue Box Program (Number 1-7). Consult the Take it Back! directory to discover which retailers in your area will take back plastic bags and styrofoam. Your blue box should not weigh more than fifteen (15) kg when full.</p>	<p>n.html#P48_1113</p> <p>Blue and Black Box Recycling - http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/recycling/garbage/recycling/index_en.html</p> <p>Plastic Recycling Codes - http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/recycling/garbage/recycling/plastic_tips_en.html</p>
22	I am planning to sell my house privately. Is there anything I need to do with the City?	Not going through Grapevine or any other private selling company. Not yet up for sale. Moving to an apartment in Toronto. Have a single detached home in Stittsville.	<p>There are a few things you must do including notifying the Tax Office for property taxes and Water Services (water billing).</p>	<p>Property Taxes - Change of ownership or address. If the property has changed ownership, send the tax bill to the new owner or return it to the Tax Office, indicating to whom the transfer of title has been made. To prevent misdirected tax bills, please advise the Revenue Office in writing of mailing address changes. Failure to receive a tax bill could still result in penalty and interest charges of 1.25% per month applied to unpaid accounts. Send address changes to the City of Ottawa, Revenue Division, 100 Constellation Crescent, 4th Floor East, Nepean, ON, K2G 6J8, or by fax to 613-580-2457. You can also contact us by e-mail at revenue@ottawa.ca. Please quote the property address and roll number on all correspondence. Water Billing: When it's a property you own - For a \$58 fee, the vendors' or purchasers' lawyer can apply for a Water Arrears Certificate, which is a statement of outstanding charges at the time of closing. The City will obtain a final</p>	<p>http://ottawa.ca/residents/proptaxes/tax_bills_options/change_ownership_or_address_en.html</p> <p>http://ottawa.ca/city_services/water/water_billing/billfaq_en.shtml#7</p>

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				reading on the closing date. A final bill is then sent to the vendor at the service address unless the vendor requests that the final bill be sent elsewhere. Alternatively, please contact the City to arrange a final meter reading, or to provide the final reading yourself.	
23	Could I speak to building permits please?	Thinking about changing the location of the fence in the backyard.	Transfer to building permits. Warm transfer preferred.	Questions can also be emailed to: Buildingpermits@ottawa.ca . Refer caller to building permits info on Ottawa.ca - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/building_code/permits/index_en.html Refer caller to building code FAQs - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/building_code/fag_en.html	Building permits - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/building_code/permits/index_en.html
24	I am on assistance and want to sign my daughter up for some recreation programs. Is there additional assistance to help me with this?	Age of daughter is 5 years old. I am on Ontario Works (OW).	Pick up an application form at any City of Ottawa recreation and culture facility or at one of the Client Service Centres. Bring the completed application form to your local recreation or culture facility. The Supervisor will review the application for approval. Annual maximum of \$157.80 in Fee Assistance.	Residents of all ages are eligible for Fee Assistance. Applications can only be approved at a recreation and culture facility. Residents are encouraged to apply for the Fee Assistance Program as early as possible before the registration period. Each qualifying individual, or member of a family, is eligible for an annual maximum of \$157.80 in Fee Assistance. Participants can register for recreation and culture programs or activities at any of the program registration locations across the City. Applicants are encouraged to pay a minimum of 25% of the program cost. A parent or guardian can transfer all, or a portion of their Fee Assistance entitlement to a child or children in their household. Deadline: Request for fee assistance is on going.	Recreation Fee Assistance Program - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/funding/recreation_culture_assistance_en.html
25	I am in the process of getting a community group together in my neighbourhood and we want to try to run a soccer program for kids aged 4-8 next Summer on City fields. I live in the Hunt Club area. Who do I talk to about this?	Don't want to speak to them now as you don't have all details. Just want the information to bring to next community group meeting.	Transfer caller to city wide allocations (613-580-2595 from 8h30-4h30 m-f OR advise caller they can send a request by e-mail at mailto:sports@ottawa.ca . Warm transfer preferred.	Casual bookings are done on a first-come-first-served basis once the seasonal allocation process is completed. Advise caller that City recognizes community groups and seeks their input where possible. Advise caller of online application form - https://ottawa.ca/cgi-bin/form.cgi?dir=connect&form=get_connected_en . To be recognized by the City as a community organization, the following criteria must be met - a partner/affiliate of the Parks and Recreation branch, City of Ottawa, or, a not-for-profit organization; a community-based organization; an organization that has the sole purpose of providing a variety of leisure programs, activities and/or services that are recreational,	Form to request community group gets added to City's Master List - https://ottawa.ca/cgi-bin/form.cgi?dir=mcl&form=mcl_en Rental fees for sports fields - http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/facilities/rentals/rental_rates_en.html#P556_7245



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				instructional and/or cultural in nature; an organization which provides programs and/or services which benefit the residents of Ottawa.	