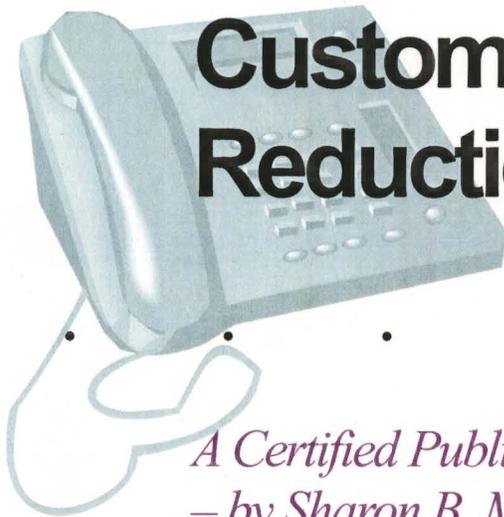


South Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles
Post Office Box 1498
Columbia, South Carolina 29216

The DMV Call Center



Customer Wait Time Reduction Plan

*A Certified Public Manager's Project Report
— by Sharon B. Madison, CPM Candidate
Submitted: January 16, 2004*

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Customer Wait Time Reduction Plan

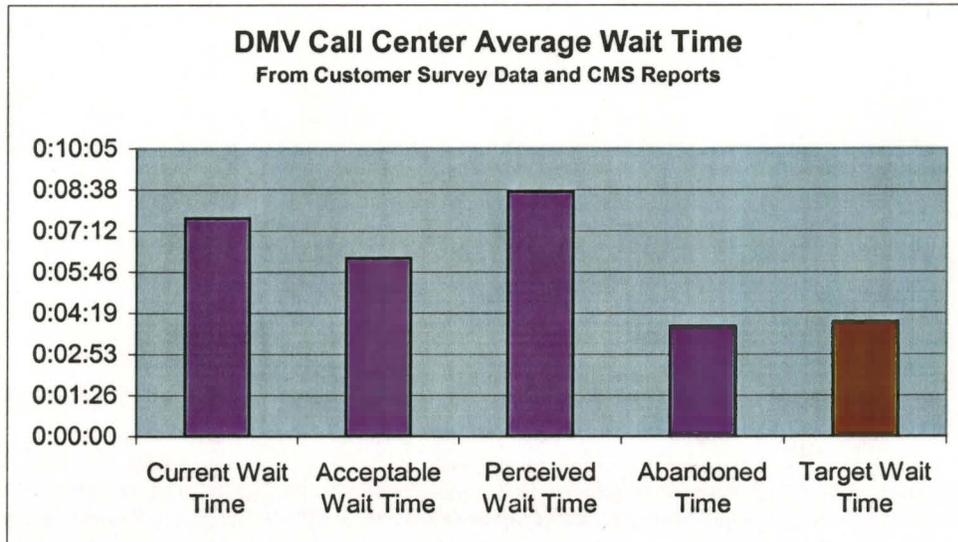
A Certified Public Manager's Project Report

Problem Statement

The DMV Call Center provides an important service to South Carolina citizens and is an information source for citizens living in other states and countries. DMV Field Office personnel call the Call Center for assistance with procedural issues and to request research. Financial Institutions, automobile dealerships, attorneys, insurance companies and towing and wrecker services in South Carolina and across the country call the Call Center for title information for vehicles of which they have a financial interest. (There is a charge for this service. The Call Center collected over \$150,000 in 2003 providing this service to financial institutions).

However, the Call Center has been plagued by a number of issues since its inception in 1998-- short-staff, extreme wait times and high abandoned rates. The Call Center was first implemented with 24 employees that transferred from 5 mini-Call Centers throughout DMV. It has been known for years that not enough staff was answering the phone. The wait time for customers at that time sometimes exceeded 1-½ hours.

With an increase in staff (50 agents strong) and realignment of processes, the wait time was reduced to 7:38 (mm:ss). A telephone survey conducted of DMV customers indicated that the acceptable wait time was 6:15 and their perceived wait time was 8:34. However, abandoned time reports indicate customers would wait only 3:51 before abandoning.



It is the mission of the Department of Motor Vehicles to:

Support the Governor's efforts to promote economic growth, deliver cost effective and efficient services, enhance quality of life and increase educational opportunity for the citizens of South Carolina.

DMV administers South Carolina's motor vehicle laws in an efficient, effective and professional manner in order to deliver accuracy and security in all transaction documents and to provide the highest levels of customer service to the citizens of South Carolina.

The Department's action plan to meet its mission includes:

- Improving DMV Products and Services by exploring alternative methods of service delivery;
- Ensure customers receive timely, accurate and consistent service in a professional manner;

- Maintain the integrity and validity of DMV's products, services and records to foster a program for continuous improvement

Further, the DMV Call Center's mission is to: *provide accurate and complete information pertaining to, but not limited to, DMV policies and procedures. We deliver quality and courteous services professionally and respectfully.*

One of the most important and challenging objectives in operating a high-value call center is to provide services that consistently meet or exceed customer expectations. The number one need identified by DMV customers is for DMV to be assessable and responsive. In direct correlation with the agency and Call Center's mission, the purpose of this project is to further reduce customer wait time (accessibility to DMV) to a more acceptable level of **four minutes** or less.

Data Collection

In order to determine what data should be obtained to study Call Center processes, a full understanding of the variables that can influence the outcome was needed. There are four variables that influence customer wait time:

1. Call Volume – the more calls coming into the system, the longer customers will have to wait.
2. Call Duration – the longer each call takes, the longer customers will have to wait.
3. Resources – the productivity of customer service agents and the technology used in the call center influence the call duration and call volume.

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4. Process – the process used to answer customer inquiries influence wait time.

With these four variables in mind, the following data was gathered:

1. Sum of incoming calls from January-June 2003 stratified by call type (Pareto 1, Appendix A);
2. Average duration of calls from the same time period, stratified by call type (Pareto 2, Appendix B);
3. Agent productivity data outlining the number of calls handled by each agent and the average call duration per agent;
4. A flowchart illustrating the call handling process was also documented (Appendix C.)

Data Analysis

Sum of Calls

Pareto 1 in Appendix A shows that over 80% of the total calls received are of types 32, 54, 55, 30, 60, and 31. Type 32 calls represent 33% of the total calls. Most of these calls, characterized as second tier driver or vehicle information calls, are general in nature and can be handled by either an automated system or by entry level agents.

Re-directing these general calls to DMV's IVR (interactive voice response system) will reduce the number of calls coming into the Call Center; thereby reducing wait time.

Call Duration

Pareto 2 in Appendix B shows that the calls that take the longest are Financial Responsibility inquiry calls. These calls require giving customers detailed information on four or more options to clear suspensions. These calls may also involve putting a customer on hold while retrieving accident or insurance information from microfilm.

Resources

Agent activity reports were reviewed paying close attention to high productivity agents versus those with lower productivity. Even though lower producing agents had a higher hold time and higher producing agents had a quicker call handling time; the differences were not significant enough to warrant further study. Because these observations focused mainly on individual skills rather than processes, other variables were concentrated on. However, increased hold time can be a result of the lack of a structured training program in the Call Center.

Call Handling Process

In reviewing the flowchart outlining the call handling process, there appeared to be one obvious bottleneck to the process – *Does the agent have the answer for the customer?* If the agent does not know how to assist the customer, he must place the customer on hold and ask for assistance. After getting assistance, the agent may still not understand how to help the customer. This bottleneck may be repeated several times throughout the day for a number of agents.

To reduce the need for agents to ask for assistance, a structured training program will be developed. This program will insure that agents have the knowledge needed to assist customers in the skills for which they are assigned.

Two trainers were hired in October that would focus on Call Center training. These trainers would spend the first few months learning DMV policies and procedures while developing targeted training modules, including customer service training modules. With a more targeted approach to Call Center training, agents will be more prepared to handle customer inquiries.

The immediate challenge for the Call Center Trainers is in learning DMV Policies and Procedures. The trainers will be working directly with subject matter experts within the Call Center to gain the knowledge necessary to develop the training modules.

Forced Solution

In analyzing the data, two possible solutions were apparent (re-direct calls to the agency's IVR and entry-level agents, and develop a structured training program). However, one solution was forced on the agency by the Governor's office.

The DMV Policy Task Force, appointed by Governor-Elect Mark Sanford on December 6, 2002, recommended outsourcing functions of the DMV Call Center to the Department of Corrections. DMV has been asked by the Governor's office to pursue this recommendation.

DMV has contracted with the Department of Corrections to have prison inmates handle general inquiries coming through the DMV Call Center. This process is outlined in the flowchart in Appendix D. The process allows for customers to choose the IVR for pre-recorded information or to have forms faxed. The second option for customers is to have calls that are general in nature answered by the prison agents. However, these calls will also be directed to entry-level agents within the Call Center. This allows the Call Center to train agents on entry-level calls first before training them on the more targeted DMV issues.

On Tuesday, December 9, 2003, the DMV Call Center began piloting answering the type of calls that will be directed to Prison Industry Agents (PIAs) with newly hired agents. This pilot enabled the Call Center to:

- Predict the number of calls that will be handled by PIAs;
- Determine the specific types of calls that will be handled by PIAs;
- Effectively evaluate and improve the PIA training program; and,
- Provide an initial work and training program for new employees.

The initial results of the pilot activity were very promising (See Appendix E). The average wait time for customers had been reduced to 2:59 and abandoned calls were just 17.93%. The average wait time prior to the pilot was 7:29 and the abandoned rate was 29.43%

During the four-day period (December 9-12, 2003), the Call Center received 10,122 incoming calls. Of these, 509 were directed (by customer input) to the IVR system, and 3,056 chose the general inquiry option (the option for prison agents). After hearing the message "...your call may be answered by an inmate at one of the state's correctional facilities", 102 calls were abandoned (only 3%).

Of the 2,756 calls that were answered by the General Inquiry (G.I.) group, 1,805 (65%) had to be transferred to other skills within the Call Center. With additional targeted training and increased knowledge by agents in this skill, fewer calls will need to be transferred.

Call Center Management will continue to monitor and improve the progress of this pilot through the full implementation of the Prison Industries Project in April 2004.

Effectiveness of the Initiatives

The Call Center is fortunate inasmuch as the Call Management System provides a number of reports that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives.

System reports will indicate current and past wait times and call handling times. Measuring this information against planned change factors (i.e. training programs, re-directing calls) as well as unplanned change factors (i.e. absenteeism, attrition, DMV Policies and Procedural changes, for example) will allow management to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives.

In addition, a monitoring and coaching program has been developed. Monitoring and coaching are essential to maintaining and improving agent performance quality, identifying training gaps and customer needs, and evaluating the level of customer satisfaction.

Call Center trainers evaluate qualitative aspects of call handling (by listening to incoming phone calls) to include the tracking and analysis of data to identify individual agent and overall call center performance trends, anticipated problems and training needs. The trainers use the information gathered during a monitoring session to perform an informal, one-on-one coaching session designed to encourage employees to continue positive behaviors and provide constructive feedback.

Conclusion

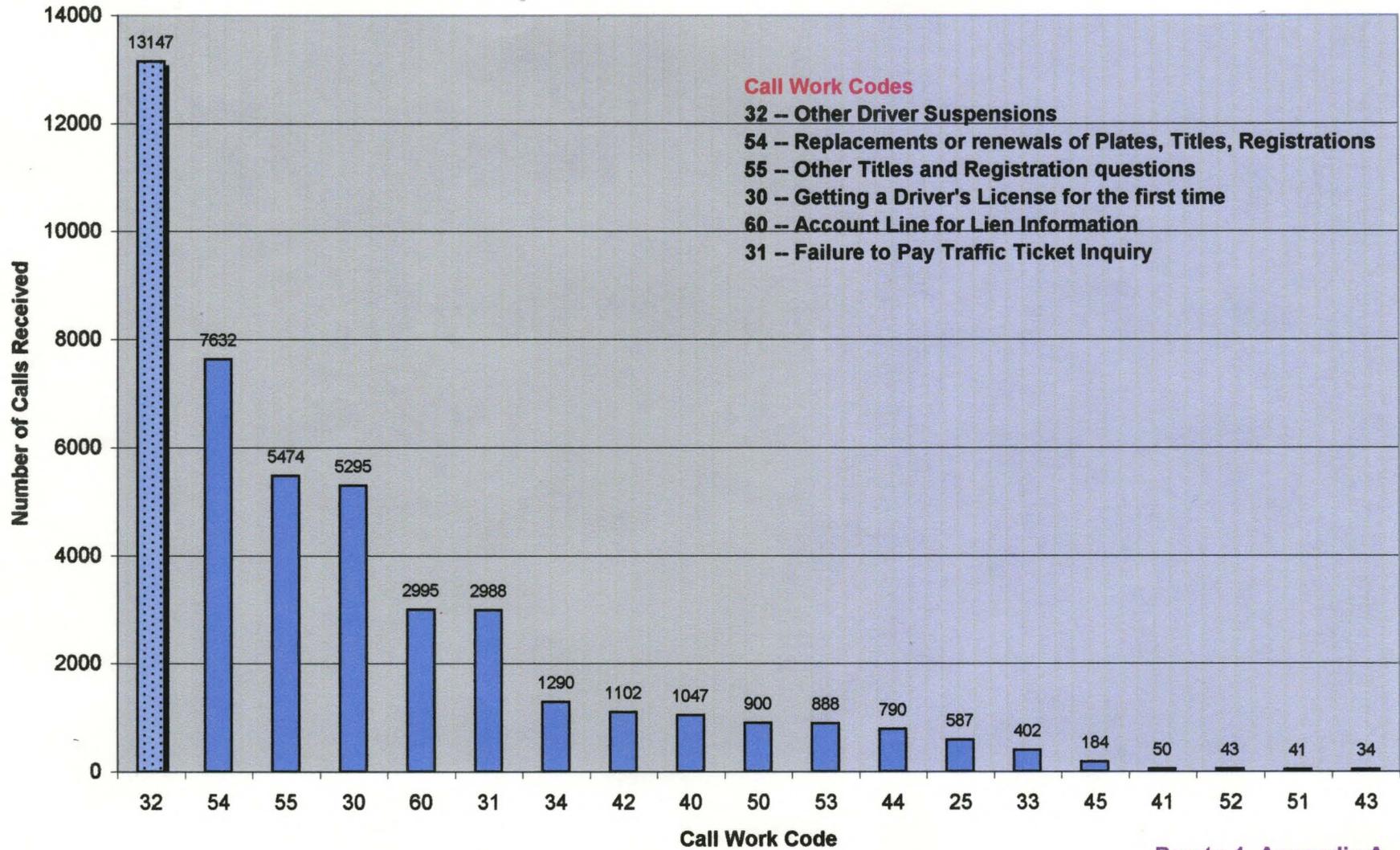
With the focus on meeting customer expectations, the DMV Call Center will continue to study processes and implement changes that will reduce wait time and insure that customers receive information that is both assessable and accurate and delivered in a professional and courteous manner. With the following process changes:

1. Re-direct callers to the IVR for pre-recorded DMV general information and for forms by fax;
2. Re-direct calls that are general in nature to prison industry agents or entry-level agents;

3. Develop a targeted and structured training program within the DMV Call Center;
4. Initiate a structured monitoring and training program;

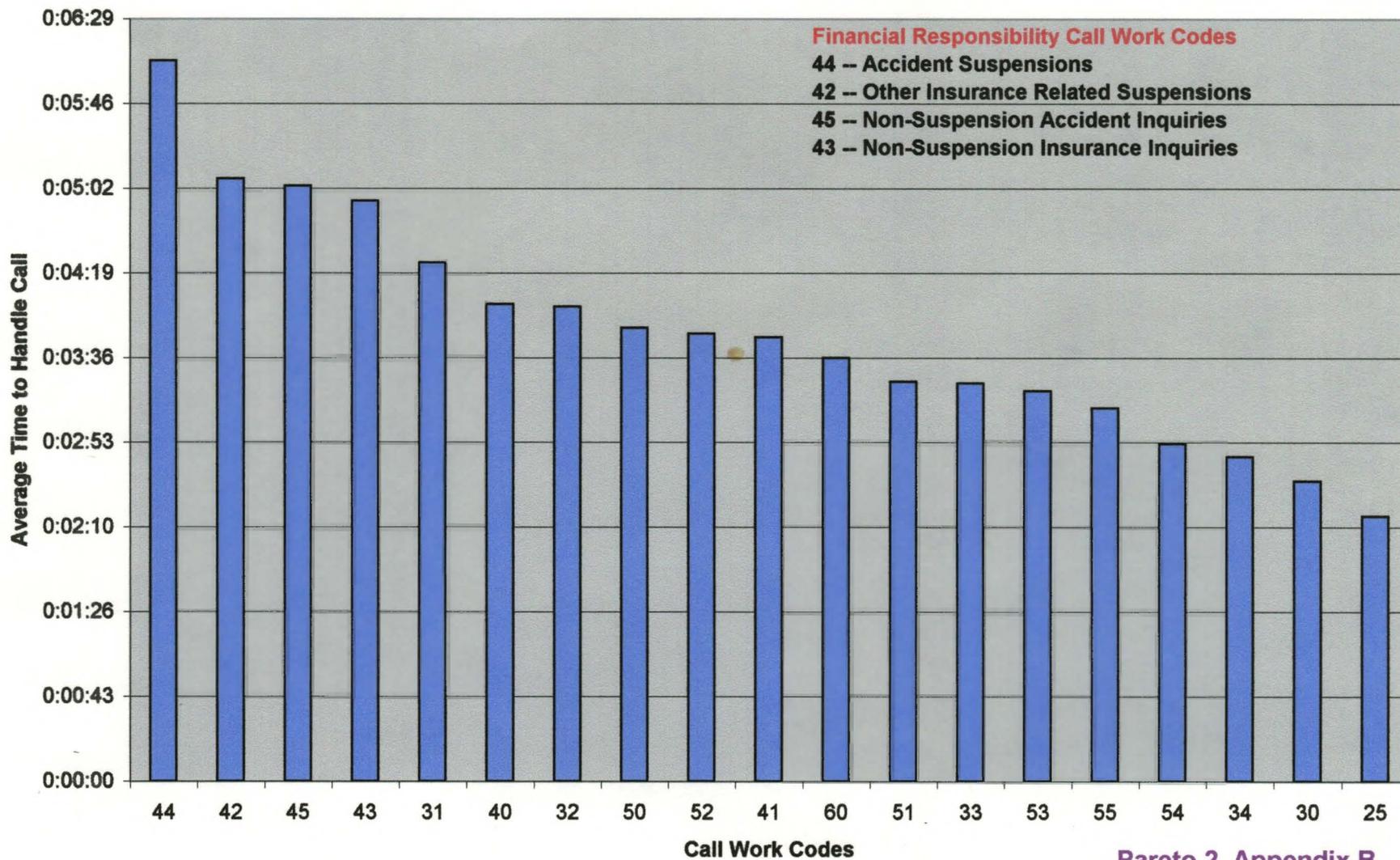
It is believed that the DMV Call Center will be successful in its vision of being *trusted and respected as a model entity for delivering accurate, courteous and quality customer service in a professional, efficient and effective manner.*

Sum of Calls Received January - June 2003



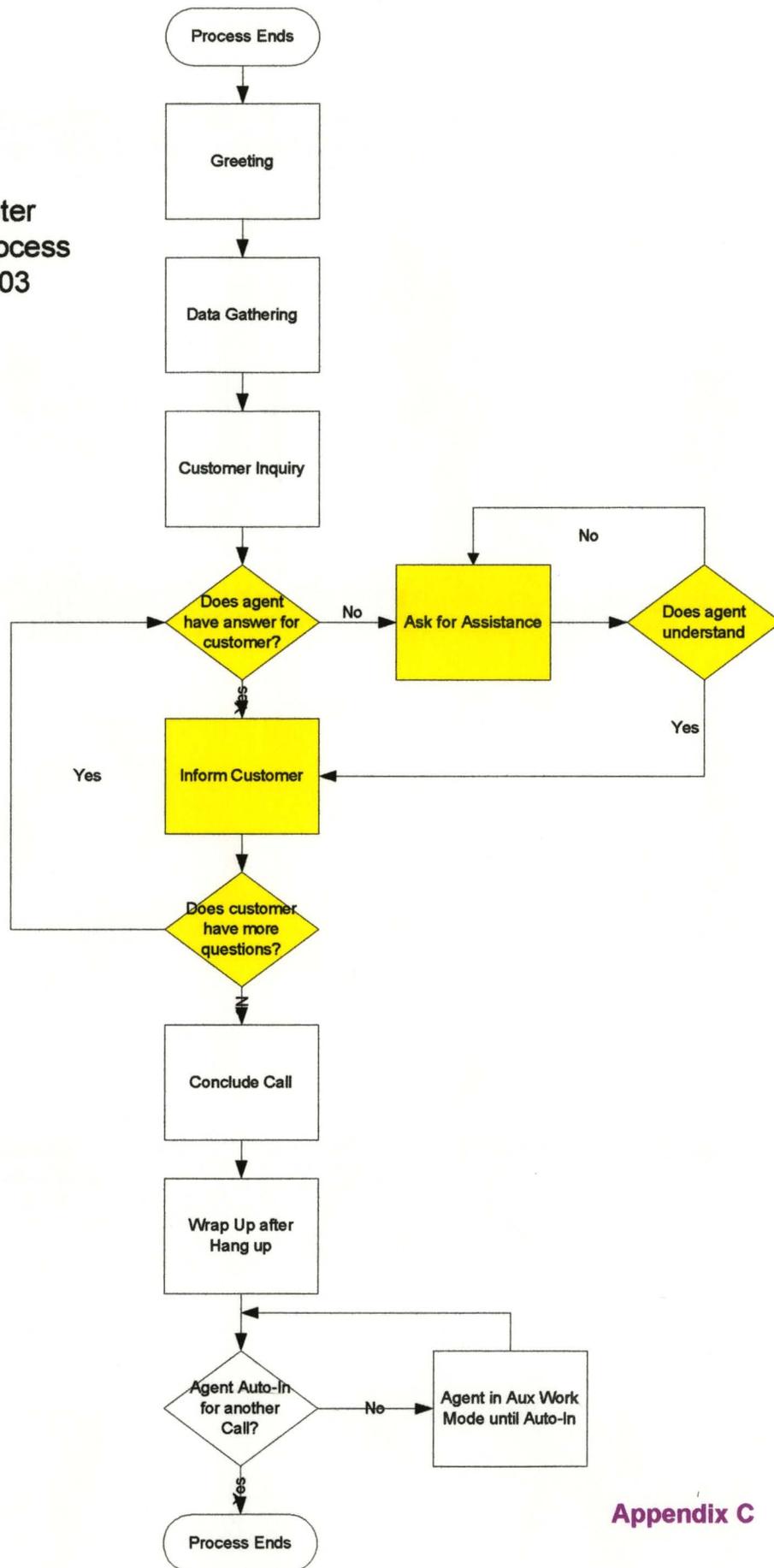
Pareto 1, Appendix A

Call Handling Time by Work Code



Pareto 2, Appendix B

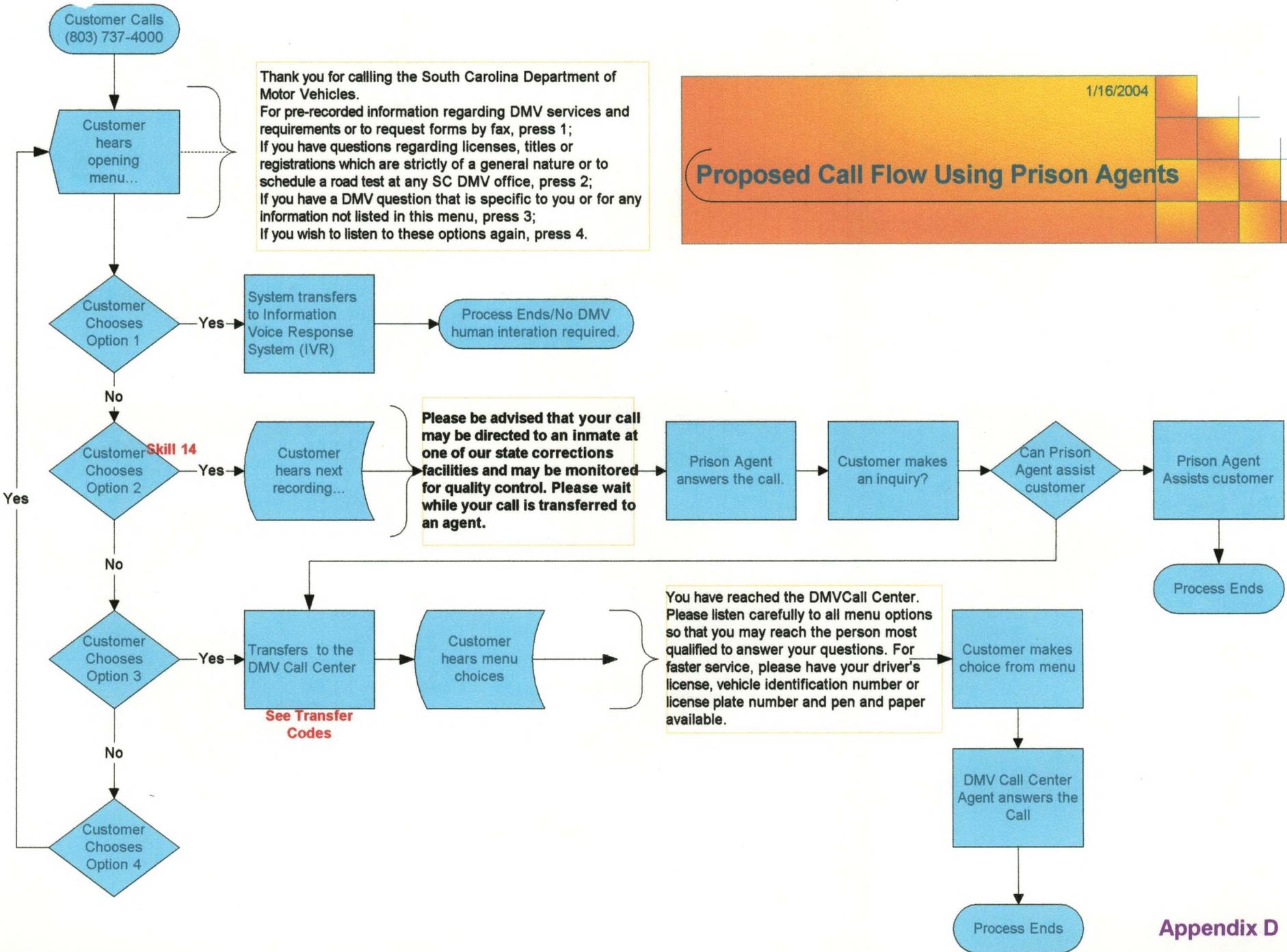
DMV Call Center
Call Handling Process
October 3, 2003



Appendix C

1/16/2004

Proposed Call Flow Using Prison Agents



Appendix D

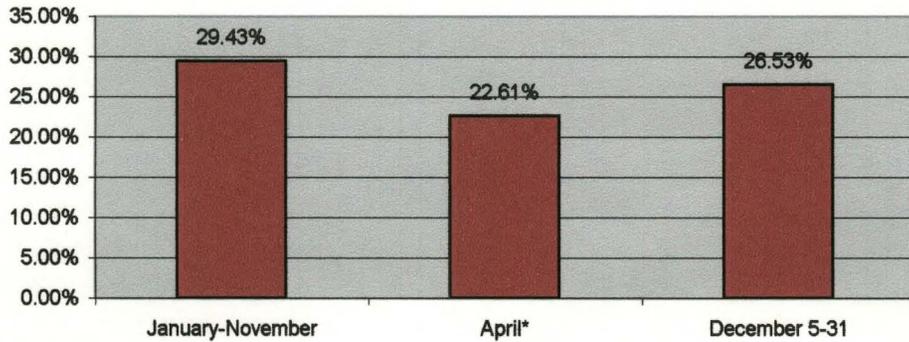
**Call Center Project Pilot Results
December 5-31, 2003**

January- November	April*	December 5-31	General Inquiries Activity	
Daily Abandoned Call Rate			Abandoned After Message	368
29.43%	22.61%	26.53%	Abandoned After Waiting for an Agent	1014
			Handled by General Inquiries Group	10312
			Transferred to Other Skills	6607
Average Daily Wait Time			Transfer Activity	
0:07:29	0:02:54	0:05:19	Transferred to Driver Skill 109	733
			Transferred to Driver Skill 108	1512
			Transferred to Non-US Citizens Group	122
			Transferred to FTPTT Group	1068
			Transferred to Vehicle Skill 106	1886
			Transferred to Vehicle Skill 107	1286

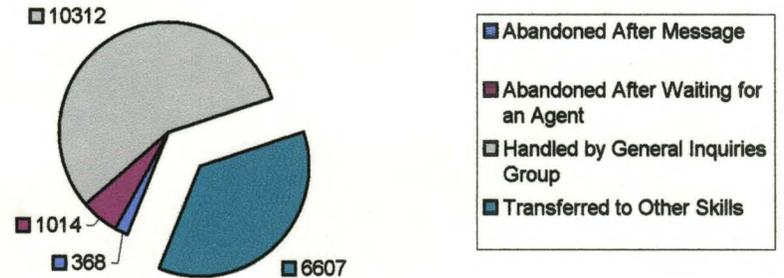
- 109 Driver Skill 3
- 108 Driver Skill 2
- 107 Vehicle Skill 3
- 106 Vehicle Skill 2
- 105 Non-US Citizens
- 102 FTPTT

Appendix E

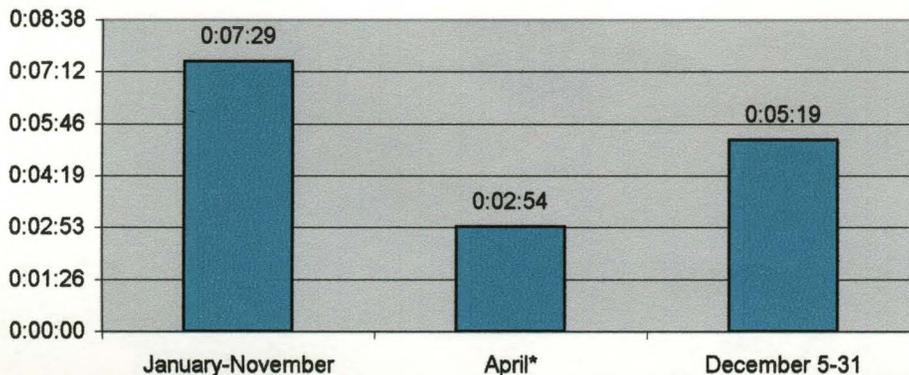
Daily Abandoned Rate



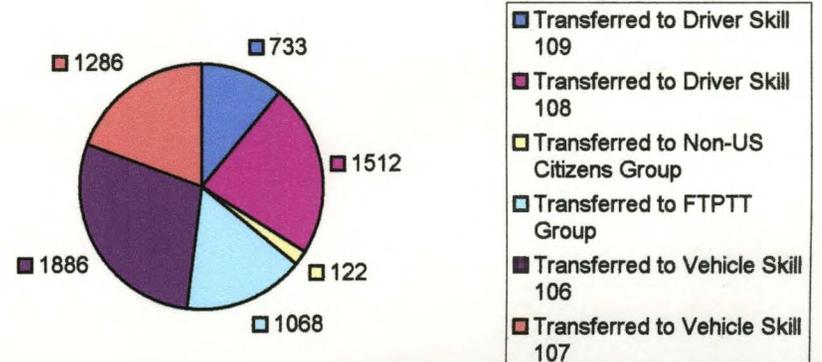
General Inquiries Activity



Average Daily Wait Time



Transfer Activity



Call Work Codes

General Questions

25 Office Locations, Hours, Mailing Address, Street Address

Driver Services Codes

30 Obtaining a DL – Not suspended (How to...)

31 Failure to Pay Traffic Ticket

32 Other Driver Suspension (not FR nor FTPPT) (includes DUI, DUS, HO, etc.)

33 Other Traffic Ticket Questions (Points, not on system, etc.)

34 Other Driver related questions (non-FR)

Insurance and Accident (FR) Codes

40 SR-22 Questions

41 Random Sampling

42 Other Insurance Related Suspensions (FR4, FR7, etc.)

43 Other Insurance Questions unrelated to Suspensions

44 Accident Suspensions (FR Accident, FR5, Default, Judgments)

45 Other Accident Questions unrelated to Suspensions (Accident Report, etc.)

Titles and Registration Codes

50 Mobile Home, Repossessed, Salvage, Revocations or Suspense Titles

51 License Plate Suspensions – Property Tax

52 Other License Plate Suspensions

53 First Time Registration, Titling and Specialized and Personalized Plates

54 Replacements or renewals of Plates, Titles, Registration or Decals

55 Other Titles and Registration Questions including Address Changes

60 Lienholder Inquiries

Appendix F