



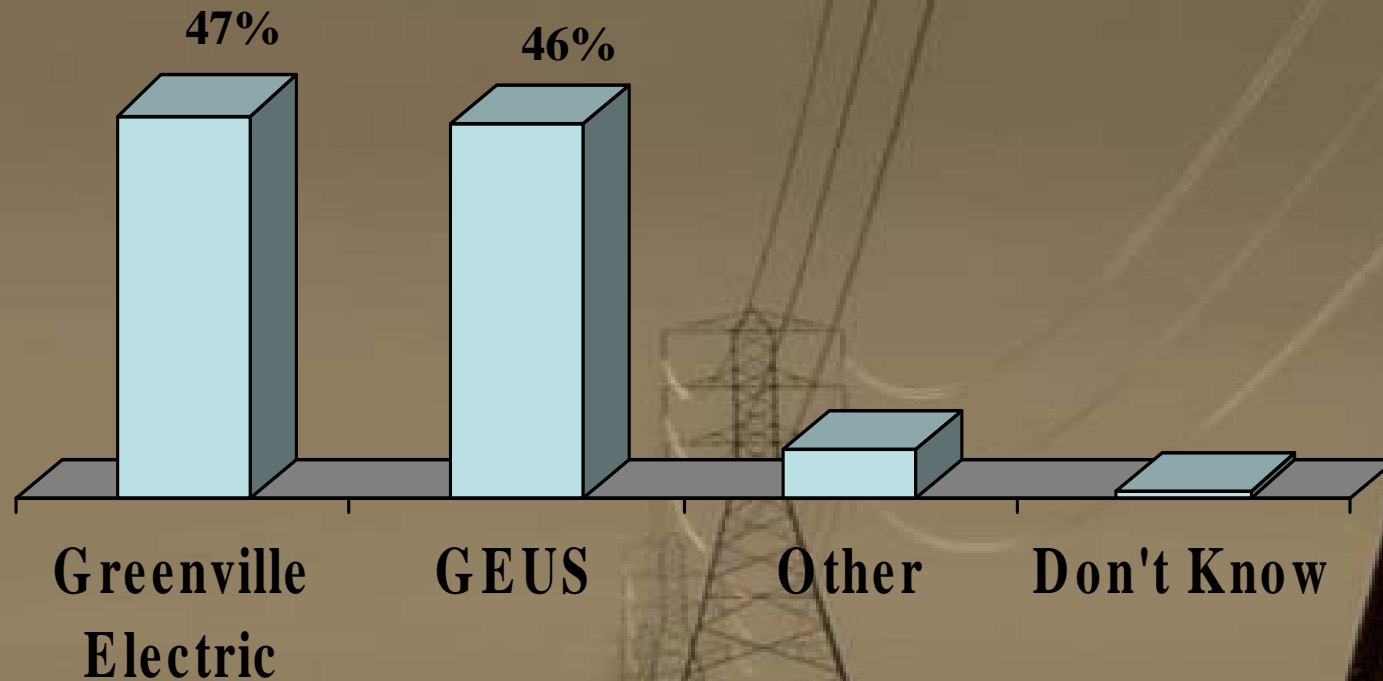
# Monitoring Utility Customer Perception: Is It Important?

TPPA Marketing &  
Customer Service Conference

# GEUS Project Overview - Energy

- 401 residential customers were surveyed by phone
- 95% Confidence Level / Error Margin +/-5%
- Key Measurement Areas:
  - Overall Satisfaction w/ Utility
  - Service Delivery/Reliability
  - Communication w/ Customers
  - Areas to Improve
- Survey was conducted in December

# *Can you name the utility?*





What to call  
GEUS has been  
a mystery since  
1891

# GEUS

It's  
JUICE!!!



*ENERGIZING THE COMMUNITY*

903.457.2800

www.geus.org



## Having a little trouble getting started?



Get energized with 'juice'  
cable & high-speed Internet

# GEUS



*Energizing the Community*



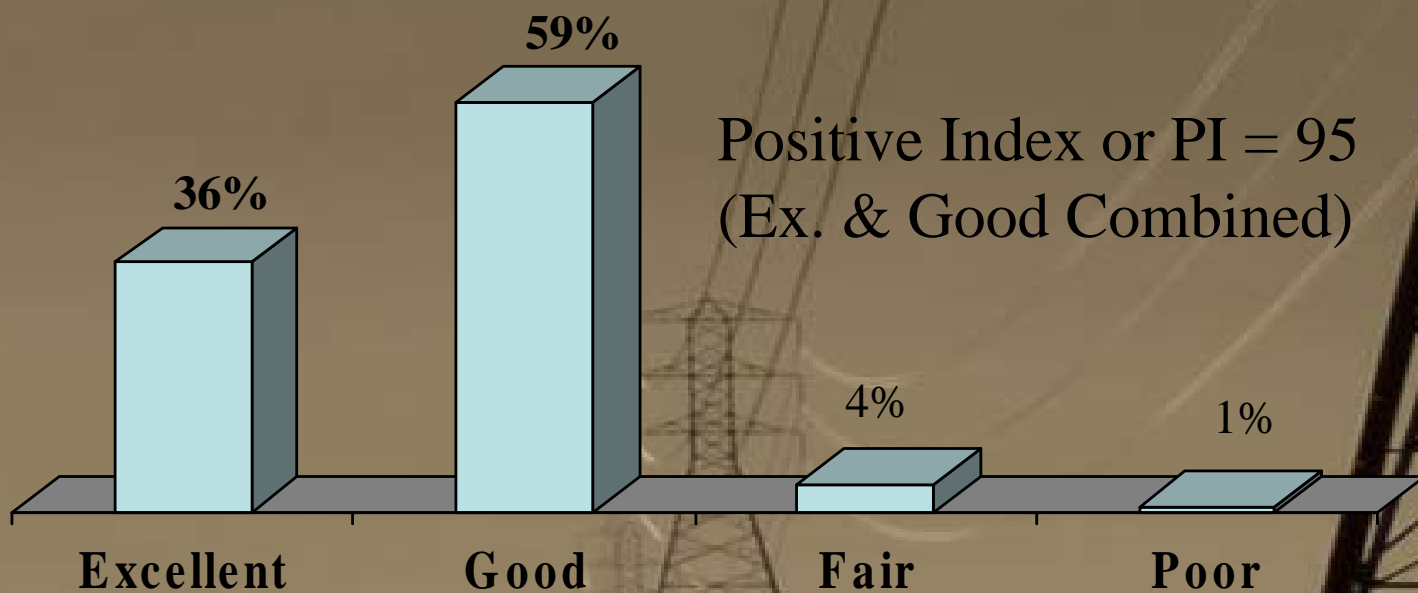
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**SDS**  
RESEARCH

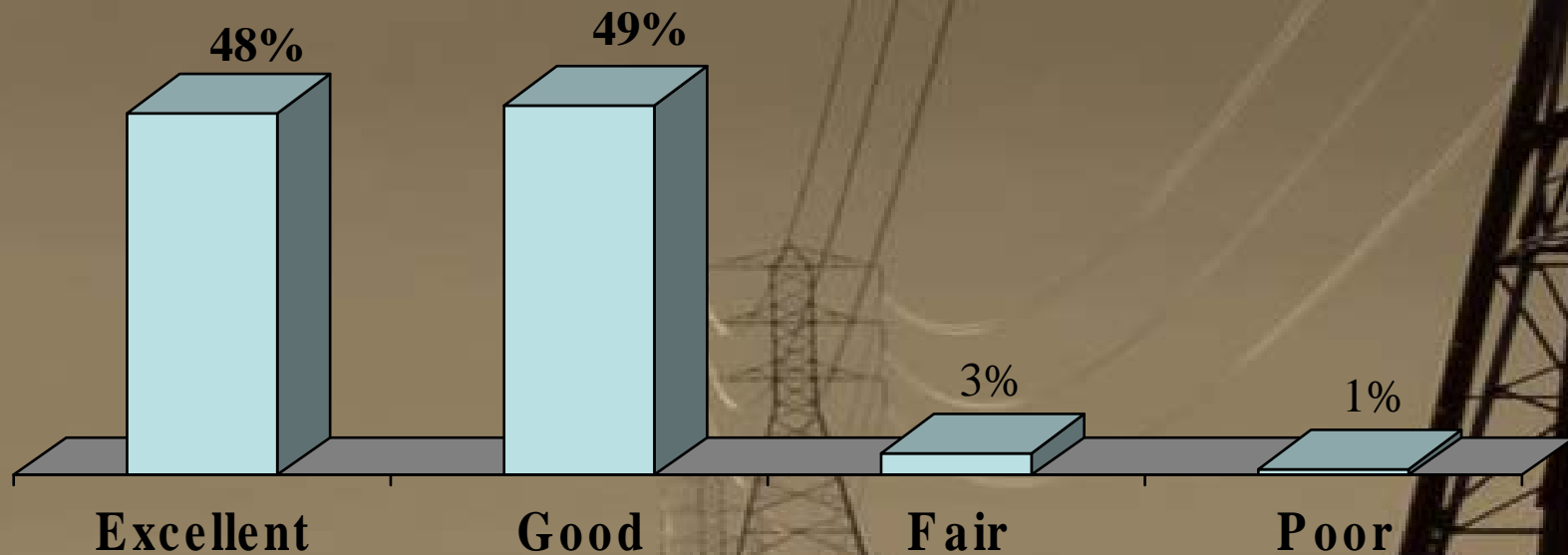
Providing Solutions Through Research

# Overall, how do you rate your electric service?

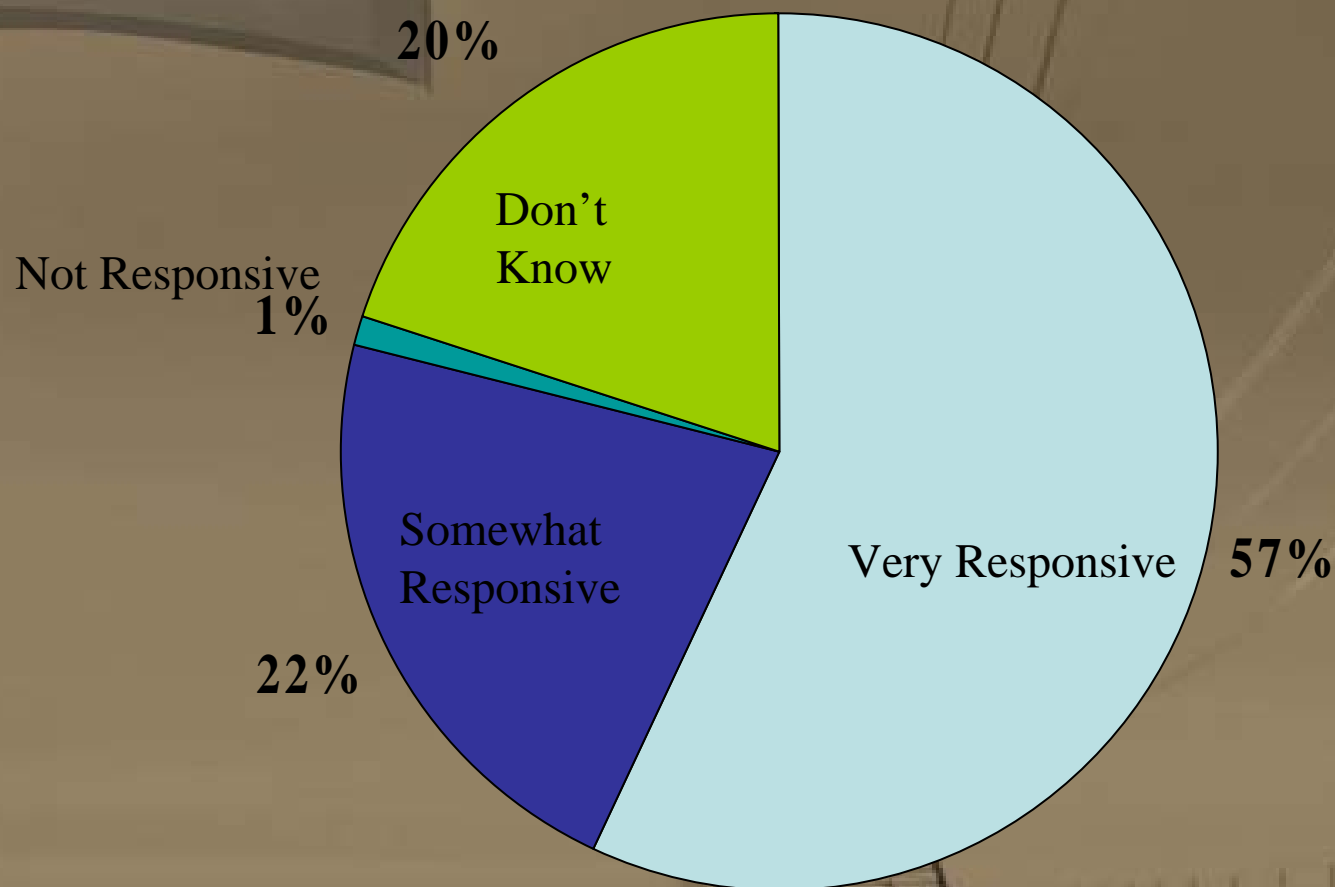


SDS Benchmarks: PI = 93 Ex 43%

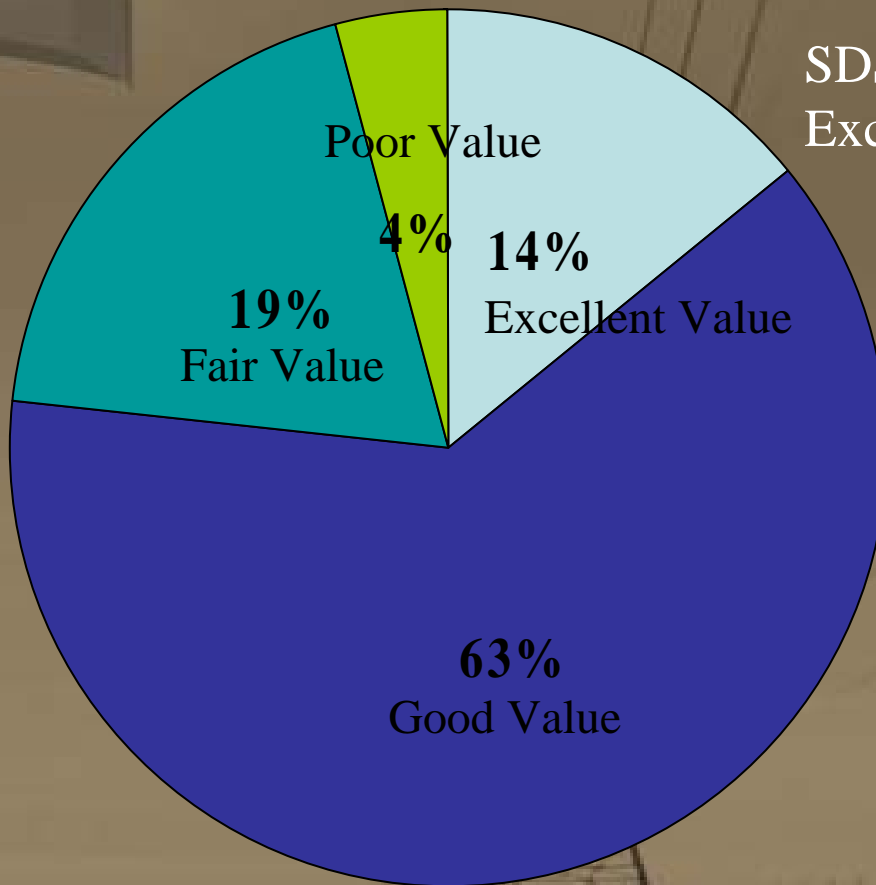
# *How do you rate electric service reliability?*



# *How responsive is utility in restoring power after an outage?*

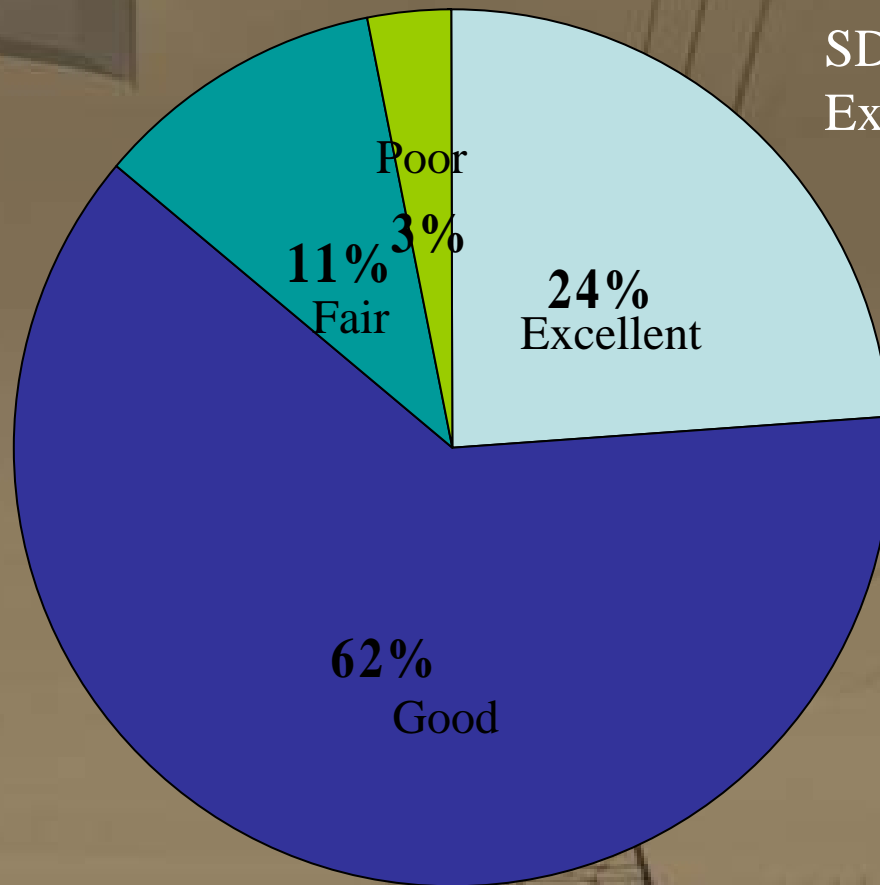


# How do you rate the value of your electric service?



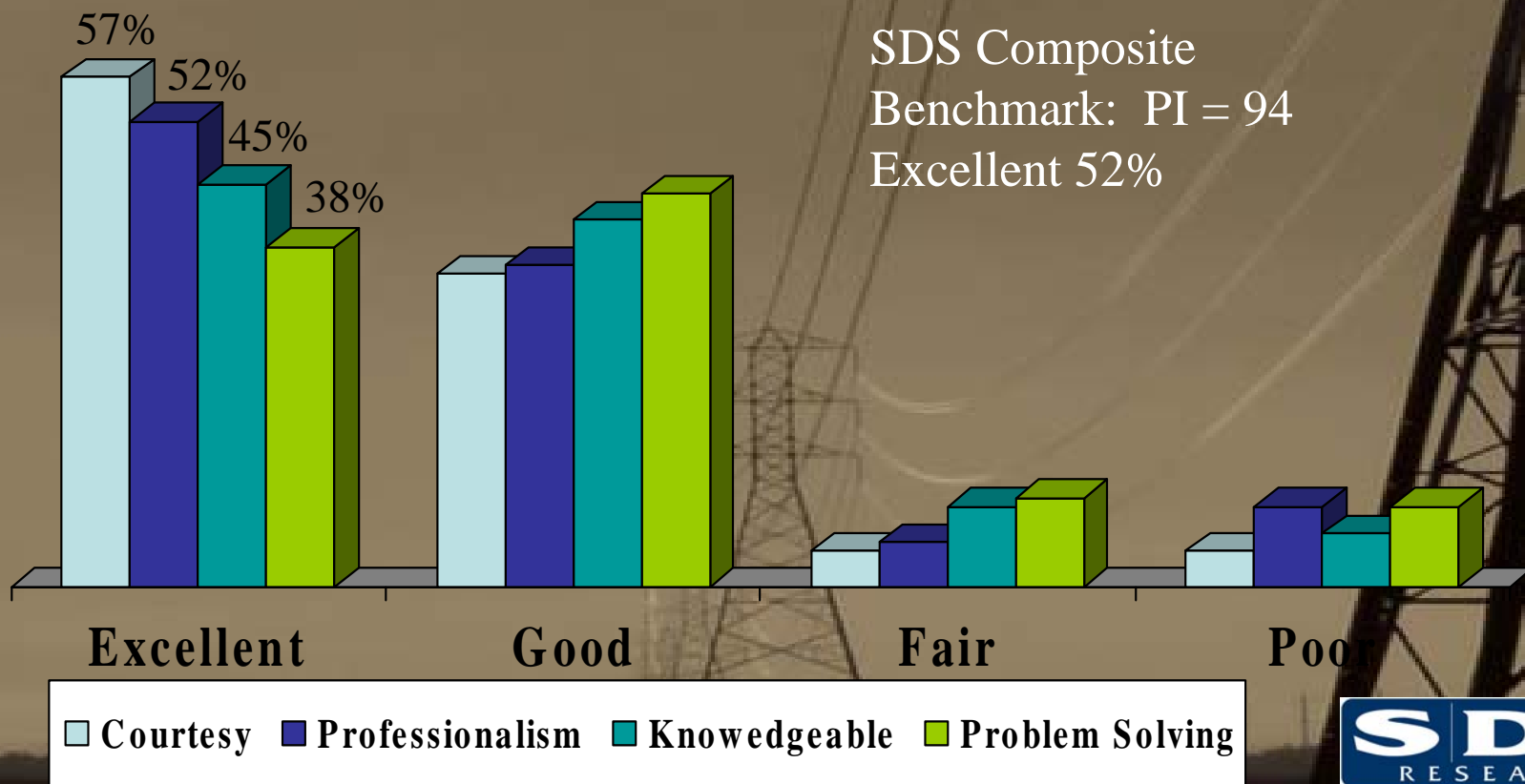
SDS Benchmarks: PI = 78  
Excellent Value 24%

# *How do you rate the utility's communication with customers?*



SDS Benchmark: PI = 88  
Excellent 32%

# How do you rate customer service reps on the following?



# *Miscellaneous Information:*

- Majority (88%) have not had service from other provider
- About half (48%) don't know how their rates compare with neighboring areas
- Most (57%) would not be willing to pay extra for a "green" energy option. Another 29% are not sure
- The majority of customers use either mail (40%) or drive-thru (35%) to pay their utility bill
- GEUS is rated fairly well in terms of being active in the community, with 26% rating excellent and 47% good
- Most customers read the newsletter either frequently (41%) or often (24%) and rate it good (69%) or excellent (19%)



# How Would You Respond?

- What percentage of your customers rate their service excellent?
- What percentage would choose another provider if they could save 5%, 10%?
- How many would recommend your utility to a friend or family member?
- How important is it that you know the answers to these questions?

# A Scary Quote:

A dissatisfied customer will tell as many as 8-16 others about an unpleasant experience with a product or service” --

**TARP**

# What Drives Customer Loyalty?

## Moments of truth

- New account set-up
- Storm/outage recovery
- Experience calling in to staff
- Community outreach
- Interact with your employees in the field
- Energy efficiency programs/advice
- Renewable Energy Options
- Talk to neighbors/friends/family
- Communications/Public Relations Efforts
- Hear or see advertising

# Credibility Comes From....?

- Building a Strong Relationship
- Service Performance
- Active, honest, forthright communication
  - Big C and little c
- Getting your story out there in the most positive, proactive light
  - Public Relations
  - Advertising and Marketing

# How Credible is Your Message?



# Why Do Electric Utilities Market?

- **Favorable Public Opinion**
  - Rate issues
  - New Construction (Generation, Transmission, etc.)
  - Right of way
- **Change Consumer Behavior**
  - Peak shaving - TOU
  - Conservation
  - Avoid dangerous behavior
  - Civic/Community focused
- **Sell new services**

# Where Does Research Come In?

- **Determine what customers think of you**
  - What are you doing well?
  - Where is there room for improvement?
  - Helps you determine how much lipstick is required...
- **Operational vs. Communications Issues**
  - What should you fix first?
  - Enhance your target marketing
    - » Which segments should you focus on?
    - » What are their hot buttons?
    - » Where can you best reach them?

# Measured Perception = Improved Loyalty

- **Up to date assessment of where you stand in consumers' eyes**
  - Awareness
  - Perceptions
  - Loyalty and engagement
  - Representative sample
- **Surface issues that need to be addressed**
  - Operational
  - Communication
  - Key drivers can help prioritize
- **Identify specific segments to focus on**
  - Media choices
  - Message themes
- **Raise consciousness within your organization**
  - Use it as a rallying cry – create ownership

# One & Done Don't Cut It

- Need regular updated snapshots
- Track progress
  - Operational issues
  - Communications issues
- Determine which marketing tools are working best/worst
- Adjust strategy if needed
- Gauge impact of external events

# Ultimate Goal?

- **Regularly track what consumers think**
  - Use research results to drive strategy
    - Help prioritize areas for improvement
  - Research results factored into employee compensation schemes
- **Employees take active role – won't happen otherwise**
  - Empowered to be active ambassadors
  - Two way communication
  - Shared mission
  - One-Call Resolution
- **Growth and improvement become habit**

# Each Utility CAN Do Better

## Need to Build Credibility – Drive Loyalty

- What do your customers think of you?
- Why it's important
- Strengths and areas for improvement
- Best ways to make improvement

## How?

- Involve Key Employees in Development of Research
- Regular Tracking of Customers' views
- Unbiased Reporting of Results
- Follow-up
- Encourage Employee Feedback – Employee Assessment?
- Adjust your measurement tools as needed

## Alan Richardson Quote:

*“Our longevity is a testament of our ability to change. So long as public power leaders have the wisdom to carry forward the old, but still contemporary, values of community service, customer orientation and local control, public power’s success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be assured.”*