



AMS IN FOCUS

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Visual Performance Management: Knowing Your Customer (Part 2) - End Users or Brokers

WHAT



HOW



WHY



WHY



The Arizona Management System (AMS) is based in part on principles of Lean management. Fundamental to understanding Lean is knowing who our customer is.

If we're not careful about correctly defining who the customer is, we can accidentally design waste into our processes because different roles lead to different values and different outcomes.

It's possible to have more than one type of customer, and they can be both internal and external to your agency, and they may have competing interests. For this reason, it is best to think of our "customer" as the ultimate external end user of our product or service. This way we can distinguish our customer from, say, a colleague who depends on our widget as part of a shared value stream, or a "broker" who does not personally use our product but transfers it to someone who does.

For example, who is the customer of a license plate? If you think it is the driver of the vehicle, you'd be wrong. The plate was designed to be used by law enforcement in identifying the vehicle and its lawful owner. MVD staff are brokers who pass the plate on to the driver, and the driver is a broker, too, who drives the plate around for police to look at.

This leads to another point: not every customer is a willing customer. DPS might stop a motorist for speeding and issue him a ticket. The motorist is the customer in this incident, and while he may be unhappy about receiving the ticket, he ultimately benefits by having an instructive,

legible ticket written and issued by a courteous state trooper who has the driver's safety, and the safety of other motorists, in mind.

Another example. Say it's your job to write and process permit applications. The facility owner is the ultimate end user of the permit, because she needs it to legally operate the business. But you might work with a broker, who in this case is a consultant who helps the owner manage the facility's regulatory affairs. The consultant might value something other than a permit application that is so simple, the facility owner could complete it without the consultant's help.



As state employees learning to use AMS tools and techniques to improve our operations, we are wise to involve customers early and often when we design or redesign our processes. And while we want to build quality and simplicity into our processes to improve work flow for ourselves, we should only do so if it eliminates waste and delivers best value for our customers.