U.S. Small Business Administration
SBA Customer Experience (CX) Landscape Analysis and Toolkit

Phase I Report – Final

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Prepared for:
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street SW
Washington, DC 20416

Prepared by:
Optimal Solutions Group, LLC
5825 University Research Court, Suite 1100
College Park, MD 20740

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Disclaimer

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Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

General Information

Glossary

Term	Definition
Customer Experience (CX)	The public's perceptions of an overall satisfaction with interactions with an agency, product, or service.[1]
Customer Experience Survey and Non-Survey Tools Matrix	A data repository identifying information for CX measurement activities. Information was coded by reviewing documents provided by the SBA, survey instruments measuring customer experience data from the data call, and other data from interviews.
Data call	The data call request asked offices to identify internal and external programs currently measuring CX using surveys. All data call recipients were asked to upload the CX survey instruments to an SBA SharePoint site. The data call also asked offices to identify programs using non-survey measurement activities (see definition below).
External customer	Individuals, businesses, and organizations outside of the government that interact with the SBA, either directly or through a contractor or SBA-funded program. The SBA's primary external customers include businesses, business owners, or grantees who participate in SBA programs.
External program	Programs that serve customers outside the SBA, including business certifications, trainings for small business owners, and loan programs.
Internal customers	SBA employees who work and interact with SBA offices.
Internal program	Programs within the SBA for SBA employees, which can include a work/life balance program from human resources or mandatory trainings required for all SBA employees on workplace harassment and Civil Rights.
Non-survey measurement	This method measures CX using non-survey tools such as administrative data (most frequently, performance metrics), website analytics, or user research, for example.
Pattern coding	A category label ("meta code") that identifies similarly coded data and organizes into sets, themes, or constructs and attributes meaning to that organization. Pattern coding is used to group codes into a smaller number of categories, themes, or concepts by summarizing the grouping.
Survey measurement	This method uses surveys (series of close or open-ended questions) related to customer experience with a particular office, program, or interaction with an SBA staff.

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[1] Definition of CX comes directly from OMB circular A-11, which can be found here: https://bit.ly/3IGyQLv.

Acronyms

Term	Description
B2B	Boots to Business
CBJ	Congressional Budget Justification
CNPP	Community Navigators Pilot Program
CX	Customer Experience
EIDL	Economic Injury Disaster Loans
FAST	Federal and State Technology Partnerships Program
GAFC	Growth Accelerators Fund Competition Program
GAO	Government Accountability Office
OCA	Office of Capital Access
OCIO	Office of Chief Information Officer
OCLA	Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs
OCORM	Office of Continuous Operations and Risk Management
OCPL	Office of Communications and Public Liaison
ODA	Office of Disaster Assistance
ODICR	Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights
OED	Office of Entrepreneurial Development
OEMISS	Office of Executive Management, Installation, and Support Services
OFO	Office of Field Operations
OGC	Office of General Counsel
OGCBD	Office of Government Contracting and Business Development
OHA	Office of Hearings and Appeals
OHRS	Office of Human Resource Solutions
OII	Office of Investment and Innovation
OIT	Office of International Trade
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
ONO	Office of the National Ombudsman
OPPCFO	Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer
OVBD	Office of Veterans Business Development
PPP	Paycheck Protection Program
RIC	Regional Innovation Clusters
RRF	Restaurant Revitalization Fund
SBA	The U.S. Small Business Administration
SBDC	Small Business Development Centers
SBIC	Small Business Investment Company Program
SBIR	Small Business Innovation Research Program
STEP	State Trade Expansion Program
STTR	Small Business Technology Transfer Program
SVOG	Shuttered Venue Operators Grant
VBOC	Veteran Owned Outreach Center Program
VOSB	Veteran-Owned Small Business Contracting
WBC	Women's Business Center
WOSB	Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program

Executive Summary

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) aims to manage customer experience (CX) and to improve service delivery throughout the agency's offices and programs. The SBA commissioned a landscape analysis to better understand how various SBA offices are developing, assessing, and using CX data to improve programs or inform decisions as well as what programs are interested in implementing new CX measurement activities.

Some SBA programs have taken steps to measure CX or related metrics to various degrees. However, it is not yet known how comprehensive or consistent these efforts are, whether the data collected is comparable across programs, or how the program offices are using the data that they collect.

The purpose of this CX landscape analysis is to examine the current SBA CX measurement activities across programs and offices. CX is understood as the public's perceptions of an overall satisfaction with interactions with an agency, product, or service.[2] The CX measurement activities under study here utilize a broader definition of CX in order to identify unique ways in which CX data is obtained. CX measurement activities include surveys, processing metrics, meetings with stakeholders, website analytics, roundtable discussions, feedback from call lines or emails, and other programmatic or operational data.

There are two phases to this analysis. Phase I determined the SBA's current CX measurement activities, identified how CX data are collected, and determined how CX data was used by programs and SBA offices. The Phase I report will inform Phase II in the development of a toolkit for the SBA offices and programs. This toolkit will assist the agency in developing or improving upon CX measurement activities.

For this study, we included 13 out of 19 SBA offices and a total of 50 programs that are associated with these offices. These programs deliver services to external (such as businesses, business owners, or grantees who participate in SBA programs) or internal customers (SBA staff). The study asks the following questions and provides answers to each question at the office level and in some instances, at the program level:

1. How are programs currently using CX measurement at the SBA?
2. How are surveys used for CX measurement at the SBA?
3. How are non-survey methods (e.g., website/user analytics, operational or administrative data analysis) used for CX measurement at the SBA?
4. How are SBA programs using CX data and what changes in service delivery have followed CX measurement activities?

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[2] Definition of CX comes directly from OMB circular A-11, which can be found here: https://bit.ly/3IGyQLv.

Findings

The results of the landscape were not intended as an assessment of the SBA offices' performance regarding CX measurement activities. The analysis sought to provide a baseline of office activities for the continued progress of CX measurement efforts agency wide.

The SBA offices and staff vary greatly in regard to their CX knowledge, skills, and data analysis experience. The data for the CX landscape came largely from office submitted data calls and office interviews. Analysis of the CX data for programs and offices found that:

- 12 of the 13 SBA offices have CX measurement activities currently in place.
- 24 of 50 programs have implemented at least one CX measurement activity. Currently there are 32 surveys and 17 performance metrics measuring CX.
- Nine programs collect other non-survey CX data (e.g., focus groups, emails, and website analytics).
- CX data is most commonly used to make program improvements and inform decision making.
- Nine of the 13 SBA offices use CX data to make changes in service delivery.

In addition to all 13 offices wanting to improve their CX measurement activities, there is also interest in receiving strategies to improve CX data collection, guidance on how to use CX data to improve service delivery, and guidance on how to use additional data sources to measure customer service. This information was shared with the Fors Marsh team to assist with the development of the toolkit in Phase II.

Recommendations

The CX data gathered presents examples of survey and non-survey measurement activities currently in place and demonstrates where there are opportunities for growth. With the varied experience of SBA office staff, in terms of CX expertise, survey development skills, and analyzing data, there are several directions in which the SBA can go. To continue moving forward and enhance CX measurement activities, it would be beneficial to develop a CX maturity model plan with clear indicators established. The SBA is moving towards standardizing its CX measurement, a plug-and-play survey was considered. Program staff noted that they would need individualized assistance in order for such a template to be useful.

The team also recommends discussions by office or with multiple offices/programs in which there are common needs (e.g., developing CX surveys or mapping CX measurement activities to a program design). This supplemental support could take the format of targeted webinars, technical sessions through which information and experiences could be shared across program managers/office leadership, and in the form of a webinar covering the current state of CX measurement at the SBA and what the SBA is looking at for the future.

Introduction

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) aims to manage customer experience (CX) and improve service delivery throughout the agency's offices and programs. The SBA asked for this landscape analysis to better understand how various SBA offices are developing, assessing, and using CX data to improve programs or inform decisions. The analysis did not seek to determine how well CX measurement activities are implemented in each office. Instead, the analysis establishes what CX measurement activities are currently in place, which will provide a baseline for the SBA to continue its work towards improving CX measurement activities throughout the agency.

CX Landscape Purpose

The purpose of the CX landscape analysis is to examine the current SBA CX measurement activities across programs and offices. The study has two phases. Phase I determined the current CX measurement activities, identified how CX data are collected, and determined how CX data is used by programs and SBA offices. The Phase I report informs Phase II in the development of a toolkit for SBA offices to implement or improve CX measurement in their programs. This toolkit will assist the agency in developing and improving CX measurement activities. **Figure 1** below provides a summary of both phases of the CX landscape analysis.

Figure 1. CX landscape analysis
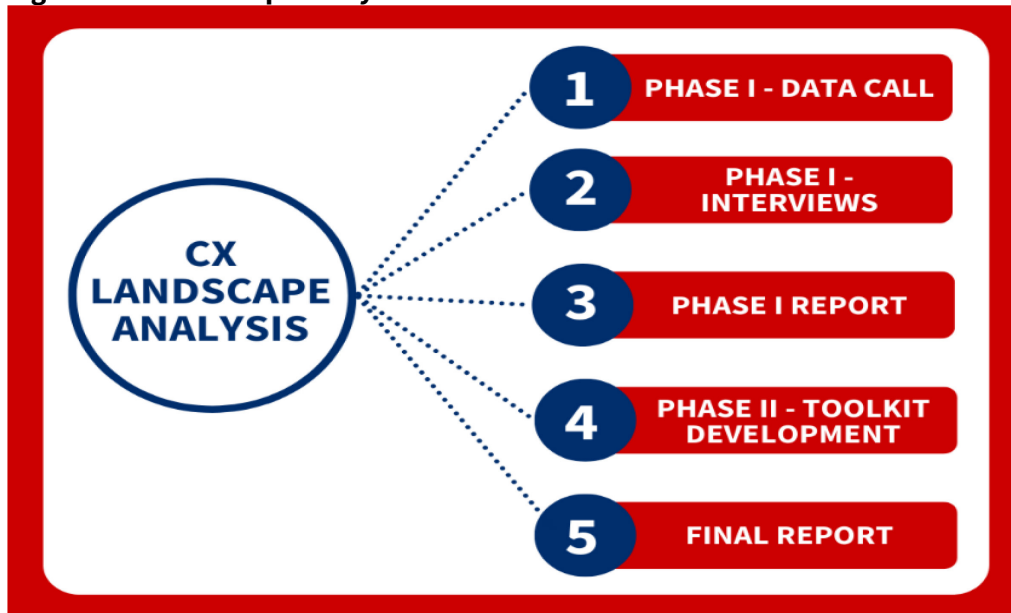
Note. CX landscape analysis with significant aspects of Phase I and II identified.

This analysis will examine both internal and external programs and customers. Internal programs are programs within the SBA for SBA employees include programs such as a work/life balance program from Human Resources and mandatory trainings required for all SBA employees on workplace harassment and Civil Rights. External programs are programs that serve customers outside the SBA and include business certifications, trainings for small business owners, and loan programs. Internal and external customers can be described as:

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- Internal customers are SBA employees who work and interact with SBA offices.
- External customers are individuals, businesses, and organizations outside of the government that interact with the SBA, either directly or through a contractor or SBA-funded program. The SBA's primary external customers include businesses, business owners, or grantees who participate in SBA programs.

This analysis will also determine which types of CX measurement activities are being used and identify programs interested in implementing a new measurement activity. The two main CX measurement activities are survey and non-survey activities. The SBA uses surveys, or sets of standardized questions in an instrument, to measure CX in both internal and external programs. Survey instruments can also be used to measure other topics, such as program outcomes in some instances, within specific programs and offices. Performance metrics and other non-survey activities are other ways that programs measure CX. These may include tracking program performance (e.g., average processing time for loans or percent of applications processed within 90 days), conducting focus groups with participants, or measuring website analytics.

The research questions guiding the design, evaluation, and analysis focus on the essential information needed by the agency as a whole regarding CX measurement activities. These questions include:

1) How are programs currently using customer experience measurement at the SBA?
   a) Which programs are measuring customer experience?
   b) Which programs are interested in measuring customer experience? For identified programs, what activities are of interest for measurement?
2) How are surveys used for customer experience measurement at the SBA?
   a) Which populations defined as customers in A-11 and the CX Executive Order do the surveys reach?
   b) What types of questions are asked? (e.g., measures of overall experience, trust, satisfaction with employee interactions)
   c) When in the customer journey are these surveys deployed?
   d) Are demographic questions currently being asked? If so, which demographic variables are collected?
   e) Comparing across survey questions asked, how comparable are the surveys across different programs?
3) How are non-survey methods (e.g., website/user analytics, operational or administrative data analysis) used for customer experience measurement at the SBA?
   a) What metrics are being tracked?
   b) When in the customer journey are these measures being tracked?
   c) Are metrics being analyzed by customer demographics? If so, which demographic variables?
   d) How comparable are the measures across different programs?
4) How are SBA programs using CX data and what changes in service delivery have followed CX measurement activities?
   a) How do programs use the data?
   b) Have there been changes in service delivery as a result of customer experience research?

Guidance Documents

Five significant documents were used to guide the evaluation design, data collection, and analysis of the SBA's current CX efforts. Executive Order (EO) 14048 on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government[3], which was issued on December 13, 2021, was used to understand what requirements were established for federal agencies using CX measurement activities.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-11 Section 280[4] provided further information regarding how federal agencies can manage and improve CX and service delivery. Section 280.10 also identified key questions for transactional customer feedback surveys as well as guidelines regarding when CX data should be obtained, collected, analyzed, and responded to. The SBA's Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ)[5] was used, along with input from the SBA, to identify the programs included in this analysis. The SBA Strategic Plan 2022-2026[6] and U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)'s Improving Federal Customer Service Efforts[7] were also used to guide and inform the research design and data collection.

Offices and Programs under Study

Table 1 below lists all 19 offices and identifies whether the office is included in the study. The 13 offices included in the study represent offices with significant customer service functions. Most of these offices offer programs to small businesses and are included here regardless of volume of customers. A few of these offices have programs that, as part of their main functions, serve internal SBA customers (for example, the Office of Chief Information Officer).

Table 1. All 19 SBA offices that are and are not under study (sorted alphabetically by office name)

SBA Office	Under Study
Office of Capital Access (OCA)	Yes
Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO)	Yes
Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)	No
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA)	No
Office of Continuous Operations and Risk Management (OCORM)	No
Office of Disaster Assistance (ODA)	Yes
Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights (ODICR)	Yes
Office of Entrepreneurial Development (OED)	Yes
Office of Executive Management, Installation, and Support Services (OEMISS)	Yes
Office of Field Operations (OFO)	Yes
Office of General Counsel (OGC)	No
Office of Government Contracting and Business Development (OGCBD)	Yes
Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA)	No

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[3] Executive Order (EO) 14048 on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government. (December 13, 2021). https://bit.ly/3ix4Hnc.

[4] OMB Circular No. A-11 Section 280. Managing Customer Experience and Improving Service Delivery. https://bit.ly/3CJIh9n.

[5] Congressional Budget Justification and Annual Performance Report. (March 28, 2022). https://bit.ly/3GD8aJ6.

[6] SBA Strategic Plan. (March 28, 2022). https://bit.ly/3Gt1JYY.

[7] Improving Federal Customer Service Efforts. U.S. Government Accountability Office. https://bit.ly/3CHWHGX.

SBA Office	Under Study
Office of Human Resource Solutions (OHRS)	Yes
Office of International Trade (OIT)	Yes
Office of Investment and Innovation (OII)	Yes
Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer (OPPCFO)	Yes
Office of the National Ombudsman (ONO)	No
Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD)	Yes

After reviewing the guidance documents and holding discussions with the SBA COR and SME, a list of 50 programs, from the 13 offices, were identified as being under study (**Table 2**).

Table 2. List of all programs under study by office

Office	Program
OCA	504 Certified Development Company Loan Program
OCA	7(a) Loan
OCA	Credit Risk Management Program
OCA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing
OCA	Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) (COVID - Economic Injury)
OCA	Microloan Program
OCA	Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
OCA	PRIME Technical Assistance Grants Program
OCA	Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF)
OCA	Surety Bond Guarantee Program (SBG Program)
OCIO	IT Security and Governance
OCIO	Mission Support and Enterprise Services
ODA	Disaster Assistance Program
ODA	Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG)
ODICR	Conflict Resolution Center
ODICR	Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Civil Rights Training
ODICR	Reasonable Accommodation
OED	Community Navigators Pilot Program (CNPP)
OED	T.H.R.I.V.E. Emerging Leaders Reimagined/Emerging Leaders
OED	Entrepreneurship Education
OED	Learning Center
OED	Native American Affairs Outreach Program
OED	Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC)
OED	SCORE
OED	Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)
OED	Women's Business Centers (WBC) Program
OEMISS	Administrative Services Program
OEMISS	Grants Management
OFO	Field Counseling and Training Program

Office	Program
OGCBD	7(j) Management and Technical Assistance Program
OGCBD	8(a) Business Development Program
OGCBD	HUBZone
OGCBD	Mentor-Protégé
OGCBD	Prime Contracting Assistance Program
OGCBD	Veteran-Owned Small Businesses Contracting (VOSB)
OGCBD	Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program (WOSB)
OHRS	Human Capital Strategy, Systems, and Employee Development Program
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention
OII	Federal and State Technology Partnerships (FAST) Program
OII	Growth Accelerators Fund Competition (GAFC) Program
OII	Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program
OII	Small Business Investment Company Program (SBIC)
OII	Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program
OIT	International Trade Promotion Program
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)
OPPCFO	Acquisition Management
OPPCFO	Financial Management Program
OPPCFO	Performance Management and Program Evaluation Program
OVBD	Boots to Business (B2B)
OVBD	Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) Program

Note: Programs are sorted alphabetically by office name and program.

Study Design

Phase I centered on gathering specific information about CX measurement activities, as well as a deeper contextual understanding of how CX data is used. Phase I focused on internal and external programs, and survey and non-survey measurement activities.

The Phase I analysis began with an initial review of the guidance documents. As a result of this initial review, the Optimal-Fors Marsh team developed an analytical framework to identify the key elements (type of activity, demographics, timeframe, customer, data used, and changes to service delivery) of measuring CX and developed a process to categorize the CX measurement activities that aligned to and addressed the research questions. The team coded the guidance documents and identified the key terms/phrases, which then became categories. These categories were used to analyze the CX measurement activities and identify similarities between surveys and among non-survey activities.

Using descriptive coding, the Optimal-Fors Marsh team reviewed an initial set of CX surveys and non-survey tools provided by the SBA. The team coded individually and then met to discuss consistency of coded data elements, and to identify what information was missing from the surveys and performance metrics to fully answer the research questions. Questions regarding program use of data, what changes have been made to programs, or how to improve service delivery required additional data sources. A

data call and interview protocol were created to document in detail the CX measurement activities at the SBA. The data collection efforts are discussed below.

Data Collection and Analysis Methodology

The SBA provided an initial set of data including survey instruments and non-survey activities at the study onset. In addition, the Optimal-Fors Marsh team had access to several survey instruments as part of its evaluation work with the SBA. To complement these materials, the SBA and the Optimal-Fors Marsh team conducted two primary data collection activities: a data call and group interviews with SBA staff at each office. The primary data collection methods used by the Optimal-Fors Marsh team are summarized in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2. Primary data collection
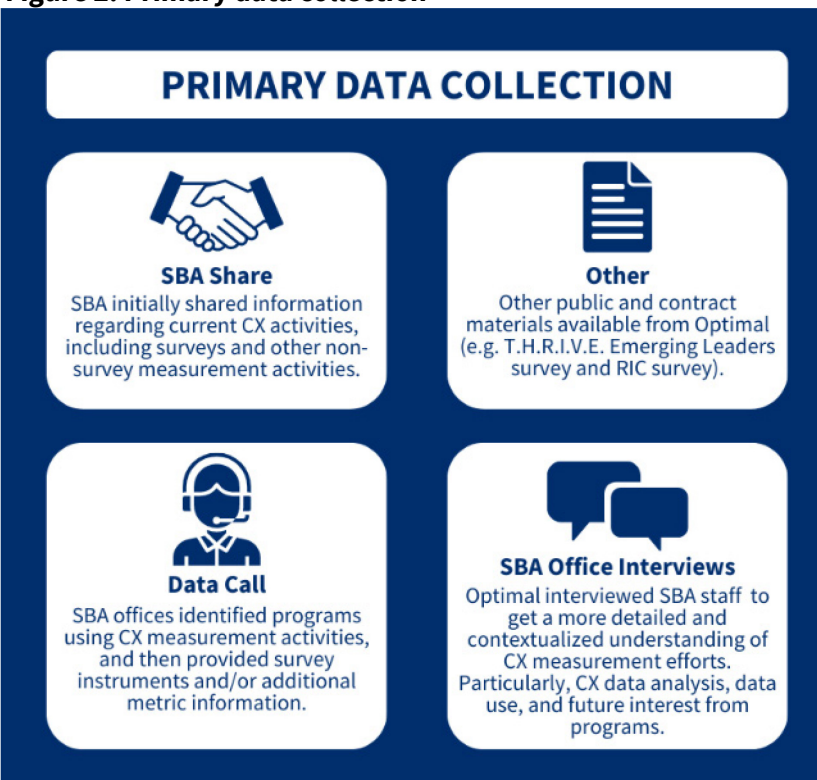
Note. Summary of data collection methods.

Data Collection System and Procedures

The Optimal-Fors Marsh team prepared a database, *Customer Experience Survey and Non-Survey Tools Matrix,* to record the CX measurement activities for each program that data were collected on, including survey and non-survey activities. The list of 32 surveys obtained can be found in the Appendix, sorted alphabetically by office and program. The matrix consolidated the distinct types of measurement activities in the 50 study programs and the data were then analyzed to answer the research questions.

The data call request to the 13 SBA offices included identification of the details of their CX measurement activities, including:
- Type of CX measurement activities (internal and external)
- Name of the program the activity is associated with
- Recipients or audience/population of the activity
- Timing/frequency (when is the survey sent or displayed to customers or when and/or how often does a non-survey activity occur)
- Point-of-contact if needed for further questions

The interview protocol questions aligned to the research questions and focused on receiving contextual information that could not be obtained using the CX survey instruments or the (brief) information from the data call.

Data Call and Interviews

The data call was sent by the Director of the Office of Program Performance, Analysis, and Evaluation (OPPAE) to senior officials at each of the 13 offices. The completed data calls were submitted through a SharePoint site along with any survey instruments available. Ten SBA offices responded to the data call with information regarding their CX measurement activities, including copies of survey instruments and more details on non-survey activities.

Virtual interviews were conducted with 12 of the 13 offices with a small group of staff including office leadership that were knowledgeable on office programs. These interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes. The interviews focused on gaining a detailed and contextualized understanding of how programs use CX data, identifying if changes in service delivery have occurred, understanding any future interest in CX measurement, and determining the offices' needs related to CX measurement.

Only ODA was unable to attend an interview. However, due to recent office reorganization, former ODA staff now located in other offices provided information related to ODA CX measurement activities, use of CX data, and any changes made to service delivery. Also, due to the large number of programs and the complexity of scheduling within each office, some program managers were not present during the interviews and these programs were not discussed (or not in the detail expected) during each of the office interviews. The office staff in attendance spoke about programs they were familiar with.

Data Analysis

The data received at the onset from the SBA and the data call, in particular the survey instruments, were analyzed and hand coded. The data were descriptively coded using the pre-identified categories of interest based on the research questions as well as customer experience-related topics included in OMB Circular No. A-11, Section 280. We quantified (summed up) responses to document the CX measurement activities across the SBA offices and SBA programs by type of measurement activity. **Figure 3** below demonstrates all data collected, totaling 49 CX measurement activities.

Figure 3. All SBA CX measurement activities
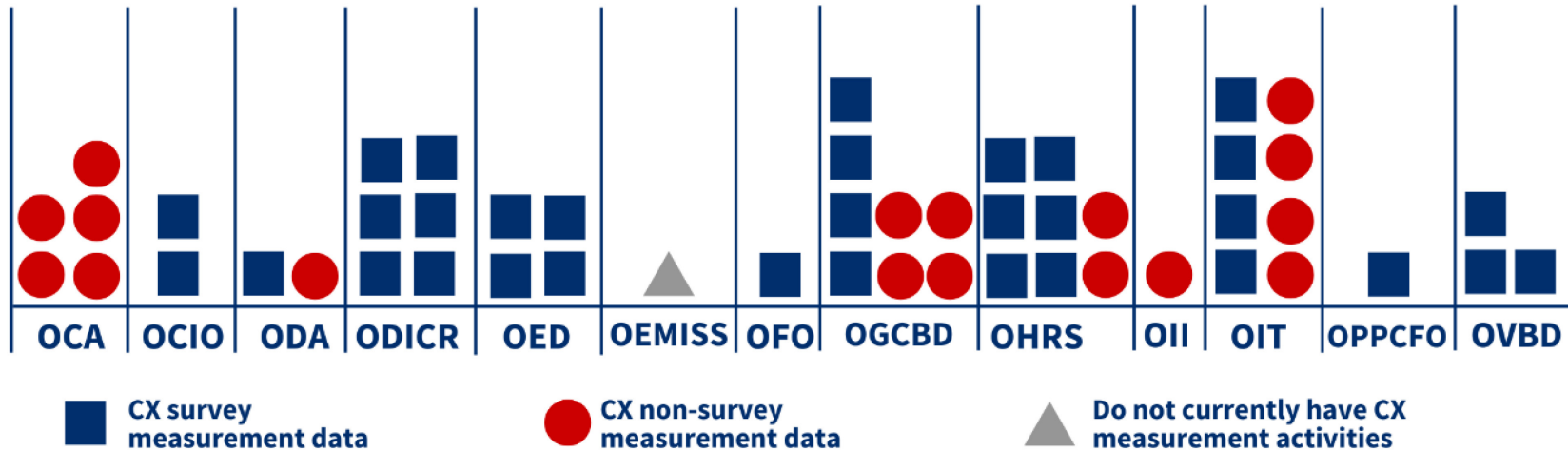
Note. Each symbol identifies a measurement activity (survey or non-survey) collected from each SBA office. The data do not indicate the number of programs in each office, since some programs have multiple surveys or use both survey and non-survey measurement activities.

Interview data from the 12 office interviews were analyzed qualitatively using descriptive coding followed by pattern coding. The pattern coding organized the data into major themes regarding the use of CX data, changes in service delivery, and programs' interest in measuring CX. Major themes were described in detail so that SBA programs interested in developing or adjusting their use of CX measurement activities can apply the lessons learned and best practices to other programs. Further analysis, broken down by research question, will be explained in more detail in the results.

Landscape Results

Research Question 1: How are programs currently using customer experience measurement at the SBA?

1a. Which programs are measuring customer experience?

Currently, 12 of the 13 offices under study have CX measurement activities in place. It should be noted that these results below are at the office level and do not imply that the measurement activity applies to all programs within an office. There is one office without current CX measurement activities. However, this office indicated a strong interest in developing CX measures and have begun working on these activities with OPPAE.

All 50 programs, listed in Table 2 above, have been included for analysis. The above-mentioned 49 measurement activities were collected on 24 of the 50 programs, 48% of the programs under study (**Figure 4**).

Of these 50 programs, six programs use non-survey measurement activities, 12 programs use surveys, and six programs use both survey and non-survey measurement activities. There is a total of 17 distinct non-survey measurement activities in place and 32 different surveys being used.

Figure 5 provides a breakdown of the current CX measurement efforts by office and measurement type. The total number of programs for each office is provided after the office acronym. Offices with "both" indicates that a program or programs use both survey and non-survey measurement activities. Offices with "unknown" measurement activities means that these programs did not include information in the submitted data calls or were not programs discussed during office interviews.

Figure 4. Current CX measurement activities

CURRENT CX MEASUREMENT ACTIVITIES

12 of the 13 offices currently have at least one CX measurement activity in place.

48%

24 of 50 programs currently use survey or non-survey measurement activities.

Six programs use non-survey measurement activities.

17 distinct non-survey measurements are currently in place.

12 programs use surveys.

32 distinct surveys are currently being used.

Six programs use both survey and non-survey measurements.

Figure 5. Current CX measurement activities by SBA office and measurement method

CURRENT CX MEASUREMENT ACTIVITIES BY SBA OFFICE AND MEASUREMENT METHOD

Legend: Both, Survey, Non-Survey, Unknown, None
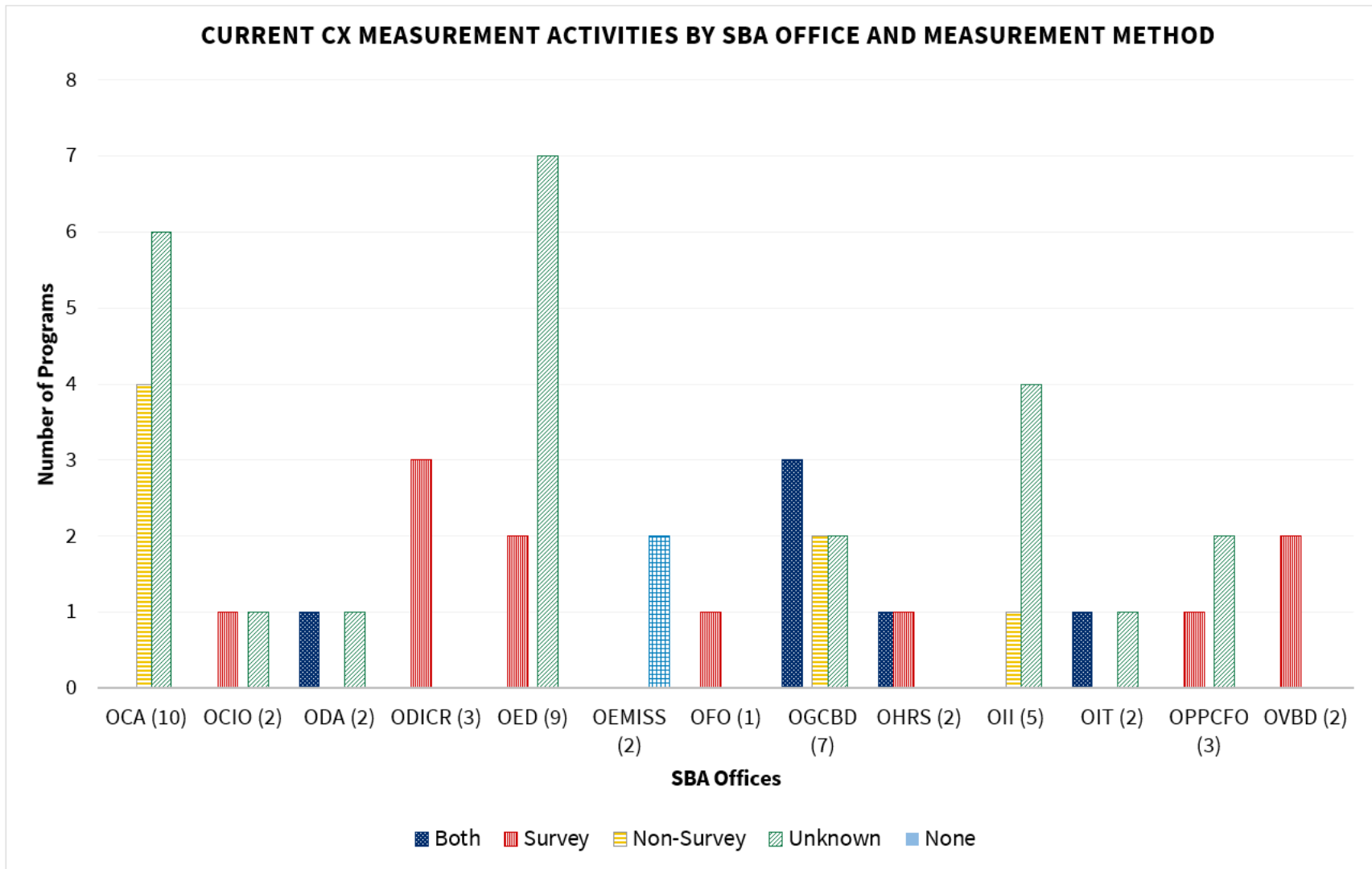
1b. Which programs are interested in measuring customer experience? What activities are of interest for measurement?

The landscape analysis assessed CX measurement activities at the office level instead of the program level because the interview data were often not program specific.

Interest in CX Measurement Activities

All 13 offices included in this study expressed some level of interest in developing or improving their CX measurement activities (**Figure 6**). OEMISS, the office without a CX measurement activity in place, showed interest and enthusiasm in starting CX measurement activities. Leadership from OEMISS said, "We're excited to see what opportunities we have here and anything else that you can provide to use from a value-added perspective. You know we're all ears." This included brainstorming which activities or programs they could start a CX measurement with.

Figure 6. Office interest in CX measurement

Note. Summary of programs currently interested in CX measurement activities.

The CX measurement activity of interest that was mentioned the most often during the interviews with offices was CX surveys. Some offices mentioned improving their current CX surveys, while others expressed interest in developing a CX survey for a program that does not currently have one. **Figure 7** below gives specific examples of these comments from three different offices (OCA, OGCBD, and OVBC) that plan to work on a CX survey in this coming year.

Figure 7. Interest in CX survey measurement

Note. Interest in CX measurement activities from three different offices.

11

Although offices expressed interest in surveys, several indicated that a "plug-and-play" survey would not meet the needs of their program, since editing would need to occur for it to be relevant for each program. A better understanding of using the CX data to improve customer experiences was also mentioned. OFO explained it would like to know "how to optimize a survey to get the maximum amount of information with the fewest questions possible… how can we maximize response rates and what kind of tools and technology would be necessary to accomplish that?"

OII is interested in adding other CX measurement activities to their programs and offered, "if you need a test office to work with, to develop a use case for guidance on going from start to finish… we can do that. Starting from just a, who are our customers and what are we trying to measure here? What outcome are we trying to achieve by measuring the customer experience." OII stated that the Growth Accelerator Fund would benefit from having CX measurement data.

In addition to adding a survey to their CX measurement activities, OGCBD and OCA also expressed interest in learning more about non-survey measurement activities. Leadership at OGCBD stated, "we'd be happy to use other analytics to describe our customer experience. We're already kind of doing it, but I'm sure we're probably not thinking of things that we could be using that would be… helpful." OGCBD and OCA staff also expressed interest in learning more about using other non-survey measurement activities such as website analytics as part of their CX measurement activities.

Research Question 1 Summary of Findings

Customer experience measurement activities are currently taking place in 12 of the 13 offices under study, and the remaining office expressed strong interest in developing and implementing a CX measurement activity. Overall, 48% of the programs are currently using a CX measurement activity, and six programs use both survey and non-survey measurement activities. All 13 offices expressed interest in improving upon their CX measurement activities, including refining activities already in use or developing new activities (CX surveys) for programs that currently do not measure CX.

Research Question 2: How are surveys used for customer experience measurement at the SBA?

2a. Which populations defined as customers in A-11 and the CX Executive Order do the surveys reach?

There are alternate definitions of a customer in the guidance documents, with A-11 being inclusive of internal customers while the CX Executive Order focuses on external customers. The definitions of customer(s) in two of these documents are shown in **Figure 8**. Based on these two definitions, coding was added to the matrix to identify the customer of each of the CX measurement activities. This coding identified the target audience of each program and after analysis of the measurement activity, the customers were coded as individuals, businesses, and organizations.

Of these 32 surveys, 15 are for internal programs and 17 are for external programs. External program customers included loan applicants, program (training) participants, grantees, disaster survivors, business owners seeking certification, and entrepreneurs.

These customers were then identified in the "individuals, businesses, or organizations" categories demonstrated in **Table 3**. Grantees are labeled as organizations. Internal programs define their customers as SBA managers, SBA staff who attended programs/sessions, and/or employees that received services (e.g., in the Reasonable Accommodation and Conflict Resolution Center). Thus, globally they are SBA staff, and are all shown under the "individuals" category below.

Figure 8. Definition of customer

DEFINITION OF CUSTOMER

OMB Circular A-11, Part 6, Section 280

A-11 Customer definition: "'customers' are individuals, businesses, and organizations (such as grantees, state, and municipal agencies) that interact with a Federal Government agency or program, either directly or via a federal contractor or even a Federally-funded program. Federal government customers could also include public servants and employees themselves in their interactions with the Federal processes."

CX Executive Order 14048

CX Executive Order definition: "the term 'customer' means any individual, business, or organization (such as grantee or State, local, or Tribal entity) that interacts with an agency or program, either directly or through a Federally-funded program administered by a contractor, nonprofit, or other Federal entity."

Table 3. Survey customers by office

Office	Individuals	Businesses	Organizations
OCIO	2		
ODA[8]	1	1	1
ODICR	6		
OED	2	2	
OFO	1		
OGCBD		4	
OHRS	6		
OIT			4
OPPCFO	1		
OVBD	3		
Total Surveys	**22**	**6**	**4**

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[8] Disaster assistance loan program has multiple types of customers since it is delivered to individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations. It is only counted once (yet shown in each category) in Table 3 to maintain the total number of 32 surveys.

2b. What types of questions are asked?

A variety of questions (CX, demographics, program process and outcomes) are asked on the 32 surveys used by the SBA offices. Analysis of the survey instruments identified that the surveys asked program-specific questions. These questions are about program components, specific curriculum, business information (e.g., size and number of employees), and general questions regarding the overall program training.[9] Additionally, some similar questions were asked across surveys. The HUBZone, 8(a), and WOSB certification surveys (all OGCBD surveys) each asked for feedback regarding the certification process and the web system used for program certification. The OGCBD surveys also asked participants to either identify which stage in the process they are in or identify what was completed most recently.

The OFO and VBOC surveys asked respondents to identify the primary reason for their interaction with the SBA. Similarly, the ODA survey asks respondents to indicate the purpose(s) of their interaction with the SBA by identifying one or more reasons from a list. The OFO, VBOC, and both B2B surveys asked for contact information if the customer was interested in participating in a focus group. And the 8(a), B2B (one survey), HUBZone, T.H.R.I.V.E./Emerging Leaders (two surveys), VBOC, WOSB, and OFO survey each asked, "how likely are you to recommend this SBA program to a fellow business owner?"

One area of interest for analyzing the surveys for the external programs is their alignment with OMB Circular No. A-11, Section 280. This circular provides information on how federal agencies can manage and improve CX and service delivery. The 17 external surveys were analyzed and coded. **Figure 9** demonstrates what percentage of the external surveys ask each category of questions. The term "category" is used broadly here to describe the different aspects of A-11, Section 280. **Table 4** further breaks down these categories by each survey.

Figure 9. A-11, Section 280 categories

A-11, SECTION 280 CATEGORIES

The 17 surveys asked questions in the categories of:

Category	Percentage
Trust	18%
Satisfaction	59%
Drivers of Experience	41%
Service Quality	41%
Process	35%
People	18%
Free Response	88%
Under 15 Questions	35%

Note. People category is only asked if an interaction with an SBA employee was applicable to the customer's experience.

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[9] Example questions: "Looking back at your experience, please rate the value of each T.H.R.I.V.E. program component below for you or your business" and "Do you believe the Boots to Business/Reboot training program provided you a proper overview of the necessary skills required to start a business?"

Table 4. External surveys' alignment with OMB Circular No. A-11, Section 280

Office	Program	Trust	Satisfaction	Drivers of Experience[10]	Service Quality	Process	People [11]	Free Response	Under 15 Qs[12]
ODA	Disaster Assistance Program	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
OED	Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC) (Large Org.)	No	No	Yes	No	No	NA	Yes	No
OED	Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC) (Small Bus.)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No
OED	T.H.R.I.V.E./Emerging Leaders (Feedback)	No	Yes	No	No	No	NA	Yes	No
OED	T.H.R.I.V.E./Emerging Leaders (Follow-Up)	No	Yes	No	No	No	NA	Yes	No
OFO	Field Counseling and Training Program	No*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OGCBD	8(a) Business Development Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	No
OGCBD	HUBZone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
OGCBD	Mentor-Protégé	No	No	No	No	No	NA	No	No
OGCBD	Women Owned Small Business Federal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	No
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) (Climate)	No	No	No	No	No	NA	Yes	Yes
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) (Cost)	No	No	No	No	No	NA	Yes	Yes
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	No	No	No	No	No	NA	Yes	Yes
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) (Tourism)	No	No	No	No	No	NA	Yes	Yes
OVBD	Boots to Business (B2B) (Outcome)	No	No	No	No	No	NA	Yes	No
OVBD	Boots to Business (B2B) (Quality)	No	Yes	No	No	No	NA	Yes	No
OVBD	Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)	No*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Indicates that the question was worded as "*this interaction increases my confidence in*" instead of "*this interaction increases my trust in*."
Note. Programs are alphabetized by office.

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[10] The "Drivers of Experience" category is the name given to: "A required series of choices or questions to assess relationships between the overall score and experience drivers relevant to the service (see chart). A multiple-choice question asking a question such as '*How can we improve*' or '*What contributed to your rating*' (the time it took, the employee, the quality, etc.) and enables the selection of individual drivers. Alternatively, individual questions for each driver on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) using statements in table below. Each Driver Sub-Category lists alternative statements that can be used, but not all statements under each Driver Sub-Category must be used."

[11] The "People" category is only asked if an interaction with an SBA employee was applicable to the customer's experience and NA is used if not applicable.

[12] The "Under 15 Qs" counts the individual questions and each line of a matrix-style question as individual questions.

2c. When in the customer journey are these surveys deployed?

The timing of when in the customer journey the surveys are deployed can be grouped into three categories: transaction (17), journey (14), and relationship (1). Transaction surveys are those that are sent immediately, or within 48 hours, of a service rendered (e.g., contact with VBOC employee or interaction with help desk). Included in the transaction category are internal program surveys that are sent after training sessions and survey links included in email signatures. Transaction surveys categorize 17 of the 32 surveys, 14 of which are internal surveys. The other three are external (Mentor-Protégé, OFO, and VBOC).[13]

"It's constantly open, but we would also send reminders on a regular basis through the SBA Daily about the survey and ask for responses. And a lot of us also have the link to the survey in our e-mail signature."

OPPCFO

Journey surveys are sent after a series of interactions or the completion of a process, including the completion of a program. Journey surveys categorize 14 of the 32 surveys, which are all for external programs. Relationship surveys measure the customer perspective reflecting on their engagement, series of transactions, and journey with a service provider. The ODA survey is categorized as a relationship survey.

2d. Are demographic questions currently being asked? If so, which demographic variables are collected?

Demographic questions are asked in eight of the 17 external surveys; questions are optional in all eight.[14] **Figure 10** shows the percentage of the eight external surveys that asked demographic information. **Table 5** further explains the demographic information asked for all 17 surveys.

For the disability category, three surveys ask, "do you identify as an individual with a disability?" Two surveys from OVBD ask participants to identify if they are a Service-Disabled

Figure 10. Survey demographics

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Eight of the 17 surveys ask optional demographic questions on the following demographic variables:

Age	47%
Gender	47%
Race	47%
Ethnicity	47%
Veteran/Military	41%
Disability	29%

Veteran. The OVBD surveys are counted as being asked and identified with an asterisk, indicating that the wording is different from other surveys in this category.

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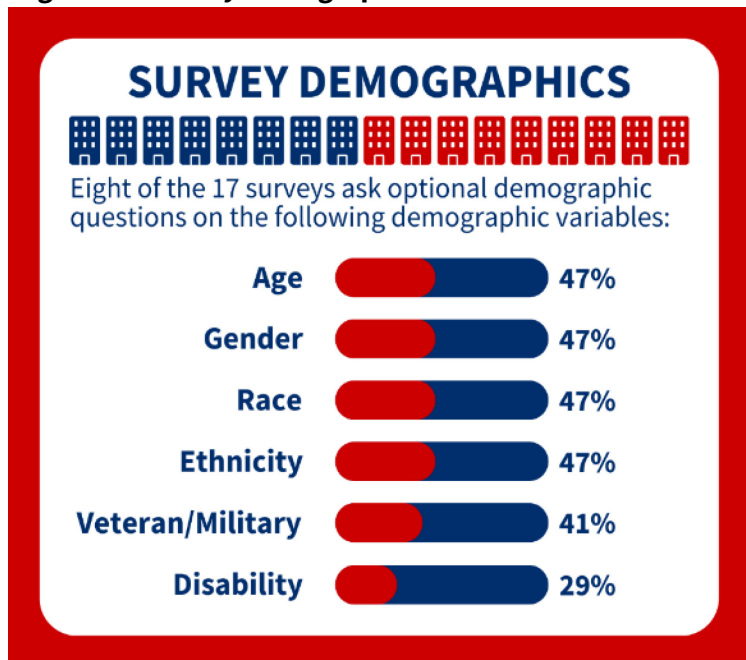
[13] OMB Circular No. A-11 Section 280. Managing Customer Experience and Improving Service Delivery. https://bit.ly/3CJIh9n.
[14] These surveys are: 8(a), HUBZone, WOSB, B2B class quality, B2B Outcome, OFO Customer Survey, ODA Customer Satisfaction, and VBOC Customer Satisfaction.

Table 5. Optional demographic questions asked on external surveys

Office	Program	Age	Gender	Race	Ethnicity	Veteran or military status	Disability
ODA	Disaster Assistance Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
OED	Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC) (Large Org.)	No	No	No	No	No	No
OED	Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC) (Small Bus.)	No	No	No	No	No	No
OED	T.H.R.I.V.E./Emerging Leaders (Feedback)	No	No	No	No	No	No
OED	T.H.R.I.V.E./Emerging Leaders (Follow-Up)	No	No	No	No	No	No
OFO	Field Counseling and Training Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
OGCBD	8(a) Business Development Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OGCBD	HUBZone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OGCBD	Mentor-Protégé	No	No	No	No	No	No
OGCBD	Women Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program (WOSB)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) (Climate)	No	No	No	No	No	No
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) (Cost)	No	No	No	No	No	No
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	No	No	No	No	No	No
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) (Tourism)	No	No	No	No	No	No
OVBD	Boots to Business (B2B) (Outcome)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
OVBD	Boots to Business (B2B) (Quality)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*
OVBD	Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*

*These surveys ask if the participant is a Service-Disabled Veteran compared to the other disability question: "Do you identify as an individual with a disability?"

Note. All surveys are included in alphabetical order by office. All demographic questions are optional with "No" indicating that the question was not asked.

Regarding how demographic data is used, the OVBD stated that, "we're going to need the data to show us, are we getting into the underserved communities?" OVBD explained that the demographic data has recently been used to focus on rural areas and military spouses. OED leadership stated that demographic data is used for "really understanding the demographics of our program participants. [This] helped us shape some of our previous funding opportunity announcements, and really, we use that data to look forward." The programs that ask demographic questions in their surveys stated that they use it to inform future program decisions.

2e. Comparing across survey questions asked, how comparable are the surveys across different programs?

The surveys vary widely across both program customer (internal or external) and office. There are very few similarities between the external surveys that extend beyond the A-11, Section 280 comparison explained above. The external surveys also differ depending upon the focus of the program, with three (8(a), HUBZone, and WOSB) being alike (mostly due to surveys coming from the same office (OGCBD)). The internal surveys, despite similarities between the OPPCFO and OCIO surveys, are often geared towards specific trainings or a topic (e.g., Mindful Minutes session on imposter syndrome).

Research Question 2 Summary

The wide range of survey approaches across internal and external programs demonstrate the variety of ways in which CX is currently being measured. Most surveys identified their customers as individuals (22 surveys), followed by businesses (six surveys), and organizations (four surveys).

One document, OMB Circular No. A-11, Section 280, was used to examine the 17 external surveys to determine if there were similarities among survey questions. This found that 59% of surveys asked about participant satisfaction with the program, 41% asked about the drivers of the participant's experience, and 41% also asked about service quality. Demographic questions were asked on eight of the 17 external program surveys. Responses to demographic questions were optional on all surveys with age, gender, race, and ethnicity being asked on all eight surveys.

Among the 32 surveys mentioned in the first paragraph of this section, only a few questions were asked on multiple surveys. Three surveys asked for feedback regarding the certification process and system used for certification and to identify which stage in the process they are in, or what was most recently completed (HUBZone, 8(a), and WOSB). Two surveys (OFO and VBOC) asked respondents to identify the primary reason for their interaction with the SBA. And eight surveys asked if the respondent would recommend this program to a fellow business owner (8(a), B2B Quality, HUBZone, T.H.R.I.V.E./Emerging Leaders small and large businesses, VBOC, WOSB, and OFO).

Research Question 3: How are non-survey methods (e.g., website/user analytics, operational or administrative data analysis) used for customer experience measurement at the SBA?

The discussion below focuses on metrics that are produced frequently using administrative data. At the end of the narrative for this research question, there is a discussion of other non-survey measurement activities.

3a. What metrics are being tracked?

Using information submitted through the data call and data shared by the SBA, 12 programs in six offices are using 17 (performance) metrics as their CX non-survey measurement activity.[15] The complete list of all 12 programs is in **Table 6**, which is organized alphabetically by office and program. OCA has four programs that track five metrics, OGCBD has four programs that track four metrics, OHRS has one program that tracks two metrics, ODA and OII each have one program that tracks one metric, and OIT has one program that tracks four metrics (wording of the STEP metrics was taken directly from the data call). It is important to note here though that SBA staffers from the STEP program identified the measures as ones that are used by the program to monitor CX.

Table 6. List of metrics by office and program

Office	Program	Metric information
OCA	504 Certified Development Company Loan Program	Average business days to process small non-delegated loan applications
OCA	7(a) Loan	Average business days to process small non-delegated loan applications
OCA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing*	Percentage of loans with initial disbursement within 5 days of loan closing
OCA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing*	Percentage of disaster loans processed within standard time (reported monthly)
OCA	Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)	Average number of days to process forgiveness applications
ODA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing*	Percentage of disasters having a Disaster Loan Outreach Center or Business Recovery Center open within 10 days
OGCBD	8(a) Business Development Program	Percentage of certifications processed within the 90-day statutory timeframe for each application
OGCBD	HUBZone	Percentage of HUBZone certification applications processed within the target number of days (60 days)
OGCBD	Veteran-Owned Small Business Contracting (VOSB)	Percentage of veteran small business applications processed within the target 90 days compared to the mandated timeline
OGCBD	Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program (WOSB)	Percentage of WOSB applications processed within the mandated 90-day requirement
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	Average number of days to new hire
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	Retention rate for new hires
OII	Small Business Investment Company Program (SBIC)	Average licensing time in months from the time a formal application is submitted to the SBA issuing a license or otherwise resolving the application
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP funds utilization
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP sales
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP number of new-to-export SBs
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP number of market-expansion SBs

*The Disaster Assistance Loan Making and Servicing Program is counted as two programs in two offices.
Note. Metrics sorted in alphabetical order by office.

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[15] Of these programs, six also use surveys: the Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing, the 8(a) Business Development Program, the HUBZone program, the WOSB program, the Recruitment and Retention program, and the STEP program.

3b. When in the customer journey are these measures being tracked?

The SBA offices using metrics rely on specific timeframes to assess CX during a customer journey. Timeframes were reported for nine programs (11 metrics) and were then categorized into five stages. **Table 7** identifies these stages along with an explanation of what timeframe this stage applies to.

Table 7. Stages of customer journey

Stage	Explanation
Application	A customer applies for a program or for an SBA job
SBA Review	The SBA processes the application
Decision	The SBA issues a decision to the customer
Receipt of Service / Program Participation	The SBA gives an award, hires a new employee, provides a training, etc.
End of the Program / Journey	Interaction between the SBA and the participant is complete

The data in **Table 8** then identifies the program and at what stage in the customer journey the metric is collected. It includes two programs, with five metrics, that are identified as "Not Applicable", since these metrics are not used for process efficiency, and therefore can not be categorized as a stage of customer journey.

3c. Are metrics being analyzed by customer demographics? If so, which demographic variables?

The information collected regarding the use of demographic data with the non-survey measurement activities was obtained during office interviews. It is not clear (or there is no evidence of) how demographic variables are used in conjunction with CX performance metrics to analyze disparities in customer experience across demographic groups. No explicit discussion of how or what data were matched was shared with the Optimal-Fors Marsh team. Offices stated that they use demographic data for purposes such as improving their understanding of their customers or determining their reach into underserved communities. Otherwise, offices stated that they do not use that data since everyone is equally important. For example, an office stated that all participants were important, so no specific subpopulations or data due to demographics were needed.

Despite 12 programs using metrics, just two offices explicitly mentioned anything related to the use of demographic data and performance metrics:

- OGCBD provided the most feedback on the importance of demographics with performance metrics: "when we look at all of that data, it helps us understand who's applying to our program, where are they coming from. So, it then informs the level of engagement or connection with the district office when we talk about our program too. We use the demographic data across OGCBD, across all of our programs and a lot of different ways."
- Another office, OED, stated that "we use [U.S.] Census data indicators to identify areas that should be interested [to ensure] the interests actually match with the need."

Table 8. Customer journey metric collection

Office	Program	Metric information	Stage of customer journey
OCA	504 Certified Development Company Loan Program	Average business days to process small non-delegated loan applications	SBA Review
OCA	7(a) Loan	Average business days to process small non-delegated loan applications	SBA Review
OCA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing	Percentage of loans with initial disbursement within 5 days of loan closing	Receipt of Service / Program Participation
OCA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing	Percentage of disaster loans processed within standard time (reported monthly)	SBA Review
OCA	Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)	Average number of days to process forgiveness applications	SBA Review
ODA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing	Percentage of disasters having a Disaster Loan Outreach Center or Business Recovery Center open within 10 days	Receipt of Service / Program
OGCBD	8(a) Business Development Program	Percentage of certifications processed within the 90-day statutory timeframe for each application	SBA Review
OGCBD	HUBZone	Percentage of HUBZone certification applications processed within the target number of days (60 days)	SBA Review
OGCBD	Veteran-Owned Small Business Contracting (VOSB)	Percentage of veteran small business applications processed within the target 90 days compared to the mandated timeline	SBA Review
OGCBD	Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program (WOSB)	Percentage of WOSB applications processed within the mandated 90-day requirement	SBA Review
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	Average number of days to new hire	Receipt of Service / Program Participation
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	Retention rate for new hires	Not Applicable
OII	Small Business Investment Company Program (SBIC)	Average licensing time in months from the time a formal application is submitted to the SBA issuing a license or otherwise resolving the application	Receipt of Service / Program Participation
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP funds utilization	Not Applicable
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP sales	Not Applicable
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP number of new-to-export SBs	Not Applicable
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP number of market-expansion SBs	Not Applicable

Note. "Not Applicable" is used for metrics that are not related to process efficiency.

3d. How comparable are the measures across different programs?

Two metrics are a similar "type" across programs (**Table 9**). The most common metric, percentage of certifications or applications processed within a set timeframe, is tracked by four different programs within the same office (8(a), HUBZone, VOSB, and WOSB). Two OCA programs track a similar metric involving the average number of business days to process a loan (504 and 7(a)).

Table 9. Metrics tracked by multiple programs

Office	Program	Metric information
OCA	504 Certified Development Company Loan Program	Average business days to process small non-delegated loan applications
OCA	7(a) Loan	Average business days to process small non-delegated loan applications
OGCBD	8(a) Business Development Program (90 days)	Percentage of certifications or applications processed within the 60- or 90-day statutory timeframe for each application
OGCBD	HUBZone (60 days)	Percentage of certifications or applications processed within the 60- or 90-day statutory timeframe for each application
OGCBD	Veteran-Owned Small Business Contracting (VOSB) (90 days)	Percentage of certifications or applications processed within the 60- or 90-day statutory timeframe for each application
OGCBD	Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program (WOSB) (90 days)	Percentage of certifications or applications processed within the 60- or 90-day statutory timeframe for each application

Table 10 includes the remainder of the metrics being tracked by programs, which includes 11 metrics that are unique. Although a few of these metrics could be broadly categorized, for example, the average number of days or percentage of loans, these categories would neglect the specifics which are relevant to that program's CX measurement activity.

Table 10. Metrics tracked by one program

Office	Program	Metric information
OCA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing	Percentage of loans with initial disbursement within 5 days of loan closing
OCA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing	Percentage of disaster loans processed within standard time (reported monthly)
OCA	Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)	Average number of days to process forgiveness applications
ODA	Disaster Assistance Program Loan Making and Servicing	Percentage of disasters having a Disaster Loan Outreach Center or Business Recovery Center open within 10 days
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	Average number of days to new hire
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	Retention rate for new hires
OII	Small Business Investment Company Program (SBIC)	Average licensing time in months from the time a formal application is submitted to the SBA issuing a license or otherwise resolving the application
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP funds utilization
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP sales
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP number of new-to-export SBs
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP number of market-expansion SBs

Other Non-Survey Activities

Nine programs identified other non-survey measurement activities through the data call or during the office interviews; see **Table 11** for more details. In some instances, references to programmatic or operational data were made. However, no specifics were given and as such, these were not added in the section above. None of the programs below used these other non-survey measurement activities consistently (i.e., scheduled and uniformly applied).

Table 11. Other non-survey measurement activities (informal and in some instances, past activities)

Office	Program(s)	Activities
OFO	Field Counseling and Training Program	• Lender round tables • Lender visits
OGCBD	7(j) Management and Technical Assistance Program	• Meeting with external stakeholders • Roundtable discussions with small groups of program stakeholders
OGCBD	8(a) Business Development Program	• Analysis of website analytics • Analysis of programmatic or operational data • Conducting social listening activities • Analysis of customer feedback from multiple sources • In-person/virtual conference engagements • Feedback from federal customers on DSBS • Meeting with external stakeholders • Roundtable discussions with small groups of program stakeholders
OGCBD	HUBZone	• Internal/Staff: Monthly team meetings--questions raised by the team, tone, etc. often shed light on issues related to satisfaction • Internal/Staff: Informal team-building activities often allow for more informal "chatter" and opportunity to assess the pulse of staff satisfaction more informally • Stakeholder chatter • Inquiries or letters of complaint from Congress or stakeholders or industry groups may indicate heightened frustration by small businesses. • Weekly open calls with firms--we often pick up "issues" and concerns • Customer Service Help Desk inquiries/complaints • Rise in protests might signal increasing frustration among federal procurement personnel
OGCBD	Mentor – Protégé	• Analysis of programmatic or operational data • Conducting social listening activities • Analysis of customer feedback from multiple sources • In-person/virtual conference engagements • Feedback from federal customers on DSBS • Meeting with external stakeholders • Roundtable discussions with small groups of program stakeholders • Analysis of application submissions • Conducting trainings with federal agencies and firms directly

Office	Program(s)	Activities
OGCBD	Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program (WOSB)	• Analysis of website analytics • Analysis of programmatic or operational data • Conducting social listening activities • Analysis of customer feedback from multiple sources • In-person/virtual conference engagements • Feedback from federal customers on DSBS • Meeting with external stakeholders • Roundtable discussions with small groups of program stakeholders • Customer journey mapping
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	• Analysis of website analytics (including employee engagement)
OII	Growth Accelerators Fund Competition (GAFC)	• Listening sessions with participants • Monthly meetings • Website analytics
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	• Focus groups

The most common non-survey activities, used by the 7(j), 8(a), Mentor-Protégé, and WOSB programs, were meetings with external stakeholders and roundtable discussions with small groups of program stakeholders. Office staff stated that three programs, 8(a), Mentor-Protégé, and WOSB, use programmatic or operational data (no specifics were given), conduct social listening activities, analyze customer feedback from multiple sources, have in-person/virtual conference engagements, and collected feedback from federal customers on DSBS. Three programs, 8(a), WOSB, and Recruitment and Retention, and OII stated using website analytics (although no specifics were given or discussed).

The interviews identified other non-survey activities. There were similarities across programs, and they demonstrated the variety of ways in which programs obtain information regarding CX.

The 8(a) Program team explained they obtain CX data "informally, not through formal surveys, but through dialogue and engagement." OIT explained that "this past fall or summer [we] had sort of some focus groups with the STEP grantees which [was] about use of our STEP program and reducing the administrative burden of some of the reporting. So, we had a roundtable discussion and then a couple of deep dive interviews." OFO also stated that "pre-pandemic we used to host lender round tables where our financial staff and usually the district director, would meet with lenders and find out about our lending programs, why they're using them, why they're not using them, what's the impediment to that. And we also would have lender visits where we would go… one-on-one or SBA to a particular lender and try to find out what was going on."

Research Question 3 Summary

The SBA programs using non-survey measurement activities rely on different metrics such as average number of days to process loans, percentage of certifications or applications processed with a set timeframe, and disbursement loans by "X" date. Overall, processing time is the most common CX non-survey metric throughout the programs, which is considered to be part of the SBA Review stage. Both OGCBD and OED discussed using demographic data in their offices, including using geographical data, to identify where applicants are coming from, which is used to target recruitment efforts with SBA district offices.

Other, mostly informal, and inconsistently measured, non-survey activities utilized by programs include meeting with external stakeholders, holding focus groups, analyzing website analytics, and using customer feedback from emails.

Research Question 4: How are SBA programs using CX data and what changes in service delivery have followed CX measurement activities?

4a. How do programs use the data?

Of the 13 offices, 11 offices provided details regarding how their programs use data, as **Figure 11** shows. Two offices, OCIO and OEMISS, have just begun their CX measurement activities and therefore could not answer questions regarding data use. OCA discussed CX data for both program improvements and to inform decisions. Information pertaining to the ODA's use of data was provided by former ODA staff now working in other offices.
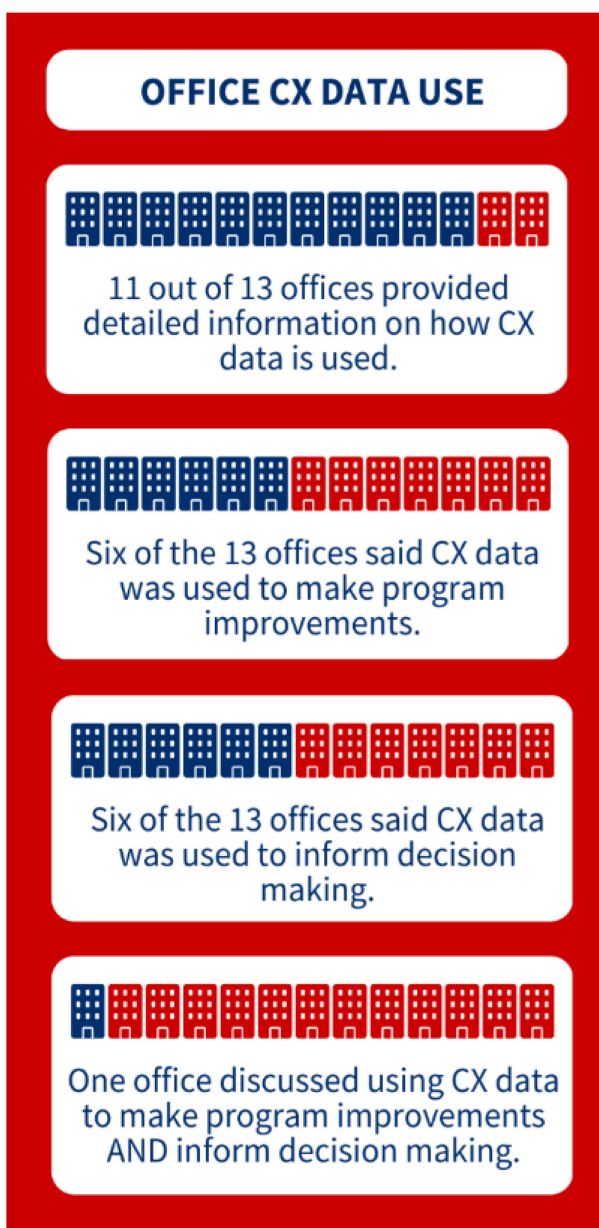
The main CX data uses fall into the overarching themes of "program improvements" and "inform decision making." Although these two themes are similar, the theme of program improvements focusses on programmatic adjustments, whereas the theme of inform decision making focusses on resource partners, changes to a process, and modernization.

Program Improvements

Program improvements were the main use of CX data in six offices: OCA, ODA, ODICR, OHRS, OIT, and OVBD. Although those offices specifically discussed using data to improve programs, not all programs in these offices were discussed in the interviews.

In OHRS, CX data are used towards internal program improvements. Regarding recruitment, OHRS stated, "we have looked at changing … our workflow process and changing the number of days allotted to each process." Additionally, CX data has been used by OHRS to improve new employee knowledge of internal programs and supports available. OHRS explained, "onboarding uses [CX] data to understand which resources are of interest and are used by new employees. [Training] changes are made quarterly to address things."

Figure 11. Office CX data use

OFFICE CX DATA USE

11 out of 13 offices provided detailed information on how CX data is used.

Six of the 13 offices said CX data was used to make program improvements.

Six of the 13 offices said CX data was used to inform decision making.

One office discussed using CX data to make program improvements AND inform decision making.

Note. Summary of office CX data use.

25

Figure 12 provides three additional examples. Both OCA and OVBD continuously update and use CX data to make program improvements. An additional example from a former ODA employee regarding how ODA uses data explained that "because the survey would evaluate individual centers, they would always get the results, and they might use it to identify project process improvement areas." With nearly half of the offices under review using CX data to make program improvements, there is potential for additional programs and offices to utilize their CX data this way.

Figure 12. CX data use: Improvements
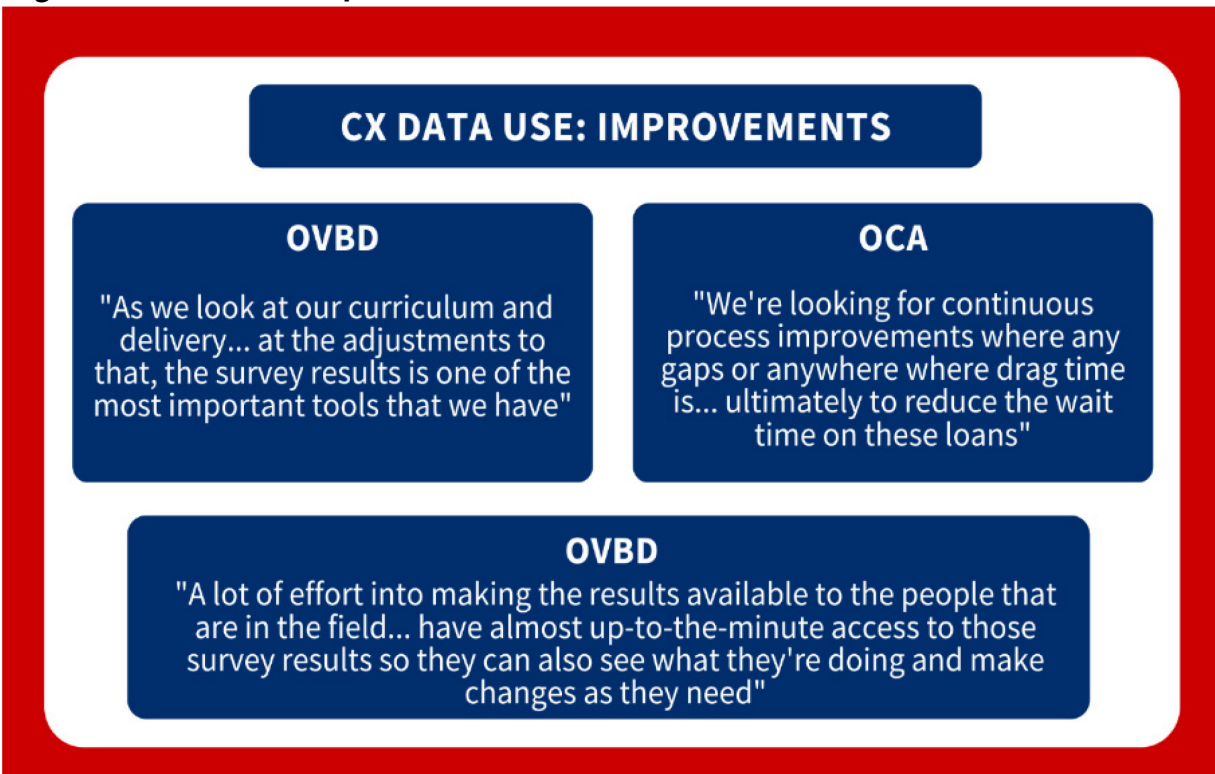
Note. Examples of external programs using CX data to make improvements.

Inform Decision Making

The second theme of CX data use, inform decision making, was also discussed in six offices: OCA, OED, OFO, OGCBD, OII, and OPPCFO. Similar to the previous theme, not all programs in these offices were discussed during the office interviews. The CX measurement data is used to inform both program- and office-level decisions, particularly for external programs. These decisions include identifying changes needed to a process, determining adjustments needed for third parties or resource partners (contractors, grantees), and recognizing when rebranding of a program is needed.

OPPCFO explained that they used CX data "more… to inform decision making of managers within the OPPCFO function about more targeted feedback on specific employees rather than kind of overarching services." **Figure 13** provides other examples of how CX data were used to inform decision making in different offices. OED and OII utilized CX data to inform decisions within their programs, while OII used CX data to drive the decisions behind the modernization of the SBIR website.

Figure 13. CX data use: Inform decision making
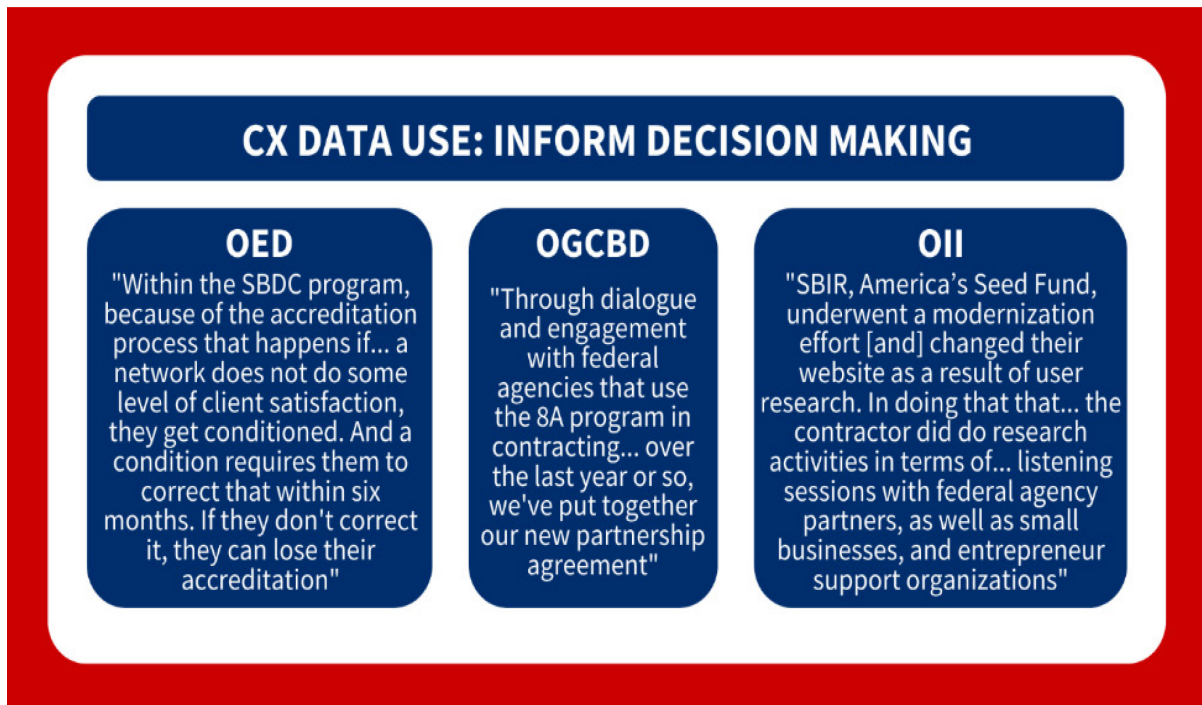
Note. Examples of how CX data were used to inform decision making in external programs.

Although detailed examples were not given for each of the six offices that mentioned using CX data to inform decision making, the examples provided demonstrate the diverse ways in which the data was utilized within offices.

Reporting Data

Although reporting data was not a theme of CX data use, offices commonly discussed how often CX data are reported while discussing how these data are used. There was a wide variety of office responses regarding how often the CX data were reported (e.g., annual reports, leadership, or office staff). In **Figure 14**, 10 of the 13 offices under study provided detailed information regarding how often and with whom their CX data is reported or shared.

Of these 10 offices, six – ODA, ODICR, OED, OGCBD, OIT, and OPPCFO – stated the data were reported annually. Two offices (OII and OFO) reported their CX data quarterly and two offices (OVBD and OHRS) reported CX data continuously through a data dashboard.

Figure 14. Office data reporting
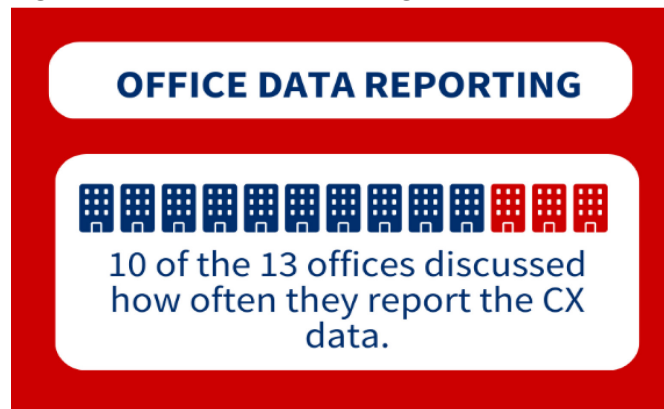
Note. Two offices did not provide sufficient information regarding their CX reporting and one office does not have CX data to report.

4b. Have there been changes in service delivery as a result of customer experience research?

Changes to Service Delivery

Of the 13 offices under study, nine offices provided information regarding how CX data led to changes in service delivery (**Figure 15**). Although four offices did not provide enough information to determine if changes were made to service delivery, the information and examples from other offices demonstrate the various ways in which CX data can be used.

These changes to service delivery occurred in both internal and external programs as a result of their CX data and CX research. Six offices – ODA, OED, OFO, OGCBD, OIT, and OVBD – provided information about changes in service delivery to external programs (**Figure 16**).

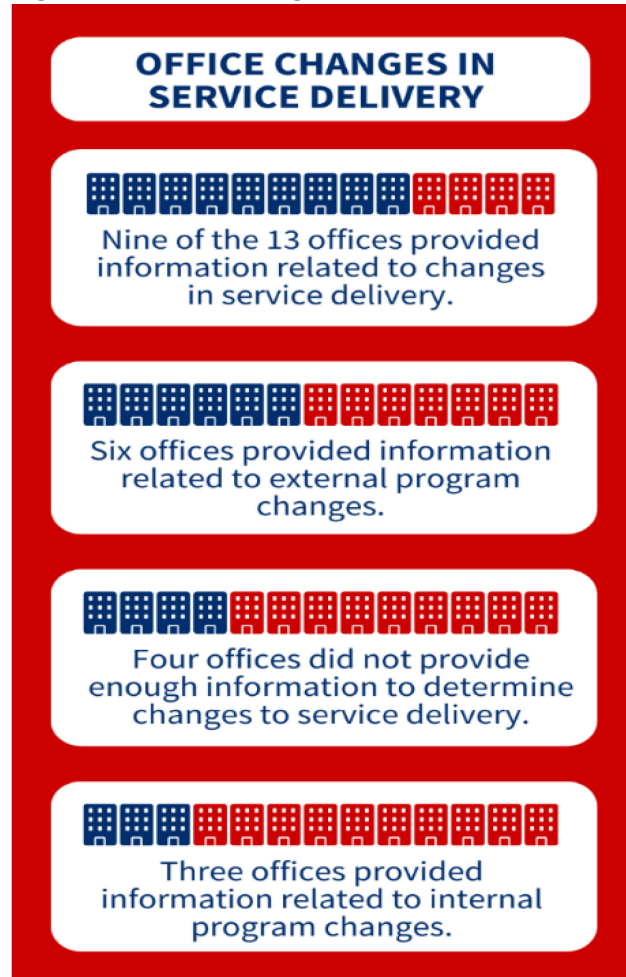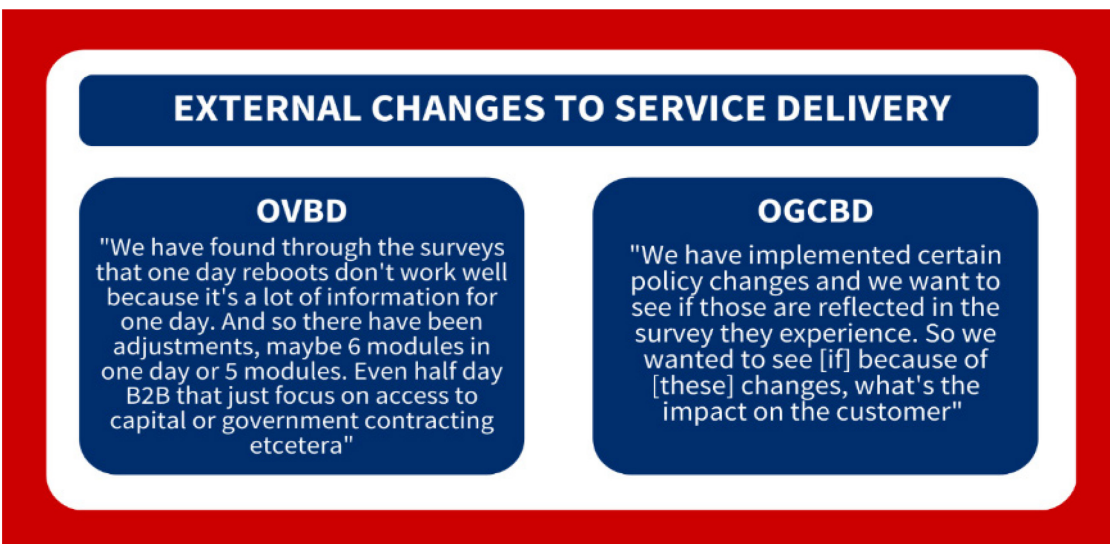**Figure 15. Office changes in service delivery**

OFFICE CHANGES IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Nine of the 13 offices provided information related to changes in service delivery.

Six offices provided information related to external program changes.

Four offices did not provide enough information to determine changes to service delivery.

Three offices provided information related to internal program changes.

Figure 16. External changes to service delivery

EXTERNAL CHANGES TO SERVICE DELIVERY

OVBD
"We have found through the surveys that one day reboots don't work well because it's a lot of information for one day. And so there have been adjustments, maybe 6 modules in one day or 5 modules. Even half day B2B that just focus on access to capital or government contracting etcetera"

OGCBD
"We have implemented certain policy changes and we want to see if those are reflected in the survey they experience. So we wanted to see [if] because of [these] changes, what's the impact on the customer"

Note. Six offices with external programs indicated they have changed service delivery.

The CX data led to service changes in how B2B sessions were delivered. The change in focus of content, as well as continuing to offer class options both online and in person, has improved the B2B program. OGCBD used CX data to identify if customer service with a program had changed as a result of policy implementations.

Internal programs with service changes occurred in three offices: ODICR, OHRS, and OPPCFO. **Figure 17** below provides two of these examples. As a result of internal CX data, a change in service delivery occurred in OHRS with the onboarding of new employees.

Figure 17. Internal changes to service delivery
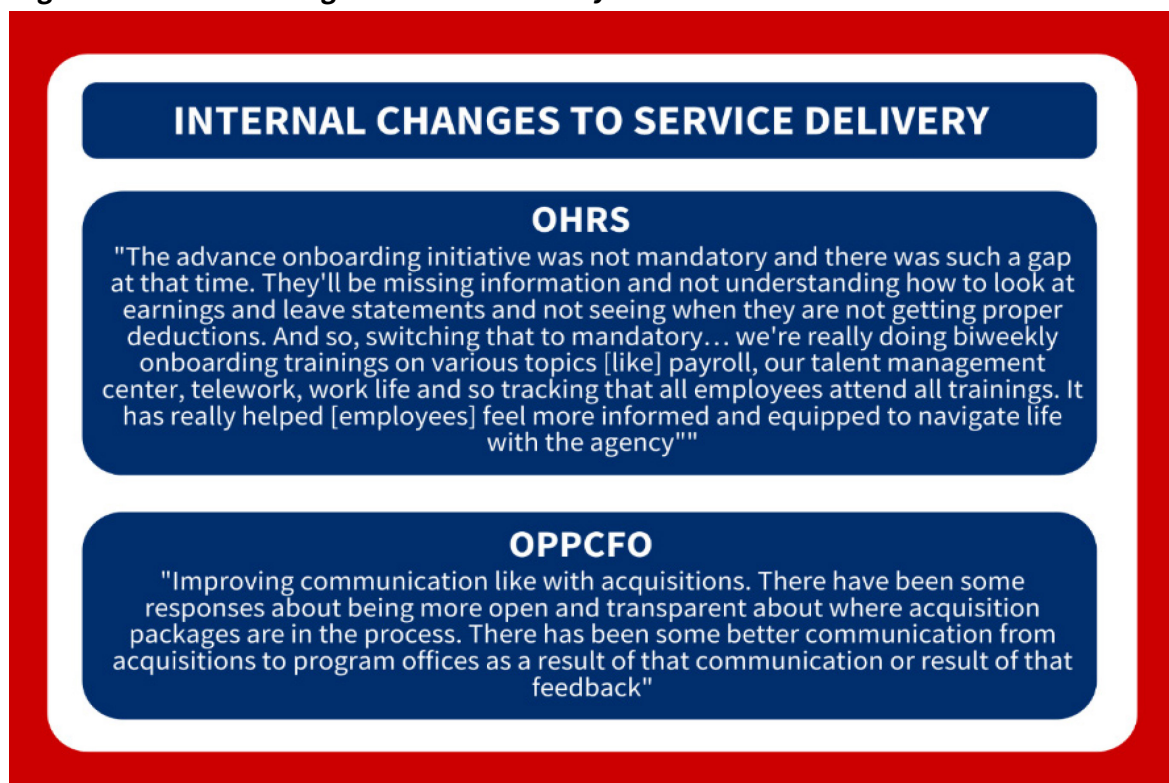
Note. Two offices with internal programs provided information regarding changes to service delivery.

The changes to the onboarding process have ensured that all new employees receive the same information, which has led to an overall smoother transition into the SBA. OPPCFO used its CX data to improve communications regarding acquisitions, which impacted the offices' service delivery.
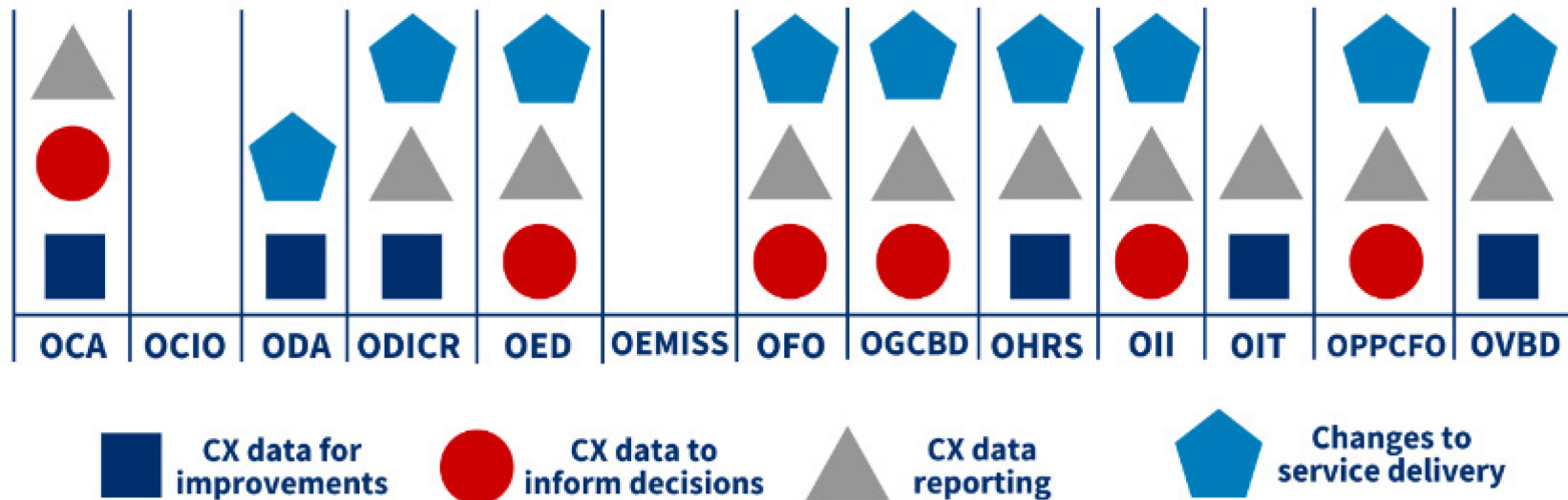
Data Summary

The data used to answer this research question was provided by 11 of the 13 offices under review. The interview data regarding CX measurement activity data usage and changes to service delivery applies to almost half, 48%, of the programs included in this analysis.

The overall summary of data used to answer this research question can be found in **Figure 18**. This summary allows for a comparison across offices, demonstrating ways in which data are used and reported, and whether changes have been made to service delivery as a result of the CX data.

Figure 18. Data summary

Note. The figure shows the combined data used to answer both sub-questions. Former ODA employees provided information for ODA currently in other offices.

Research Question 4 Summary

The data used to answer this research question were provided by 11 of the 13 offices under review. **Figure 19** provides the data highlights for this research question. These 11 offices provided detailed information regarding their use of CX data. About half of the offices (five) stated that CX data are used to make program improvements, while the other half of the offices (five) stated that CX data are used for decision making. One office utilizes CX data for program improvements and decision making.

Changes to service delivery as a result of CX data occurred in nine of the 13 offices. Among these were six offices discussing service delivery changes to external programs, and three offices discussing service delivery changes to internal programs. An external program used CX data to change how a program was delivered and an internal program changed a training requirement and made an advance onboarding initiative required for new employees.

Figure 19. Data highlights
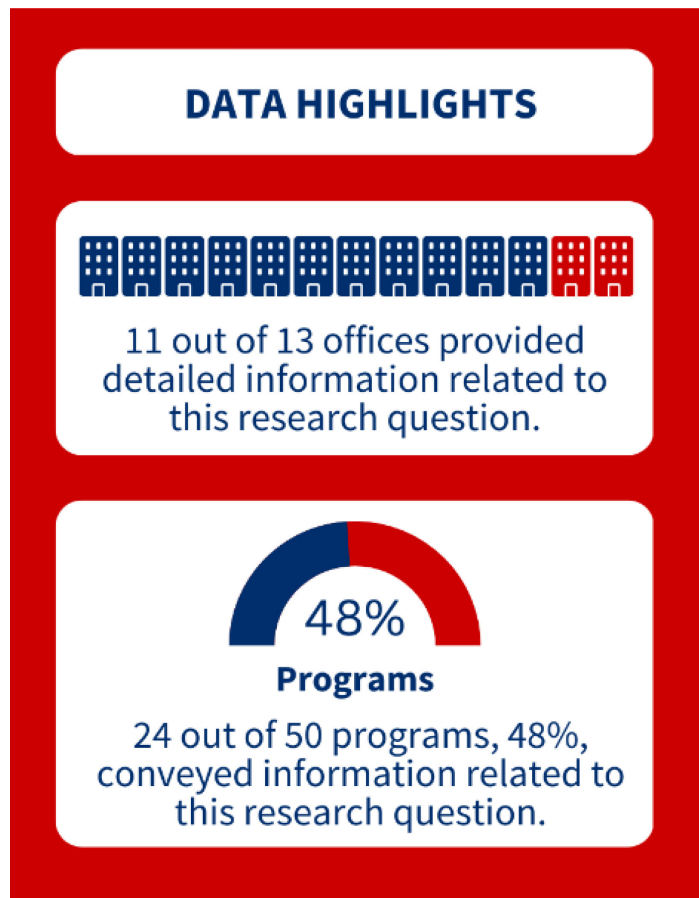
Note. Data for this research question is based on office interviews.

SBA Offices' Concerns Regarding CX Measurement Efforts

The interviews with the SBA offices provided valuable information regarding both current and future interest in CX measurement activities. Although not all programs were discussed, those who attended provided quality data that was used to answer these research questions. One topic that was discussed in most of the interviews, but is not directly tied to a research question, involved general concerns about CX measurement activities.

While some offices appeared more comfortable collecting, reporting, and using CX measurement data, several offices expressed that their limited knowledge of creating CX surveys and capacity to collect and analyze data were standing in the way of utilizing CX measurement data for their programs. **Figure 20** identifies four of these concerns:

Figure 20. Offices' concerns regarding CX measurement efforts
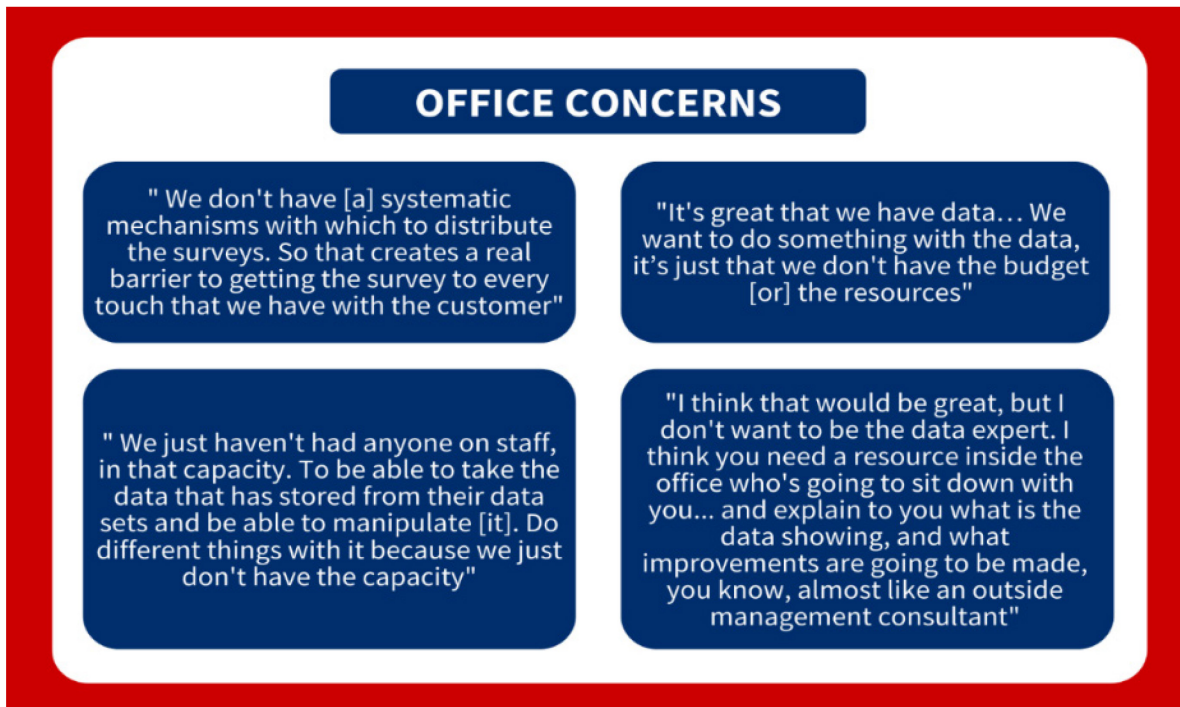
Note. Examples of SBA offices' concerns regarding CX measurement efforts.

Another office explained, "we don't have any bandwidth. We have limited skills in that area. Obviously, we can create a form survey, but outside of that, that's not something that the majority, if any, of our staff… is highly skilled at it." Additionally, OCIO, OFO, OGCBD, and OII each stated that they have "no bandwidth," with both OED and OEMISS stating they have "no capacity," to develop measurement activities or tools to measure CX in the future.

Phase II: Toolkit Development

The Optimal-Fors Marsh team will use findings from the Phase I data collection to develop one toolkit, comprising up to four chapters (up to 3-4 pages each) to assist the SBA program staff in implementing or improving the CX measurement. The toolkit will be implementable within the context of the SBA and its programs, consistent with best practices in measuring CX in government (e.g., GSA CX Center of Excellence, Digital.gov CX toolkit), and responsive to the needs assessed in the Phase I data collection. In addition, the design of the toolkit will be user-friendly and visually engaging. The toolkit will include clear, concise language with visual emphasis on key takeaways and actionable guidance for program staff to bring about positive change and help prioritize improvements. Graphics or visualizations will be used to engage the reader and improve recall of important elements of the toolkit. Branding and formatting will be consistent throughout toolkit chapters and will be aligned to SBA's guidelines and 508 compliant.

Identification of Toolkit Topics

The Optimal-Fors Marsh team will take a two-step approach to identify toolkit topics. In step 1, the SBA

and the Optimal-Fors Marsh team will discuss Phase I findings to establish a common understanding and issues identified during the landscape analysis. In step 2, the Optimal-Fors Marsh team will prepare an outline of major topics for the toolkit and then conduct a discovery session with the SBA program staff to identify and gather insights from the SBA to further refine and select topics for the toolkit.

Phase 1 findings will be reviewed within the context of CX measurement and evaluation best practices in addition to CX guidance documents (e.g., OMB Circular No. A-11) to identify opportunities to support the SBA program staff in their CX measurement activities. Similarly, SBA priorities and interests will be used to inform the toolkit topics to ensure that the toolkit is applicable to the SBA program staff's needs and capacity.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to, those listed below. The topics will be revised, removed, or added as necessary to address the needs identified by the results of the Phase I data collection, industry best practices, and the SBA's priorities.

1. Measuring and Monitoring Customer Experience (Overview)
    Provides an overview of why, when, and how to measure and monitor customer experience data. May respond to questions such as "what is customer experience?", "why is it important to measure customer experience?", and "how can a program manager begin to measure customer experience?" Will introduce how to define CX metrics that help programs prioritize improvements in their service.

2. Template Customer Experience and Customer Satisfaction Surveys
    Provides a template survey, which can be individualized for programs, to measure customer experience and customer satisfaction with minimal customization required on the part of the program manager. The customer experience template must comply with requirements under OMB A-11, Part 6, Section 280 and be suitable for submission under the agency's Generic Clearance for SBA Customer Experience data collections, or under the SBA's Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on SBA Service Delivery. The customer satisfaction template would be suitable for simplified collections, including those not requiring PRA clearance (i.e., surveys of internal customers). This tool may also include a decision aid to assist the program manager in choosing the type of survey that best meets their needs. Programs may need assistance individualizing the template and suggestions and examples will be provided.

3. Non-Survey Tools for Measuring Customer Experience
    Provides an overview of non-survey tools that can be used to measure customer experience, such as operational metrics, administrative data, website analytics, and user research. All tools included in this guide must be implementable within the context of the SBA.

4. Managing for Customer Experience Results
    Provides program managers with advice and tips for using their customer experience data to create a culture of customer experience excellence. May include topics such as socializing customer experience measures throughout the organization, reporting on results, promoting accountability and continuous improvement, and avoiding unintended consequences or perverse incentives in measuring customer experience.

Discovery Session

Upon compiling a list of potential toolkit topics, the Optimal-Fors Marsh team will conduct a discovery session with the SBA to provide an overview of the process used to identify potential toolkit topics based on the findings from the Phase I data collection and to gather additional insights from the SBA that will help further refine the topics. The Optimal-Fors Marsh team will present the evidence from Phase I data collection supporting the identified toolkit topics and will facilitate a discussion with the SBA around the utility of each topic. The Optimal-Fors Marsh team will work collaboratively with the SBA to identify the final list of toolkit topics that will be most impactful in assisting the SBA program staff in implementing or improving their customer experience measurement.

If additional data collection is necessary to supplement findings from the landscape analysis and the discovery session, the FMG team will develop a research approach to gather additional insights from the SBA's SMEs and program staff. Potential data collection methods include concurrent or additional focus groups, in-depth interviews, or online surveys with SBA staff.

Create Toolkit

The Optimal-Fors Marsh team will develop a draft outline of the toolkit chapters, including an overview of each topic and details about each subsection. The outline may also include information about potential graphics or visualizations for each chapter. The Optimal-Fors Marsh team will submit the draft outline to the SBA for review and will incorporate the SBA's feedback into the final outline. The team will then draft toolkit chapters according to the final outline and will submit the draft toolkit to the SBA program staff for review. The Optimal-Fors Marsh team will conduct a one-hour meeting to present the draft toolkit and obtain feedback from the SBA to ensure that both the content and the design of the toolkit are aligned with the needs, identified in Phase I, of SBA program staff. The Optimal-Fors Marsh team will work with the SBA to identify ways in which the toolkit can be refined to promote buy-in and future use of the toolkit by the SBA staff. In addition to a final toolkit, which will incorporate feedback from the SBA, the Optimal-Fors Marsh team will provide a toolkit supplement (five-slide PowerPoint deck) outlining actionable recommendations for future CX measurement or monitoring, analyses, templates, or toolkits.

Recommendations and Next Steps

The SBA offices vary greatly in regard to staff CX knowledge, skills, and data analysis experience. Overall, a one-size-fits-all approach will most likely be ineffective due to the individualized assistance needed within each program and office.

To continue moving forward and enhance CX measurement activities, it would be beneficial to develop a CX maturity model plan with clear indicators established, including examples of different maturity model dimensions. This CX maturity model plan would bridge the gap between the CX Maturity Model from the GSA and the current CX measurement efforts in all offices of the SBA. The plan would also assist the Office of Program Performance, Analysis, and Evaluation (OPPAE) by establishing a common ground for all offices regarding CX measurement activities, expectations, and ways to improve.

The Optimal-Fors Marsh team also recommends that, in addition to targeted information disseminated

through toolkits, that there be more discussion by office or with multiple offices/programs in which there are common needs (e.g., developing CX surveys or mapping CX measurement activities to a program design). This supplemental support could take the format of targeted webinars, technical sessions through which information and experiences could be shared across program managers/office leadership, and in the form of a webinar covering the current state of CX measurement at the SBA and what the SBA is looking at for the future.

Appendix - All surveys alphabetically by office and program

Office	Program	Survey Title
OCIO	Mission Support and Enterprise Services	ITSC Customer Satisfaction Survey
OCIO	Mission Support and Enterprise Services	OCIO Customer Satisfaction Survey
ODA	Disaster Assistance Program	American Customer Satisfaction Index
ODICR	Conflict Resolution Center	Confidential CRC User Survey
ODICR	EEO/Civil Rights Training	Civil Treatment Evaluation
ODICR	EEO/Civil Rights Training	EEO Counselor Training Evaluation Form
ODICR	EEO/Civil Rights Training	Training Evaluation Form
ODICR	Reasonable Accommodations	ODICR Reasonable Accommodations Training Survey
ODICR	Reasonable Accommodations	ODICR Reasonable Accommodation Survey (for employee)
OED	Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC)	Regional Innovation Clusters Large Organization Survey
OED	Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC)	Regional Innovation Clusters Small Business Survey
OED	T.H.R.I.V.E Emerging Leaders	Emerging Leaders Feedback Survey
OED	T.H.R.I.V.E Emerging Leaders	Emerging Leaders Follow Up Survey
OFO	Field Counseling and Training Program	SBA District Office Customer Experience Survey
OGCBD	8(a) Business Development Program	8(a) Program Customer Feedback Survey
OGCBD	HUBZone	HUBZone Program Customer Feedback Survey
OGCBD	Mentor-Protégé	Customer Feedback on the Mentor-Protégé Program
OGCBD	Women Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program (WOSB)	WOSB Program Customer Feedback Survey
OHRS	Human Capital Strategy, Systems, and Employee Development Program	HR Cafe Satisfaction Survey

Office	Program	Survey Title
OHRS	Human Capital Strategy, Systems, and Employee Development Program	Mindful Minutes Survey
OHRS	Human Capital Strategy, Systems, and Employee Development Program	Mindful Moments Evaluation
OHRS	Human Capital Strategy, Systems, and Employee Development Program	USA Hire Satisfaction Survey
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	EAP Orientation Satisfaction
OHRS	Recruitment and Retention	Onboarding Cohort Survey
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	Allowable Cost - Export Credit Insurance
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	Climate or Energy Related Trade Shows
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	STEP Survey
OIT	State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)	Tourism
OPPCFO	Financial Management Program	OPPCFO Customer Satisfaction Survey
OVBD	Boots to Business (B2B) (Outcome)*	B2B Entrepreneurship Outcome Survey
OVBD	Boots to Business (B2B) (Quality)	B2B Post Course Quality Assessment Survey
OVBD	Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)*	SBA Veterans Business Outreach Center Customer Experience Survey (Client Customer Satisfaction Survey)

Note: * Surveys are in process of finalization and deployment.