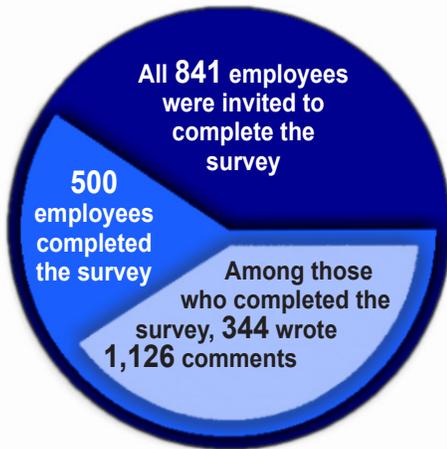


**BACKGROUND:** As part of the strategic planning process being conducted by DAS leadership, surveys were conducted to get input from external customers and DAS employees. This report provides findings from the **employee survey** conducted July 15-25, 2011.



**SKY-HIGH RESPONSE RATE:** 500 DAS employees completed the survey, out of a total agency population of 841. That's a response rate of 59% – far beyond what is typical for most surveys.

**THOUGHTFUL COMMENTS:** Employees provided 1,126 comments, with 344 people writing at least one comment. That's 69% of all survey-takers – and 41% of everyone in our agency.

Page 1 → **Key Findings**

Page 2 → **Message from Director Blair**

*Beginning on page 3, the report gives you high-level themes and sample comments.*

Pages 3-5 → **Guiding Principle #1**  
DAS will be the agency of choice for employment.

Pages 6-8 → **Guiding Principle #2**  
DAS is the service provider of choice for our customers.

Pages 9-11 → **Guiding Principle #3**  
DAS will operate more efficiently by using a common sense approach...

Pages 12-14 → **Guiding Principle #4**  
DAS will no longer operate in "silos." Instead, all divisions will work together...

Page 15 → **Survey Question #5**  
Are there other guiding principles to consider?

### IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES:

If you were among those who completed the survey, you'll recall using a 1-to-10 scale. You rated each of four proposed guiding principles in terms of "importance" and "current ranking." The results (on the right) show agreement among survey-takers that all four principles are very important – the "importance" average for each principle ranges from 8.4 to 9.0 on the 1-to-10 scale.

### ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT:

The numbers are lower on ratings that show how we're currently doing in terms of the four principles – the "current" average ranges from 4.5 to 5.5, also on a 1-to-10 scale.

*See the rest of this report for much more information...*

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

### SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1 to 10\*

1. DAS will be the agency of choice for employment.	How important is this guiding principle to the success of DAS?	8.7
	Where do you think DAS currently ranks in meeting this guiding principle?	4.5
2. DAS is the service provider of choice for our customers.	How important is this guiding principle to the success of DAS?	9.0
	Where do you think DAS currently ranks in meeting this guiding principle?	5.5
3. DAS will operate more efficiently by using a common sense approach to our business practices and processes.	How important is this guiding principle to the success of DAS?	8.7
	Where do you think DAS currently ranks in meeting this guiding principle?	5.1
4. DAS will no longer operate in "silos." Instead, all divisions will work together to become one cohesive DAS.	How important is this guiding principle to the success of DAS?	8.4
	Where do you think DAS currently ranks in meeting this guiding principle?	4.6

\*Importance scale: 1 = Not at all important → 10 = Extremely important

\*Current rank scale: 1 = Does not meet this guiding principle at all → 10 = Meets in all aspects

August 2011

Dear DAS Employee,

Here it is, ready for your review – a summary of findings from our 2011 employee survey on guiding principles.

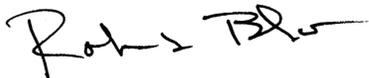
There's a lot of good news here, starting with the positive response. Five hundred DAS employees completed the survey, and 344 people used the comment sections to share their observations, insights, and improvement ideas. This summary report gives you the highlights. It shows the 1-to-10 ratings for each of the guiding principles, along with key themes and a sample of employee comments.

With the survey completed and the input being circulated to everyone in our agency, we're off to a good start with this. But you and I both know what often happens with employee surveys. They end up on the shelf gathering dust.

As the DAS Director, I'm going to do everything I can to make sure this survey ends up fueling a sincere and steady improvement process that benefits DAS employees and our many customers. The DAS Senior Team and I are using the findings to gain a better understanding of our strengths and improvement opportunities as an agency. We're weaving key survey findings into our agency goals and strategies. And a team subgroup is developing practical steps to use the survey results as a springboard to greater dialogue, recognition, learning, and more.

We are hoping that you too will put the survey findings to work. This report is a great place to start because it's full of useful ideas. Perhaps you can talk about it with co-workers – and find one or two actions to carry out right away. If you have regular meetings, consider making the survey findings an agenda item – with the intent of uncovering one or two actions that will benefit you and your customers.

Many thanks to the 500 DAS employees who completed the survey, to the 841 DAS employees who serve customers every day, and to all of you who are joining me in putting the survey findings to work.



Robert Blair  
Director

# 1 Guiding Principle #1

## DAS will be the agency of choice for employment.

This guiding principle prompted comments from 261 survey takers – the most comments for any of the survey items. More than half of those who rated this principle wrote suggestions and observations. Here are some of the key themes that emerged:

### Wording issues regarding this guiding principle

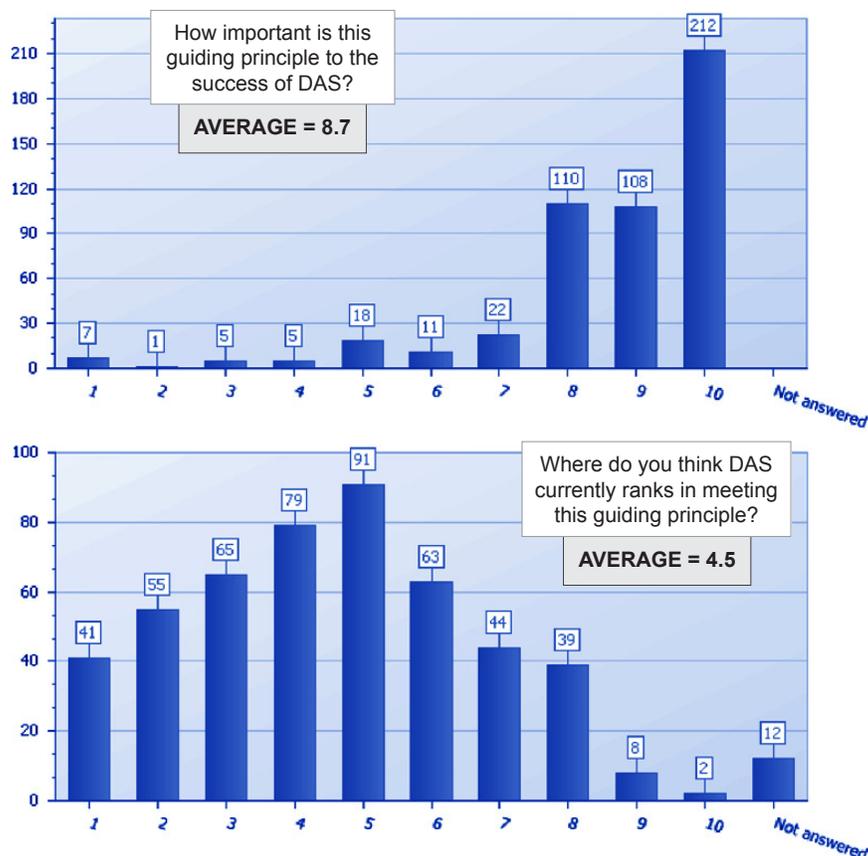
Some respondents expressed concern about the phrasing of this guiding principle, saying it conveys a competitiveness that might go against the DAS mission of supporting other agencies. One person explained: *“This guiding principle should be: ‘DAS will be a great place to work.’ A subtle difference, but calling DAS the ‘agency of choice’ sounds very self important and conveys that we are better than other state agencies. We should want to be the best, but the way we communicate it comes across as arrogant to our agency customers and is the root of many of DAS problems. Another person wrote: “This guiding principle seems to position DAS against the other agencies in terms of superiority, which seems counter to other stated goals of having Ohio agencies and staff think and act as an enterprise and not as individual silos.”*

### Development and Advancement

The importance of career paths, learning opportunities, and advancement opportunities came up often in people’s comments. Many expressed their belief that advancement is limited internally within DAS – and that growth opportunities of this nature are crucial to their viewing the agency as an employer of choice.

Development and advancement are high priorities for people, but they mean different things to different people. Some people cited the need for additional mentoring situations. Others focused on a greater need for training and job shadowing. Others mentioned the importance of promoting from within, reducing the use of temporary workers, and getting assistance in proactively creating a personal career path.

One person provided a cautionary note: *“More mentoring is needed and DAS needs to take its EEO policy seriously. I see male employees rising through the ranks of the agency and being given the advantage of informal mentoring by more senior male employees but I don’t see any path to advancement in*



*this agency for women. I have resigned myself to the fact that the 'good old boys' network is the way it is in this agency and that no amount of effort on my part is going to result in promotion. Age discrimination is also a problem. Older employees are made to feel that their ideas are not important and that the best contribution they can make to the agency's success would be to retire. In the long run, this attitude will hurt the agency as all employees have something of value to contribute in a culture that nurtures diversity."*

## Internal Communication

Numerous people highlight internal communication as a crucial aspect of an employer-of-choice organization. They defined "communication" in many ways, citing everything from internal newsletters to visits with the Director and other senior leaders to regular staff meetings to an active intranet. The message comes across loud and clear: Employees want to be kept in the informational loops.

*"It is the age-old issue of trying to maintain communication between all tiers of employees. If there isn't clear communication as to the strategy and direction and how an employee's job supports that, then it is difficult to have job satisfaction as opposed to just getting a paycheck. Suggestion: establish a means of communicating regularly what the overall strategy and direction is for the agency -- and identify how the different areas of DAS support the strategy and direction."*

## Employee Involvement and Empowerment

For many respondents who shared comments, the key attribute of a choice workplace is the opportunity to (at a minimum) provide input and (ideally) be empowered to access information, team up with colleagues, make decisions, and shape how they go about their work.

Some respondents noted that "involvement" and "inclusion" can be as easy as asking. *"Ask for employee opinions when considering changes to the areas that they are experts in. What could make them feel ownership of their job more than that?"*

Some of the commenters cited this as a strength, but many more mentioned it as an opportunity for improvement. One person wrote: *"At the present time my impression is that little consideration is given to input from employees. There is talk about the importance of such input, but behaviors and approaches are not changing. In particular I feel there are many ways in which staff and management fail to include feedback options during the planning stages. It appears that employee input is a to-do list item that is addressed at the end of a project as a check-off item rather than at the end of the project as an input. Neither do I feel that consideration is given to the question of 'What will we do with the data after we get it?' 'How would we implement suggestions?' 'How would we provide feedback in ways that demonstrate that consideration was given to the employee input?' I have been completing 'anonymous' surveys for years and have yet to recognize a change that came about as a result of survey data."*

**Ask for employee opinions when considering changes to the areas that they are experts in. What could make them feel ownership of their job more than that?**

*"I find it ironic that DAS is talking about employee contributions being valued and employees being included in the decision-making; however, only senior team members were included to draft the mission statement, vision and goals. If you're going to preach these virtues then DAS employees should have been included in these meetings. Why would you have a senior team that has virtually no experience in running DAS try and draft these goals? Why doesn't DAS draw from the pool of talent that has been working here for several years or even decades?"*

## Fairness, Trust, Respect

Basic issues of civility were cited as important foundational elements of a great workplace. Fairness, trust, and respect were cited by many. One person affirmed this while highlighting some of the above issues of communication and involvement: *“Ensure employees feel valued, respected and appreciated. Build mutual trust and respect. Provide open communication for a positive and productive environment. Involve employees and assist them in achieving their potential and reinforce belief in the Agency - that the Agency is genuinely committed to these principles and do (follow through) what they say they will do.”*

***Ensure employees feel valued, respected and appreciated. Build mutual trust and respect. Provide open communication for a positive and productive environment.***

Flexibility also came up, often mentioned in the context of trust. Some commenters asked for greater flexibility with working arrangements, including telecommuting and four 10-hour workdays. A number of people noted that these arrangements are commonplace in the private sector.

### Management Capability

It's said that people don't choose to leave their jobs, they choose to leave their bosses. That belief was supported from some of the comments in which respondents cited a supportive, empowering supervisor as a crucial factor in building a workplace of choice. For example: *“Hire and retain managers who respect and value their employees. Replace managers who view their employees as an inconvenience to be dealt with or view their employees as a necessary evil.”*

*“360 degree evaluation of managers and supervisors, tied to any promotions or bonuses said member of management may receive. Especially included should be subordinates, internal and external customers, and peers. Management should always ask the employee most affected by a change for their input in order to see the REAL best way to do a task; rather than sitting behind a desk and dreaming up what they THINK or HOPE will work. You've got a LOT of corporate knowledge around, and it's foolish not to use it.”*

## Rewards and Recognition

People agree that appreciation and recognition are essential, and many respondents said that more people could be doing more every day to thank their co-workers and informally call out their great work. There's an understanding that this doesn't take some special program – that anyone can and should make appreciation and recognition a part of how they go about their work with colleagues.

Some people called for consistent implementation of a reward and recognition *program* – while others urged against this, saying that spotty implementation leads to a situation where some work areas enjoy recognition and others don't. Others cited problems with having a few people selecting reward recipients.

A representative comment in favor: *“Have recognition programs that truly recognize outstanding accomplishments/achievements that go above and beyond the call of duty.”*

A very different perspective: *“Please, no more recognition programs! They always end up being a joke among the silent majority of DAS employees. It's always the same group of people that nominate each other and receive the rewards. We need to spend time and energy on building a strong team.”*

## 2 Guiding Principle #2 DAS is the service provider of choice for our customers.

For this guiding principle focusing on customers, 256 comments coalesced into four themes:

### Strategic Positioning

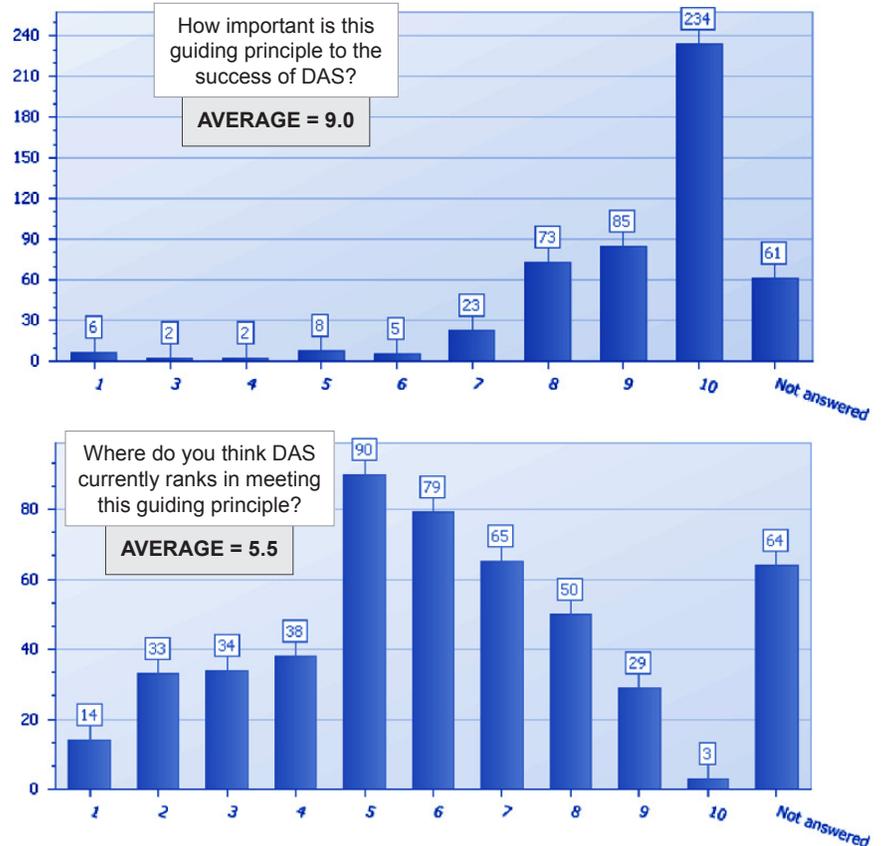
About 20 respondents commented on the distinction of DAS being a *provider* of choice, the *only* choice, and the *mandated* choice. Some wrote that because DAS is sometimes the *only* choice or the *mandated* choice, customers can end up being taken for granted – and the internal mindset of being a *provider* of choice fails to gain traction.

Several survey-takers framed this challenge as a positioning issue: How does DAS want to think of itself, define itself, and position itself in the marketplace? One person wrote: *“Marketing ourselves as the provider of choice is self-defeating when agencies have no choice. Instead of being experts, we should focus on being ‘professional and capable service providers,’ ‘problem solvers,’ ‘trusted partners.’ Our customers have needs, and their biggest reservations toward doing business with DAS are: 1) They are afraid we will restrict them, limit their freedom/flexibility. 2) They are afraid that we won’t deliver. All too often, DAS meets this with a ‘we’re the best, and you’ll do things our way’ approach, which poisons the relationship.”*

Another person echoed several survey-takers by asking “whether DAS will aspire to strategic as well as tactical ‘partnerships’” with its customers: *“A critical question...is whether DAS management prefers to take a secondary tactical role where it is treated by its customers as merely an arms length vendor trying to align with their customer’s ever shifting needs..., or whether DAS will aspire to strategic as well as tactical ‘partnerships’ (i.e., defined shared interests/objectives/risks), participating with DAS customer agencies in successfully executing the customer specific mission/outcomes in a win/win framework.”*

Building on this, one person underscored the importance of service: *“I don’t think being a provider of ‘choice’ is as important as providing quality service. I don’t believe agencies would mind being required to use DAS services, as long as we provide good customer service and a quality product.”*

Benchmarking also came up, with commenters saying that if DAS intends to position itself as a provider of choice, it needs to stay up to date on key industry information in the public and private sector, including best practices, pricing data, essential metrics, and so on.



## Service Orientation

Nearly one in five commenters wrote about the importance of creating a workplace where the culture is defined by service – and staff make service to external and internal customers their highest priority. These comments from two survey-takers capture the essence of what many people had to say:

*“The culture of DAS must change from a ‘we are in charge’ attitude to a ‘how can I help’ position.”*

*“I am not sure how you change the culture, but somehow we have to become the agency that people want to come to rather than avoid or try to get around. Making other agency’s lives easier is the answer, and if we can live up to our ‘solutions’ slogan, we will become the ‘go-to’ agency for state government.”*

There’s no shortage of specific ideas from staff on how to turn this service mindset into everyday action. Here’s a sample of suggestions from respondents:

**Leadership must recognize that their direct reports are their number one customer.**

*Ensuring resources to do their job, managing performance and attending to (employee) needs first will create the ripple effect that will eventually reach the ultimate customer.*

*“Create a comprehensive, standard directory of services that lists the products and services, etc., provided by each division, section, and unit within the section. Distribute to agencies...”*

*“The services catalog focuses on OIT/IDS and what it can do. Instead, it should focus on customers’ needs, along with how IDS can meet those needs and at what price. In other words, the catalog should sell.”*

*“We need to provide the agencies with customer engagement staff who will work with them to assess their needs.”*

*“DAS needs customer account teams and/or service delivery managers who are empowered to work across silos on behalf of customers to insure customers stay with DAS.”*

Development of a service culture is made difficult in some cases because *“many personnel in program units have little interaction with our customers. As a result, they are more internally focused in their efforts and are not thinking like customers when it comes to delivering services.”*

Leadership and “walking the talk” of service also came up as a crucial factor.

One person explained: *“A customer service mindset must be modeled by all leaders. To accomplish this, leadership must recognize that their direct reports are their number one customer. Ensuring resources to do their job, managing performance (do this well) and attending to their needs first will create the ripple effect that will eventually reach the ultimate customer (in the State’s case, the taxpayer).”*

## Communicating with Customers

Nearly a third of the people commenting on this guiding principle highlighted the importance getting closer to customers, working harder to understand their needs and goals, ensuring ongoing communication, and generally helping customers be successful. Across most of these comments, the central theme was a call for better two-way communication between DAS staff and each of its customers.

People shared many ideas for taking these good intentions and turning them into action. Here is a sample:

*“Create an outreach team to fulfill a public relations/marketing aspect for our agency and services.”*

*“DAS could create a ‘customer service hotline’ for the agencies to call when they are not sure who they need to call.*

*“Have monthly or bimonthly customer meetings to provide a platform for our customers to discuss their current business needs. (The meetings should be attended by the Outreach team, service managers, and upper management to extend a ‘welcome’ and to offer solutions to customer problems.)”*

*“In addition to attending the staff meetings of other agencies, we could offer tours of our departments (e.g., while planning a print job, tour the Print department to see their services in action...)”*

*“Establish an agency liaison for each agency. Meet with the agency quarterly to get an understanding of their upcoming needs.”*

*“Have an annual knowledge exchange with all agencies that DAS serves. Have periodic surveys go out to the DAS agencies to keep on top of the needs of our clients.”*

*“Thinking specifically of OIT, agencies need an ‘OIT Account Executive (or Team)’ that can guide them through OIT’s service offerings....”*

*All too often, negative feedback is viewed as ‘sour grapes’ when it should be viewed as an opportunity to open a dialogue with the customer about potential changes we could make.*

One person described how “negative feedback” from customers can be the key to improvement: *“We have to require program leaders to poll their customers and be responsive to feedback...both good and bad. All too often, negative feedback is viewed as ‘sour grapes’ when it should be viewed as an opportunity to open a dialogue with the customer about potential changes we could make. We need to listen to them!!! We need to be the model of what we are promoting.”*

## Internal Support and Improvement

Many of the people who commented on DAS being a “provider of choice” for its customers focused on the need for internal support to get the job done. “Support” was defined in various ways, but several factors rose to the surface: trust from management, greater empowerment (see the 1st guiding principle), equipment, training, better communication between sections and other work areas (see the 4th guiding principle), wiser use of staff (to better match workforce supply and service demand), etc.

Accountability for service also emerged as a factor, as shown by these comments: *“Staff should be evaluated by their customers quarterly to have up to date data on performance.” “Have some type of quantitative customer service metric as part of performance evaluations.” “Too often some of our employees are the slackers and do not pull their fair share of work. Unfortunately the managers often overlook this conduct and pass off the work to others that are capable.”*

Echoing the importance of the guiding principle on operating more efficiently, many comments noted that a sustained focus on customers requires ongoing improvement of processes and practices – to ensure that customers are getting services that are simpler, faster, better, and more cost effective.

## Guiding Principle #3

# 3 DAS will operate more efficiently by using a common sense approach to our business practices and processes.

Six in ten people who rated this guiding principle also wrote comments. The following summarizes their comments.

## Review Work Processes

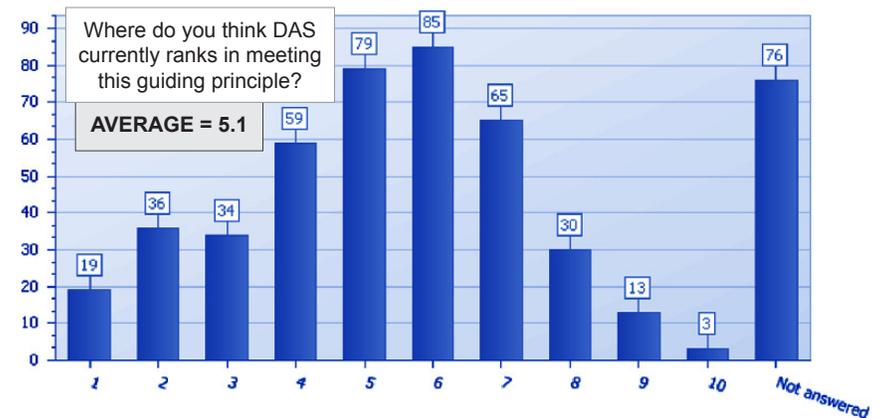
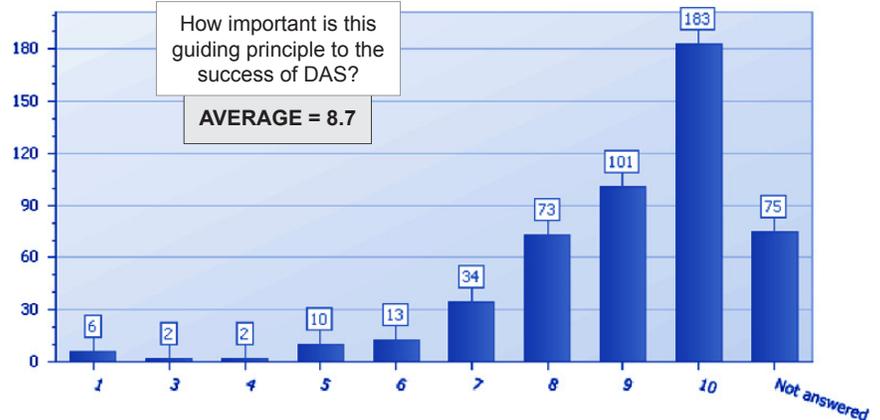
Most of the input from DAS employees about using a common sense approach to business practices came in the area of work processes. They support taking a fresh look at work processes as a way of achieving gains in efficiency. Employees suggested that DAS develop process maps of all critical functions, and then review the mapped processes to:

- Eliminate redundancies, waste, and non-value-added steps
- Streamline processes (make them simpler, faster, better, and more cost effective)
- Determine if automation is applicable, and use electronic signatures whenever possible
- Delegate authority whenever possible to reduce multiple supervisory approvals

Several employees suggested that DAS make greater use of Kaizen events to identify inefficiencies and use cross-functional teams to implement changes. Kaizen events are fast-paced projects that go from process mapping and analysis to process overhaul and the start of implementation – all in one week. Staff advise that DAS make sure they (Kaizen events) are open to all areas and not just run by the managers. Additionally, staff want management to empower teams to implement the recommended process changes. *“If Kaizen is applied correctly, the process works, changes mindsets, and improves morale.”*

Here is a sample of related comments:

*“Some processes have far too many touch points. Some decision trees can be pruned and others can be cut down. Authority should be delegated where possible – not every decision needs thirteen reviews and final approval by a deputy director. These decisions become very expensive. Touch things as few times as necessary while still making prudent decisions. This would apply to DAS’ myriad governance and approval processes.”*



*“Just as in the private sector, we must continually improve our business processes to become more efficient. Creating ‘cost saving/business process’ work groups who meet once a month in all departments would be a good method. These groups would meet to bounce cost saving/business process ideas off each other, and report to Director Blair with their brainstorming ideas... To coincide with these groups, management MUST take the ideas into consideration and actually implement a certain percentage of them in each area. No one wants to meet and come up with really good ideas only to never hear of them getting implemented.”*

*“All organizations can continually improve. Generally, staff are not the problem, processes are.”*

## Achieving Efficiencies

Employees comment that DAS needs to get rid of the red tape from the contract and procurement processes. There is a culture of keeping processes the same “because it’s the State” or “because we always have” done it that way without regard to the cost of doing business or the inconvenience to customers. Sometimes the red tape is due to legislative requirements (DMA form), so DAS should work with legislators to remove some of these mandates. DAS management needs to empower employees and eliminate additional, time-consuming reviews that do not add value.

Staff suggested that DAS should standardize business processes for all agencies instead of applying different rules to different agencies. Internally, DAS should standardize the processes used among the various divisions to prevent duplication of efforts and create consistency of information. Instead of having five slightly different processes filling the same basic purpose, have just one.

*“Eliminate obstacles that provide no business value at all. Remove red tape from our contract and procurement processes.”*

*“Make solution-oriented thinking, process time reduction, and cost reduction critical success factors. Certain areas within DAS are more focused on following steps in a process than the cost impact of that process.”*

*“I think the agency has already been remarkably flexible as the budget and size of staff have shrunk over the past few funding cycles. Additional changes requiring ORC revisions may be the greatest source of continued and additional savings. A systematic review of business processes to determine opportunities for eliminating, modifying or even privatizing functions to save dollars will require support from top administrators and the prioritization of such tasks.”*

*“Although this is very general, I think each and every area has room for improvement. There has been so much change in technology over the past 5-10 years and I feel there are many things we do ‘just because we’ve always done them.’ As the workforce changes (retirements, etc.), this is our opportunity to ask in EVERY area – why do we do each thing we do? Why do we complete that form? Is it important? Is there a better way? Who is it useful to?”*

*As the workforce changes, this is our opportunity to ask in EVERY area – why do we do each thing we do? Why do we complete that form? Is it important? Is there a better way? Who is it useful to?*

## Policies and Procedures

Many employees indicated that DAS needs to document our policies and procedures, understand why we are doing our daily tasks, and eliminate things we don’t need to do which would in turn reduce costs

for our customers. In addition, we need to eliminate redundant processes, revisit laws and mandates to see if there is any flexibility in implementation, and decentralize processes and decisions where possible.

**Review current policies and processes to make sure they are still valid and needed.... Some practices are inefficient, but they continue to be followed because of habit.**

*“Review current policies and processes to make sure they are still valid and needed. Also, review existing practices and see if they are related to a policy or if the practice can be eliminated to streamline a process. Some practices are inefficient, but they continue to be followed because of habit.”*

*“There continue to be too many steps of approval for processing items. This bogs down expectations of customers. First, make things simpler, then post a clear step by step outline of the time it takes to accomplish a task. Every customer can see this and understand all that is involved, thereby making all expectations clear. This should minimize disappointment.”*

### **Reports**

Many comments focused on inefficiencies in producing reports. People suggested eliminating rarely used reports, posting reports online instead of producing paper copies, and ending the double processing in filling out the Time Reporting Form. OAKS reporting capabilities were noted to be both a vehicle that produces too much paper and a means to automate processes and reduce paper.

*“Stop wasting employees’ time on creating reports that no one reads and that take more time to complete, which in turn decreases efficiency. This is an important concept – other agencies look at DAS like the agency that sets the rules and they don’t even follow them.”*

*“Use OAKS more efficiently to reduce paper copies.”*

### **Cost Recovery and Pricing**

Some employees suggested that DAS re-examine the policy of cost recovery as a billing model, theorizing that if services are important enough to provide, they are important enough to fund. The practice of billing causes layering of administrative overhead, charging back to internal workgroups, and it ends up inflating the cost of services and the use of taxpayer dollars.

DAS needs to monitor the cost of providing services internally versus the cost of like services in the private sector, in order to keep our costs in check and provide competitive prices.

*“More emphasis and effort need to be put into a thoroughly defined rate structure that is based on actual costs. Many of the rates for services are inflated, due to old assumptions. A fresh look at this process with dedicated resources would yield a competitive product.”*

### **Customer Service**

Staff suggested that DAS customers need to be involved in determining a solution to their needs. OIT was cited as an example of a division that frequently tailors solutions to fit customer needs. *“We need to re-evaluate the things that DAS does for agencies that the agencies can do better for themselves, and then let them do it. DAS should ask customers regularly what is and is not working. Customers should also be involved in establishing DAS’ guiding principles.”*

Guiding Principle #4

# 4 DAS will no longer operate in “silos.” Instead, all divisions will work together to become one cohesive DAS.

Among employees who rated this guiding principle, 217 provided comments.

Overwhelmingly, employees observed that DAS operates in a siloed way to a large degree, and they called for a more unified agency. Staff comments focused mainly on cross-training staff, conducting regular staff meetings, and creating a communication tool to better educate employees of the functions of other divisions.

## Education and Training

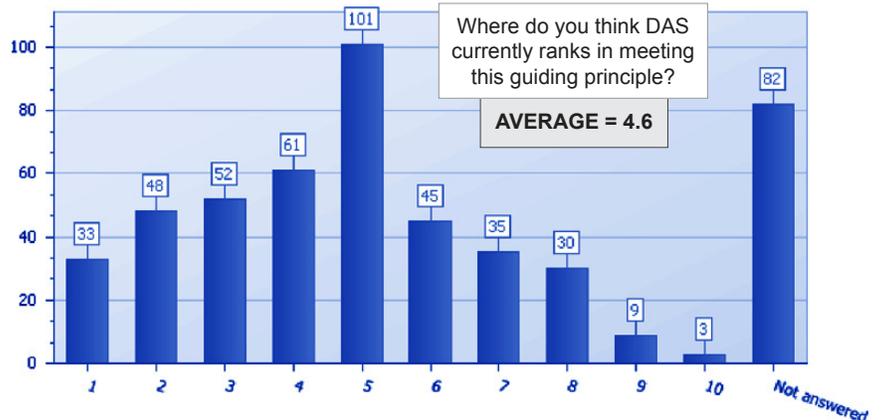
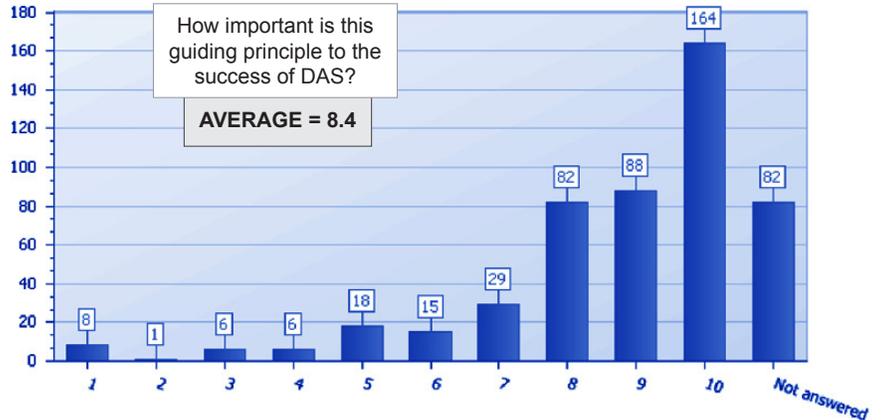
By far, the need for education and training for employees was the most frequently cited need in order to create a unified DAS. Thirty-eight respondents made this their main comment. In general, comments indicated that employees need a better overall understanding of the agency as a whole. A place to start would be to educate staff on the key components of the various divisions: their work products, tables of organization, goals, mission statements, and more. This could be done through meetings, newsletters, cross-training, shadowing, employee orientation sessions, and ongoing classes.

Some of the survey takers pressed for the formation of more cross-agency teams to bridge the gaps where silos currently exist. *“The best way to understand another section is to actually see it in action.”* Management should encourage cross-division project coordination, they said. Meetings and communications should also cross divisional boundaries to encourage a collective sense of identity and purpose.

There were suggestions to cross-train employees as part of career counseling and match people’s knowledge, skills, and abilities with jobs. Another thought was to hold a mini-orientation session to introduce staff to the duties of all the divisions to ensure that customers get the right service for their needs.

Yet another person recommended regularly scheduled informational meetings with divisions about new processes and new staff. Meet-and-greets between divisions could bring this guiding principle to life.

*“Breaking down the silos will be a huge endeavor, but it is something that needs done as quickly as possible to promote unity in the division. As it stands now, many employees don’t understand the relationship*



*we have with other divisions, so employee education must come first, before promoting to our business partners and customers.”*

## Agency Meetings

Another top suggestion was to hold meetings (of all types) to inform DAS staff of agency and division topics. Suggestions included quarterly ‘all division’ meetings, monthly town hall meetings, internal user-group meetings, division meetings, biannual department-wide meetings, and interdepartmental meetings.

*“Hold an all staff meeting in which each division presents its mission and functions to all DAS employees. Employees will start to think about information sharing in a different light if it is presented as an agency goal from the top down. It is difficult to think of ourselves as a cohesive unit without knowing what the other divisions are responsible for and who the contact people are.”*

*“Hold monthly town hall meetings to improve communication and keep everyone on the same page.”*

*“Hold agency wide staff meetings to facilitate an enterprise mentality.”*

## Communication

Many comments focused on the importance of communication in breaking down barriers to a cohesive DAS. Communication is key to the success of education, training initiatives, and agency-wide meetings. Staff indicated that they would like to see communication come downstream from the Director to the Division Chiefs to the staff. Meetings, webinars, SharePoint, and newsletters are among the tools people recommended for improving internal communication.

**Communication between divisions needs to be improved.... Employees feel unimportant and unappreciated when they come to find out about changes that affect their work environment after the fact or through informal channels.**

*“Communication between divisions needs to be improved so that everyone who works together is informed of what’s going on.... Employees feel unimportant and unappreciated when they come to find out about changes that affect their work environment after the fact or through informal channels.”*

*“Better communication from upper and middle managers down is essential to achieving cohesiveness within the agency.”*

*“Create a DAS SharePoint site for internal news. (Something as simple as an employee promotion may affect business in another division.) It could also be a place where complaints and compliments can be shared with the appropriate division for potential action.”*

*“Acknowledge the successes and stop referring to them as Silos when they are really Pillars of Excellence, each with valuable levels of expertise and work experiences that can be brought to bear on common concerns and issues.... An approachable management, clearly defined goals and objectives, a common understanding of the principles of customer service, and empowering workers through involvement in planning activities and setting of departmental goals. It’s the empowerment piece that is critical. The strategic planning process should not be limited to management. Including line staff in the process instills a feeling of ownership, both of the plan and of one’s personal responsibility within an agency.”*

*"It starts at the top. It is correct that individual divisions operate independently without understanding their relationship to other divisions or how they fit within the overall agency mission. That may be due to the fact that some supervisors, managers, etc. do not believe in the same goals/missions as others, and therefore rank and file employees will not believe either. How can the overall agency mission succeed if not everyone believes in it? It could be the best mission statement ever and it will never succeed if not everyone supports it. There is a good quote from Abraham Lincoln that says 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' We need to be united first, then success of the mission statement next."*

*"One cohesive DAS sounds ideal."*

### Seeing the Benefits of Division

Twelve respondents indicated that having a siloed approach is an effective way to operate because of the diversity of tasks that the department performs. Their comments include:

*"Our work is diversified into silo tasks so maybe that's not so bad. The bad is not knowing how we can work together to achieve better outcomes for our customers. This guiding principle may be too idealistic."*

*"Divisions should be allowed the opportunity to operate independently so long as the objectives and strategies are within the vision and mission of the Department. There is not a 'one size fits all' approach with the diversity of the function within DAS and creating such is very bureaucratic."*

*"I think an understanding of each other's work – yes. Understanding how we work together – yes. But I am not sure I understand the 'one agency' statement. We are a very diverse group with very diverse services. I am not sure we need to be one thing. I think there is strength in the individual nature of many of the groups. Big can sometimes equal a lack of individualism – which is one of our strengths."*

*"Centralization and 'one size fits all' solutions may seem like the way to go, but the divisions are diverse for a reason – they have different goals and purposes. Trying to mash them all together will only lead to greater inefficiencies."*

### Customer Service

*"I think one benchmark could be how well services are provided from Division to Division internally before expecting high marks or return/repeat customers from the agencies. If we cannot rank ourselves well within and across those lines, how can there be an expectation for outsiders to want to use our staff. We all need to be able to 'sell' each other and create internal cohesion."*

*"Get rid of billing each other for services. A lot of times DAS hates to work with each other because of billing."*

**One benchmark could be how well services are provided from Division to Division internally before expecting high marks or return/repeat customers from the agencies.... We all need to be able to 'sell' each other and create internal cohesion.**

## Survey Question #5

# 5 Are there other guiding principles that DAS Senior Management should consider as they develop the strategic plan?

A total of 149 suggestions were provided in response to this question.

- Add accountability and people principles (communication, engagement, initiative) to the guiding principles. Embed these expectations into a competency map and a performance management system.
- Include the concept of diversity in the guiding principles. Add “generational” diversity to the other aspects of workforce diversity (gender, sex, religion, educational, and geographic) in the context of how different generations experience these factors.
- To be an attractive employer, the agency has to be on the cutting edge of technology and embrace flexible workplace principles. These are important to Gen Y employees (attracting and retaining).
- Empower employees to make more decisions without a lot of supervisor approvals. Make sure decisions are made timely. “Indecision is the enemy of action.”
- Ensure effective leaders by providing leadership development.
- Include the concept of shared responsibility for outcomes by including staff in crucial discussions and decisions, as appropriate.
- The missing elements are stewardship and trust.
- Integrity. We work to earn the position of trusted partner, advisor, coach, consultant, and facilitator.
- Need to add transparency in conducting business. Also, promote a high performing culture, proactive leadership, creating a workplace environment that fosters mutual respect, integrity, and professional conduct.

Additional comments:

*“When guiding principles are established, they need to be laid out on a foundation of a new culture based on governance through customer service, a sense of urgency, and a standard for quality of communication with a focus on logical prioritization.”*

*“You have identified great foundational process principles. Well done!”*

*“Always keep in mind the employee who is doing the job, whatever the change is...”*