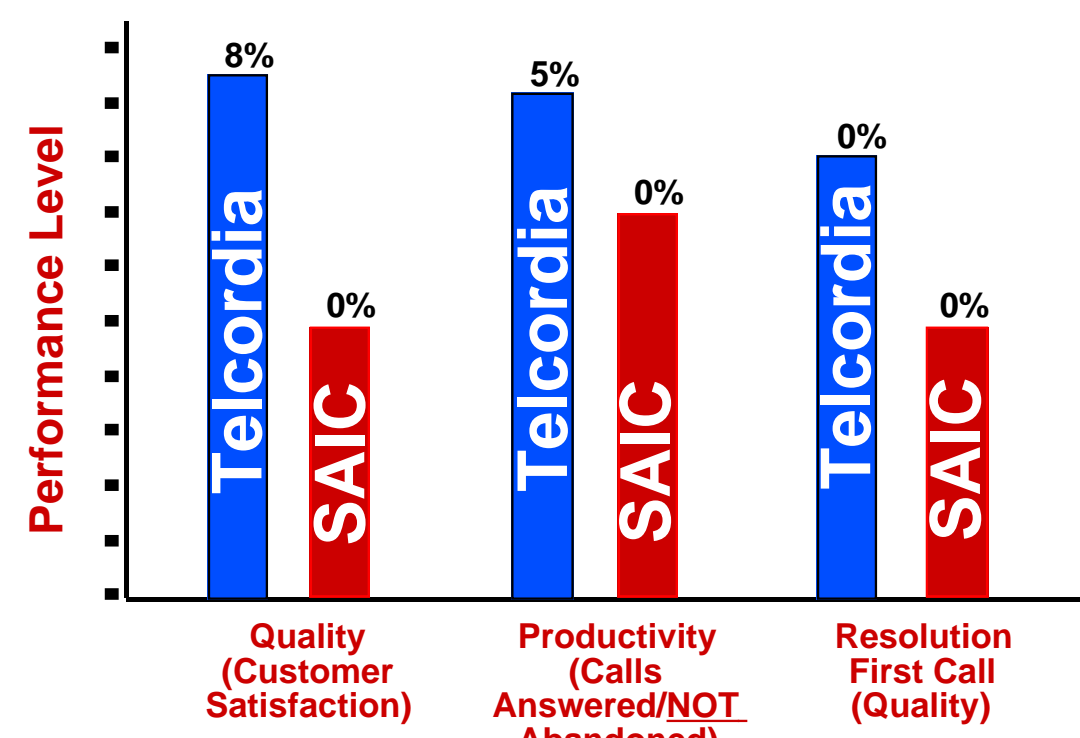


Executive Summary/Abstract

This performance improvement project was undertaken for the Computer Help Desk/Call Center within the Information Technology (IT) function for SAIC/Telcordia. Telcordia is the former Bell Communications Research (Bellcore) and was purchased by SAIC approximately 3 years prior to the project effort that we will present. The project was initiated after Telcordia's Help Desk was "re-engineered" by the company's CIO. It was the CIO who asked for an externally conducted performance project aimed at using Telcordia's Help Desk as the model for performer excellence that would be used to transform SAIC's Help Desk whose results were in need of improvement. However, results were not being consistently or reliably tracked for many metrics that were important to the CIO.

SAIC's results compared to Telcordia's, show a significant (PIP) Performance Improvement Potential



The project that was actually undertaken looked at Telcordia, first, with the objective of documenting the current relationships (interdependencies) as the Help Desk operated within the context of the IT organization and Telcordia, as well as the flow of accomplishments for the Help Desk function. In this way we were able to identify and recommend some performance improvements for Telcordia, the master performer Help Desk, prior to even addressing the same function within SAIC. Within 12 months following the Telcordia part of the project, Telcordia's Help Desk achieved the highest certification rating ever awarded by STI Knowledge, Inc. a third party certification company for Help Desk/Call Center functions.

The enhanced Help Desk model was what was implemented in SAIC whose improved results began to appear within 3 months. Though SAIC would have benefited from an overlay of Telcordia's original model of performance, by optimizing the performance model within Telcordia first, we were able to:

- take Telcordia from master performer to world class performer
- optimize the model that was going to be implemented within SAIC
- create/support a framework for continuous improvement for both companies
- introduce the new model into SAIC in a much more acceptable manner (That is, Telcordia had opportunities to improve also.)

The moral of the story is that even master performers can find improvement opportunities as long as they continue to look at themselves seeking to get "even better."

The Performance Problem/Opportunity

On objective and customer focused measures of performance, SAIC's Help Desk had significant performance improvement opportunity. This was important to the CIO since the Help Desk was (and is) the "face" of IT to the majority of its customer base. And yet, customers were typically calling an individual that they knew, rather than calling the Help Desk and "taking the risk" of working with the Agent who answered. Some called the main number and then complained about service. Some didn't bother to call at all.

The CIO knew that performance could be transformed, since he had already completed a dramatic transformation within Telcordia. He accomplished these improvements through the implementation of customer-focused measures while simultaneously supporting performers via the implementation of improved resources and automated job aids, performance based learning experiences and ongoing, specific, frequent and directly delivered feedback to Help Desk Agents and Supervisors. The CIO also knew that it would be difficult, politically, to have Telcordia professionals go SAIC to facilitate the turnaround required within SAIC. He, therefore, hired an external consultant (CMP Associates) to support needed improvements within SAIC using Telcordia as the model of excellence.

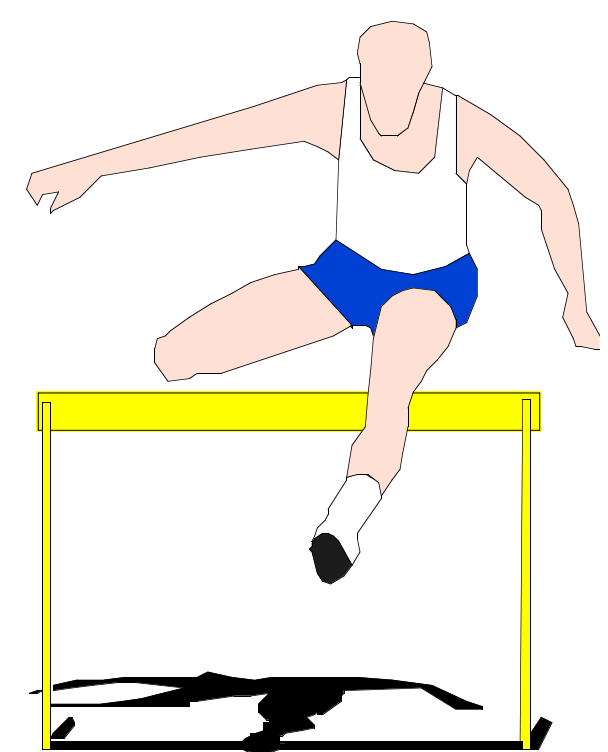
The CIO did not anticipate that the project would identify and recommend improvements in the master performer organization (Telcordia). Therefore, part of what was achieved was capitalizing on an improvement opportunity, rather than only resolving a problem or addressing a clear performance gap. Also, the Telcordia Help Desk was operating in the context (relatively speaking) of a much higher call volume and more complex customer issues questions than SAIC. The demographics and the performance results (before) of the two call centers, are as follows:

Help Desk Demographics

	Telcordia	SAIC
Complexity (# of Platforms Supported)	15	3
Monthly Call Volume	15,500	7,300
Number of Agents	43	25

Help Desk Performance (Before)

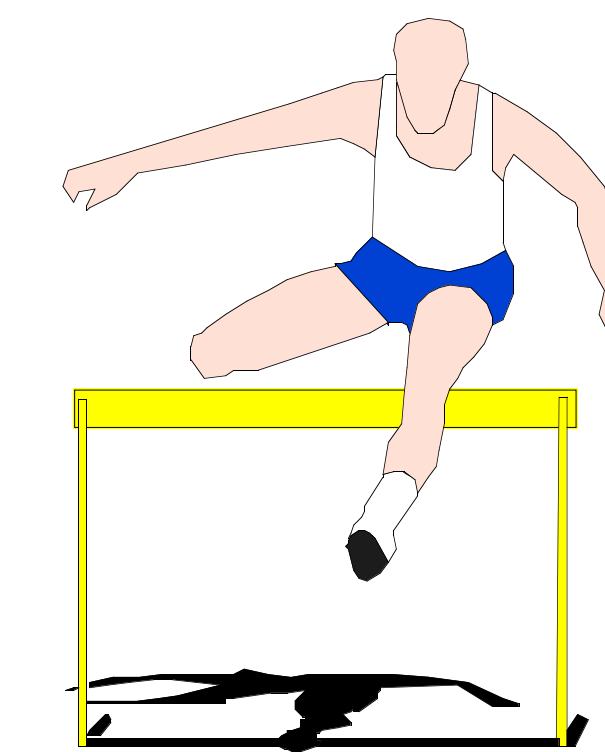
	Telcordia	SAIC
Customer Satisfaction (Automated Survey Results)	95.6% met or exceeded	77% met or exceeded
IR's Closed within 1 Day	97.5%	not tracked
Calls Handled (Not Abandoned)	95.3%	85%
First Call Resolution	82.4%	65%



Raising the Bar . . .

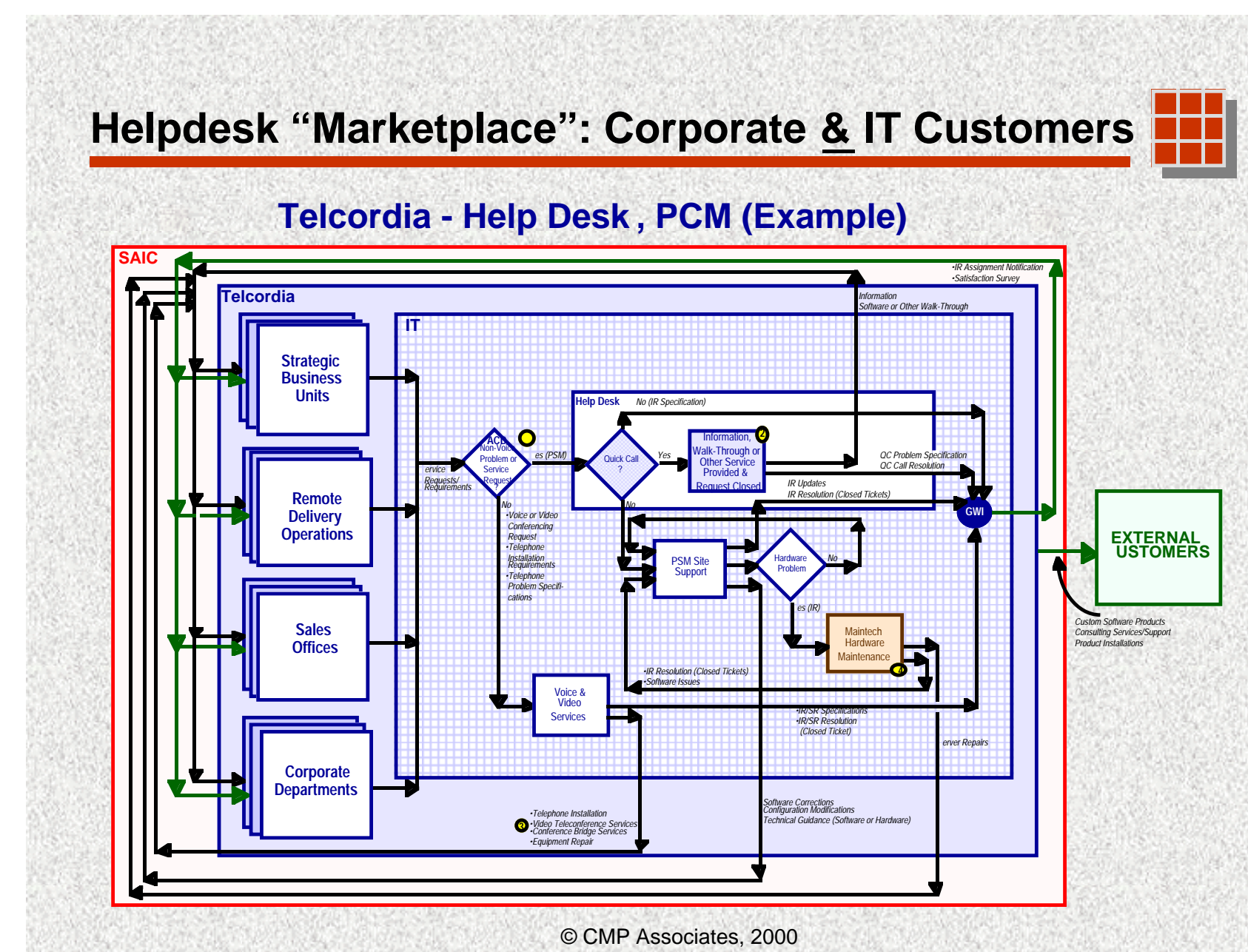
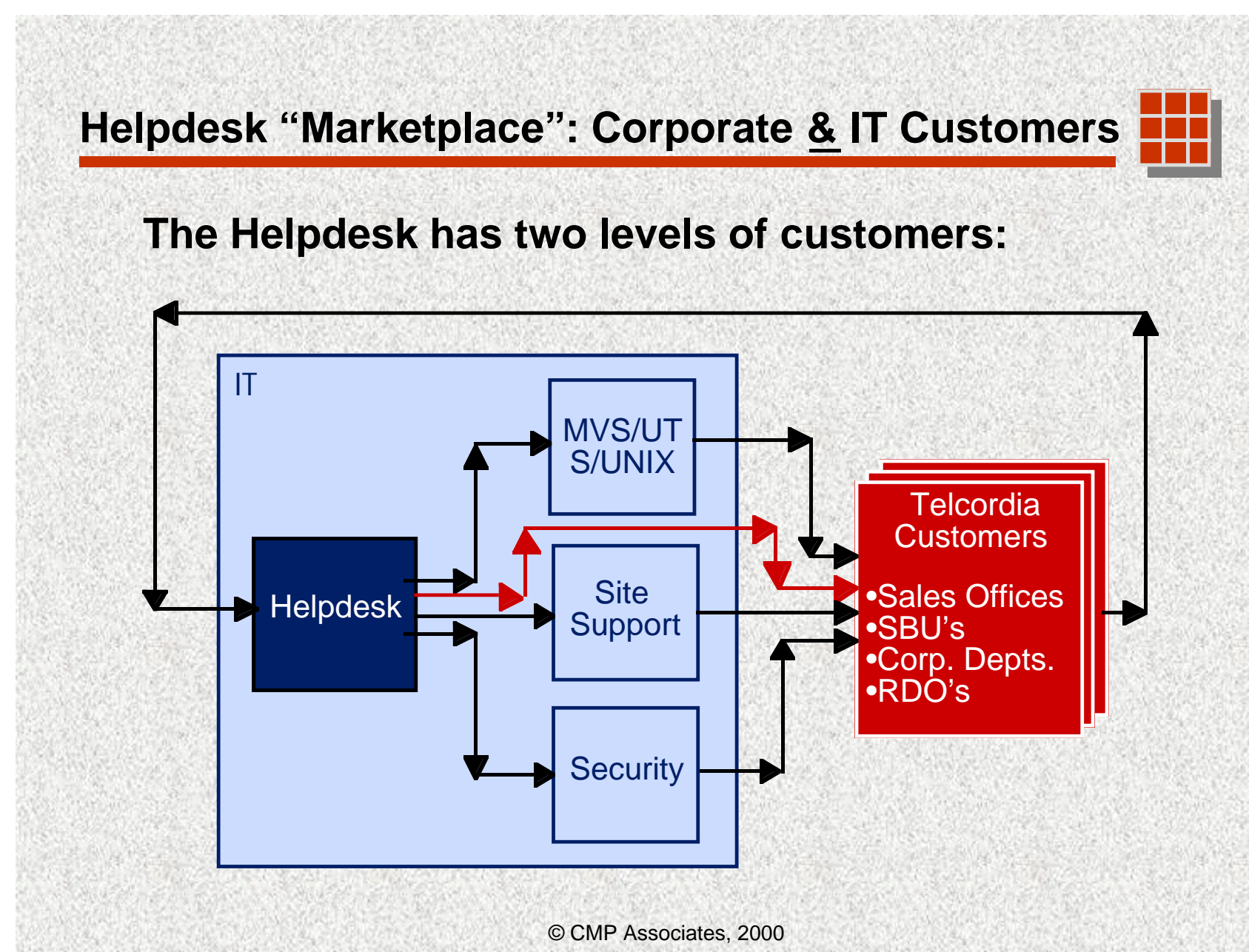
Improving the master/model performers in a computer Help Desk (Call Center)

Presented by: **Carol M. Panza, CMP Associates**

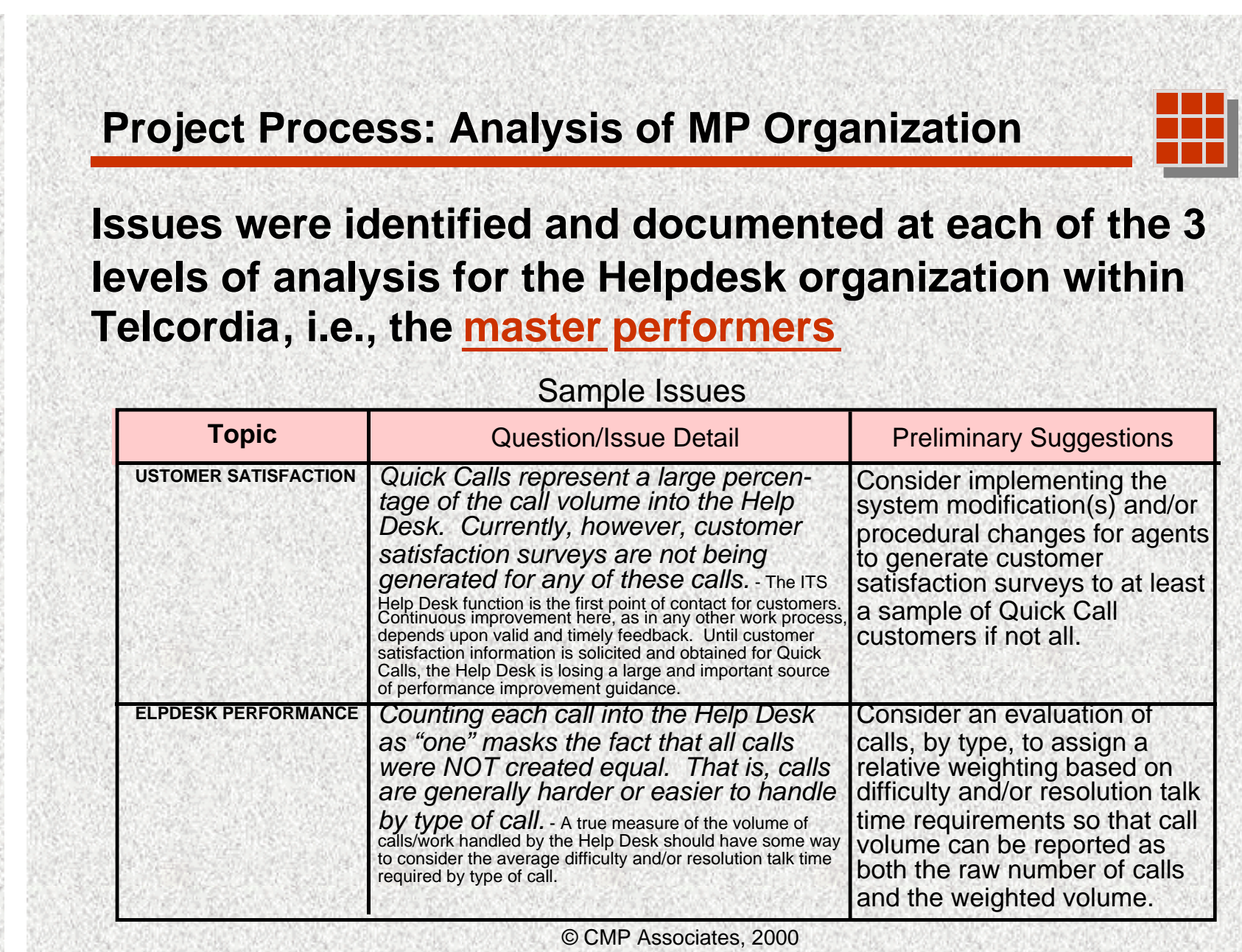
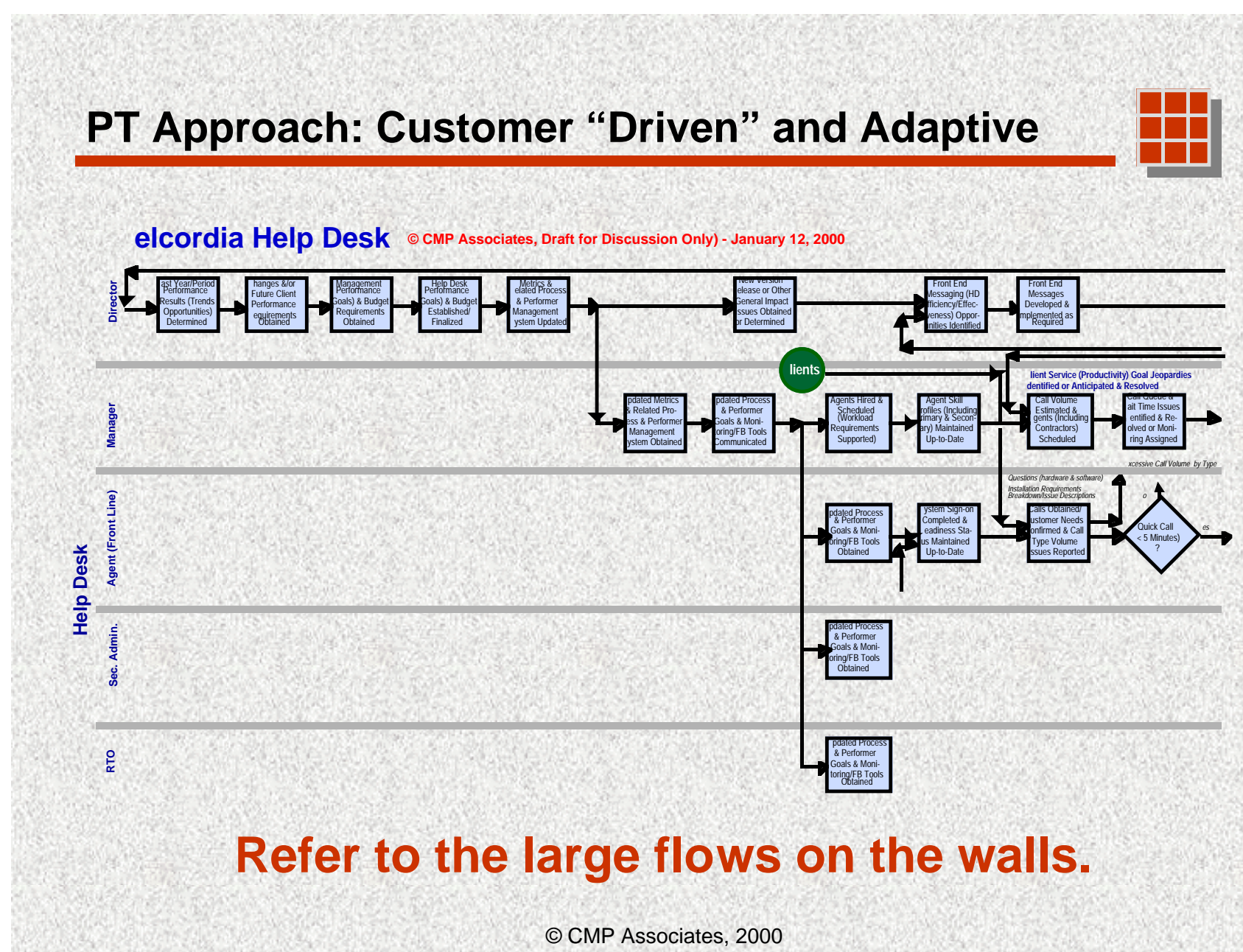


Brief Description of Intervention

We believe that a systematic analysis beginning at the macro/context level is the key to opportunity identification. That is, you should start with the relationship view of the organization you are attempting to assist and focus its "fit" within its (internal and external) marketplace versus process specification. Following are two of the maps or pictures that we created at the macro level. A number of issues were identified over the course of the project. At the macro level we focused, among other things, on the fact that the Help Desk has two levels of customers.



We also raised the issue of the evaluation of customer satisfaction, which was further addressed at the process level. When we proceed to process specification, we define the sequence of accomplishments required to produce a valued product/output or to process or address an important input. In the case of Telcordia, we developed and then refined with the client and their customers, a detailed, multilevel process flow. All of the issues identified, together with suggestions for addressing each, were documented and organized for presentation to the client in a table format, from the samples below were extracted.

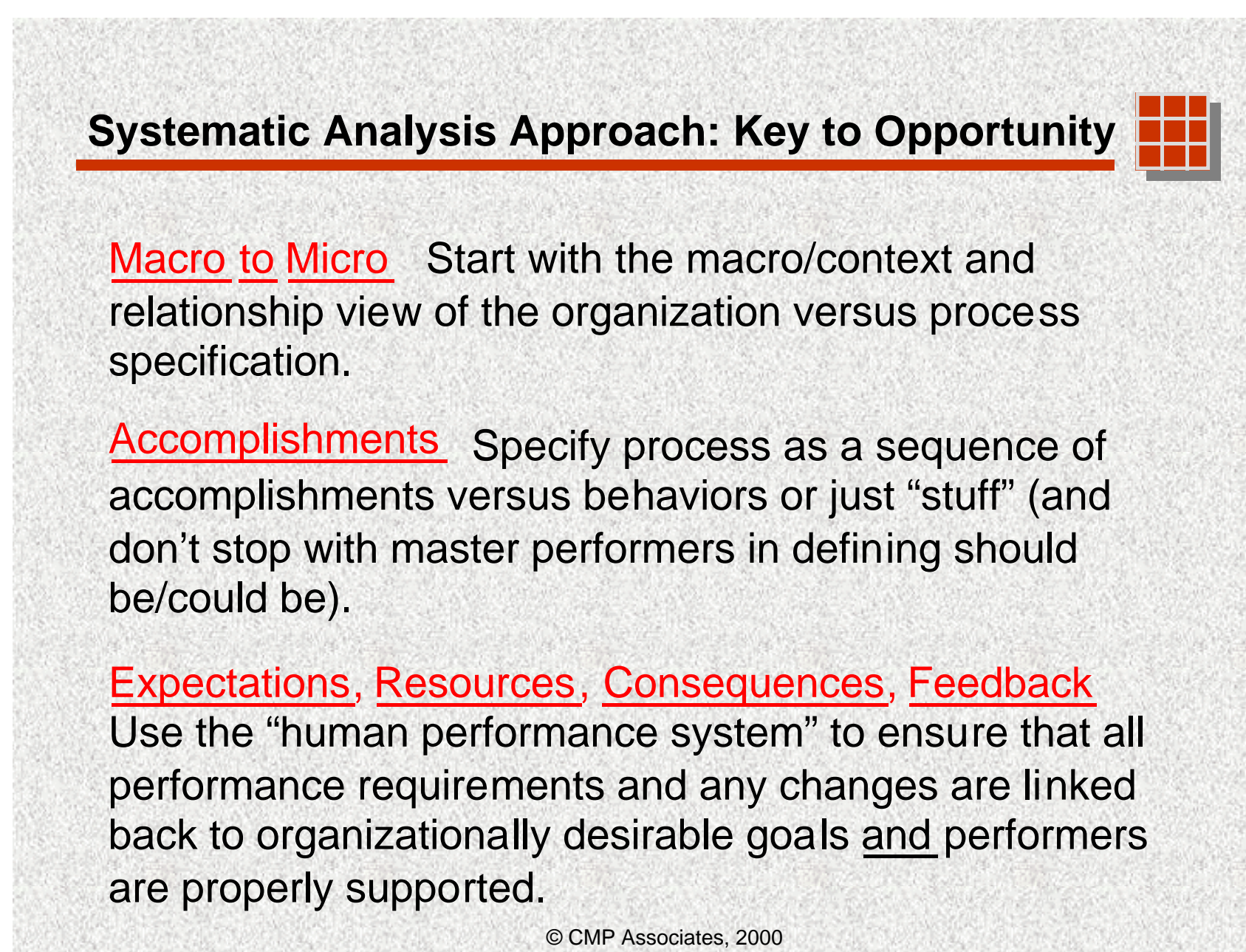


Project Process: Analysis of MP Organization

Issues were identified and documented at each of the 3 levels of analysis for the Helpdesk organization within Telcordia, i.e., the **master performers**

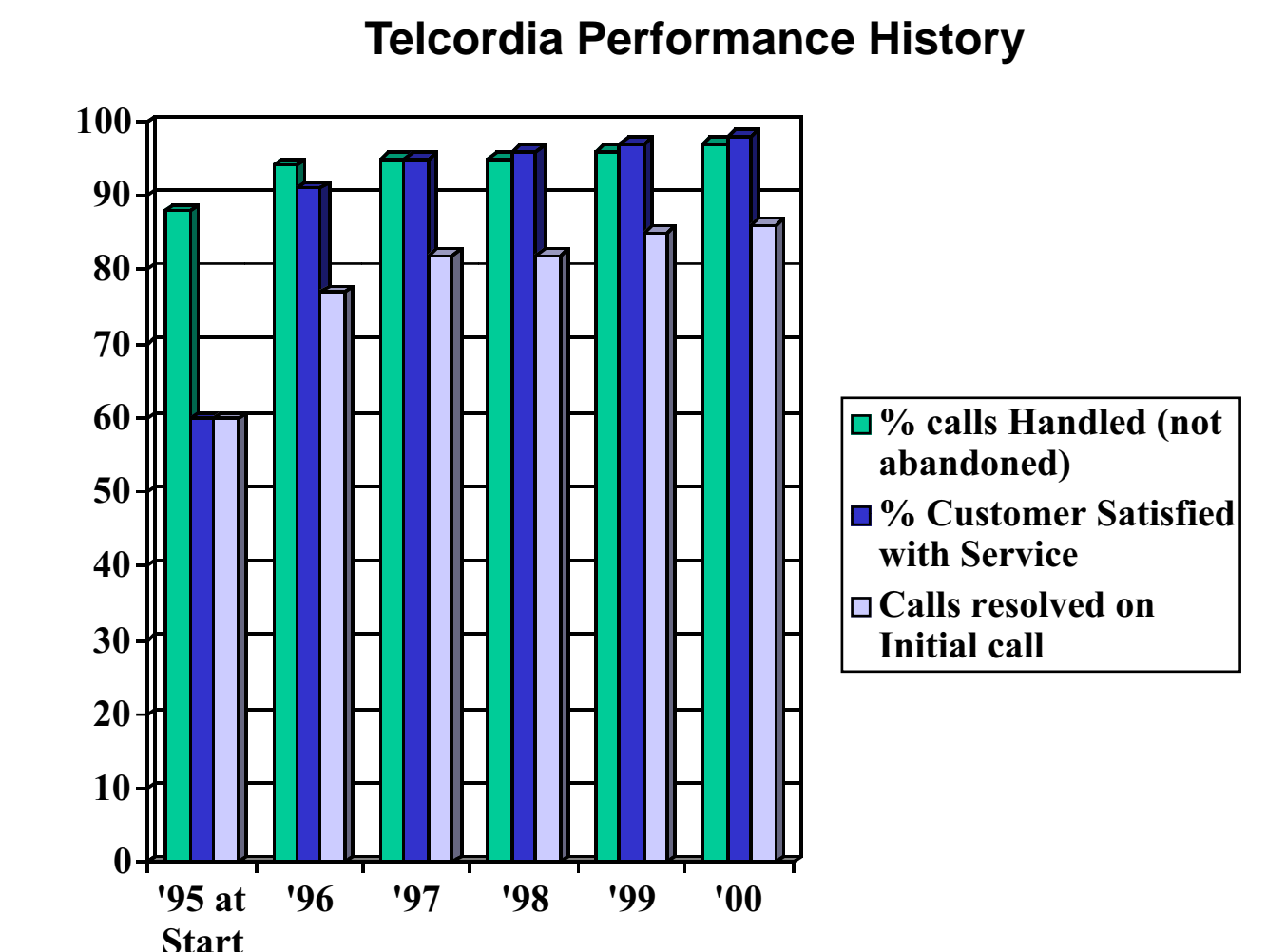
Topic	Question/Issue Detail	Preliminary Suggestions
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	Quick Calls represent a large percentage of the call volume into the Help Desk. Currently, however, customer satisfaction surveys are not being generated for any of these calls. The IR's Help Desk function is the first point of contact for customer. Continuous improvement here, as in any other work process, depends upon valid and timely feedback. Until customer satisfaction information is solicited and obtained for Quick Calls, the Help Desk is losing a large and important source of performance improvement guidance.	Consider implementing the system modification(s) and/or procedural changes for agents to generate customer satisfaction surveys to at least a sample of Quick Call customers if not all.
HELPDESK PERFORMANCE	Counting each call into the Help Desk as "one" masks the fact that all calls were NOT created equal. That is, calls are generally harder or easier to handle by type of call. - A true measure of the volume of calls/work handled by the Help Desk should have some way to consider the average difficulty and/or resolution task time required by type of call.	Consider an evaluation of calls, by type, to assign a relative weighting based on difficulty and/or resolution talk time requirements so that call volume can be reported as both the raw number of calls and the weighted volume.

The analysis was completed at Telcordia prior to visiting SAIC. Telcordia began to implement some of the improvement suggestions almost immediately. Other suggested actions were sequenced in accordance with resource availability, dependency on other Help Desk actions or on other functional areas. When we went to SAIC, we looked at its Help Desk in the context of its customer base, call volume and available resources. SAIC was also able to take advantage of the enhanced models developed with Telcordia. Furthermore, cooperation and useful idea exchanges were begun (for the first time) between the management of Telcordia's Help Desk and that of SAIC. The following concepts were fundamental to the intervention undertaken for Telcordia/SAIC and for its success.



Graphic Display of Performance Results

Following is Telcordia's Help Desk performance history. The CIO took over in 1995 and began the turnaround. Three of the metrics that were tracked included 1.) percent of calls that were handled and not abandoned, 2.) customer satisfaction (percent of customers indicating that their expectations were met or exceeded) ratings on automatically generated customer surveys (response rate exceeded 35%), and 3.) calls resolved on the customer's initial call.

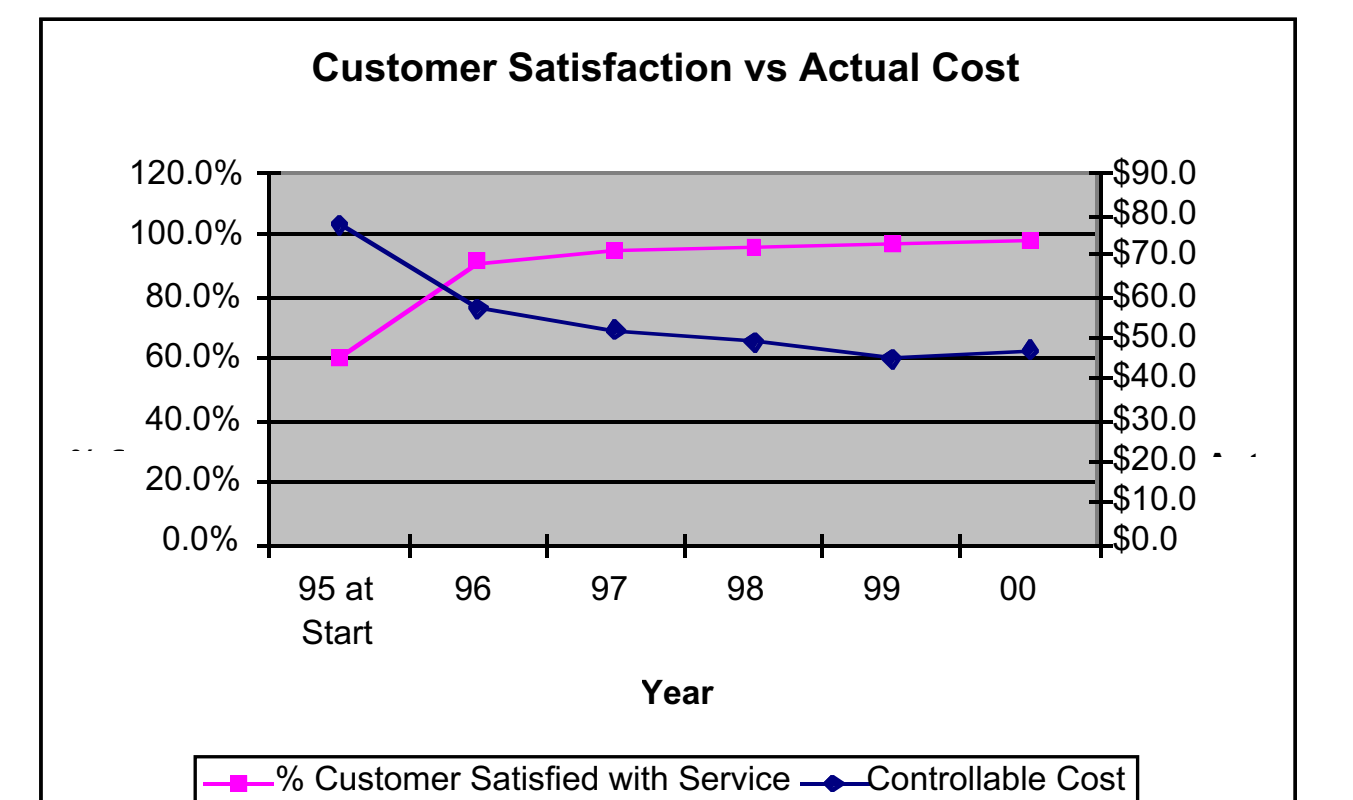


Help Desk Performance Comparison

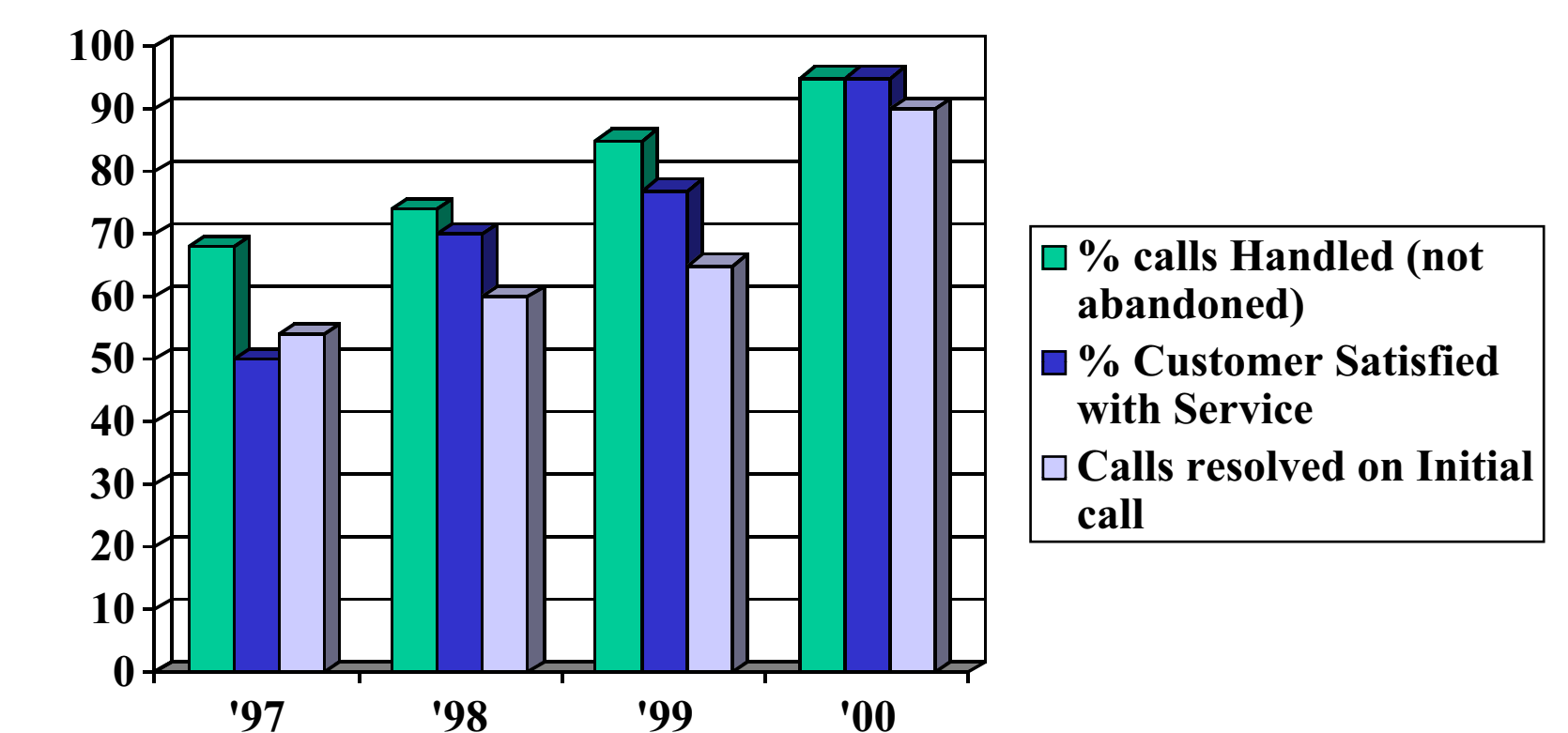
Telcordia	YE - 1999	YE - 2001
Customer Satisfaction (Automated Survey Results)	95.6% met or exceeded	98.3% met or exceeded
IR's Closed within 1 Day	97.5%	98.9%
Calls Handled (Not Abandoned)	95.3%	96.6%
First Call Resolution	82.4%	85.9%

In 2001 Telcordia underwent an externally conducted certification process. The Help Desk was awarded certification achieving the highest scores ever achieved by a Help Desk.

- The categories reviewed included:
- Structure and Strategy**
 - Return on IT Investment
 - Commitment to World Class Customer Support
 - Help Desk Strategy
 - Supporting the Business vs. Supporting the Technology
 - Help Desk Mission
 - Function of the HD in the Extended Support System
 - Perception and Performance**
 - Customer Satisfaction Measurement Process
 - Performance Measurement
 - Strategic Support Skills/Activity Quality
 - Service Level Agreements
 - Recognition/Incentive Programs
 - Marketing the Help Desk
 - Innovation Business Influence**



SAIC Performance History



Help Desk Performance Comparison

SAIC	YE - 1999	YE - 2001
Customer Satisfaction (Automated Survey Results)	77% met or exceeded	95.9% met or exceeded
IR's Closed within 1 Day	not tracked	91.8%
Calls Handled (Not Abandoned)	85%	95.6%
First Call Resolution	65%	90.6%

Lessons Learned

There most obvious and important lesson learned through this project was that even a Master Performer organization/function, like the Telcordia Help Desk, can improve and get even better. However, just by undertaking this project, the CIO was proving two important lessons to keep in mind:

- The acquiring company can learn from the skills and experience of companies they acquire. (SAIC purchased Telcordia and, as a result, there was a great deal of resistance on the part of SAIC, to ANY ideas or practices that came from Telcordia. This project helped to pave the way for cooperation when SAIC's Help Desk dramatically improved.)
- Size is not necessarily the indicator of performance proficiency, no less excellence. (SAIC was and is a much larger company than Telcordia. However, here again, Telcordia had developed expertise that was more than worthy of consideration for implementation at SAIC.)