



NATIONAL HIGHWAYS BEST VALUE Benchmarking Club

incorporating the Highways Design and Highway Works divisions

Trainee, Graduate and Apprentice Competition: **“Delivering a Significant Improvement in Public Satisfaction”** **Competition Pack**

Introduction:

Thank you for your interest in the competition.

Highway Services are a big industry and they have a daily impact on the majority of people in the country. With so much similar highway work being done by so many people in so many places there are tremendous opportunities for even small efficiency ideas to generate significant savings across the UK. The key features of a good service improvement initiative are usually

- Simplicity (in concept, implementation and operation)
- Innovation (for example new tools – or better/combined use of existing ones)
- Transferability (the ability for others to adopt the idea)

The National Highways Benchmarking Club operates an ethos of free transfer of ideas and best practice in order to help its membership and the industry provide the public with the best possible service. It is recognised that often the best ideas for improvement come from the ‘sharp end’ and from practitioners who are in the training process challenging what they are doing and the way they are doing it. That is just the thinking and approach that this competition seeks to promote!

The Challenge

Individuals and/or teams, working in public or private sector organisations, are invited to make a proposal for a highway service improvement initiative that will result in a marked improvement in customer (public) satisfaction. The proposal can be related to any aspect of highways services, be they front line, or supporting activities. Lateral and novel thinking will be particularly welcomed by the judges!

The primary objectives of competition entrants should be to explain what the measure involves, how it will be delivered and then, importantly, proposals for ensuring/proving that it has achieved the desired effect without unwanted spin-offs - or at least details of how potential adverse effects will be minimised!

It is acknowledged that entrant’s ideas will likely not have been ‘tested’. The important point will be to persuade the judges that the idea is a good one, practical to deliver, and will be successful.

In proposing the necessary changes entrants should also be mindful of the value for money/efficiency agenda. It will generally be expected that the measure will be at worst ‘cost neutral’ and better still will deliver a ‘cashable’ saving into the bargain. The judges will take these financial implications into account in their deliberations.

Whilst considering efficiency implications, entrants will be expected to have referred to the ‘Local Highways Efficiency Toolkit’ in compiling their submissions. The toolkit, and other guidance related to highway efficiency and performance can be downloaded from the following websites:

<http://www.rcoe.gov.uk/rce/core/page.do?pagelid=10329>

<http://www.roadsmmeasurement.org>

Crucial in the delivery of quality highway services is the outcome for highway users and the paying public. Entries demonstrating strong customer focus will be favoured by the judges. Entrants ideas that help promote positive culture change in this regard will also be particularly welcomed by the judges.

Customer satisfaction surveys of highway services often conclude that problems are linked to poor communication with service users. The judges will be looking for evidence that this has been addressed in the entrants proposals.

Competition Rules:

- Entries should be no more than 1500 words supported as necessary by graphics, photographs, costing summaries, or plans etc included within the text (no separate appendices). They should be emailed to the Benchmarking Club C/O jennifers@buildsoft.co.uk
- Entrants should be working towards professional qualifications or on recognised industry training schemes. There is no age limit.
- The entrant(s) names, employer and training status should be recorded at the top of their submission
- The Closing Date will be 12th September with winners announced by 30th September 2008.
- The idea behind the measure to improve public satisfaction should be either new (to the best of the entrant's knowledge) or a new combination of existing ideas and/or processes to achieve a better result.
- The initiative/idea should 'belong' to the individual or team submitting it.
- The individual or team submitting the efficiency initiative (and their employers) should be content for others to adopt it without seeking any personal or commercial gain (except the recognition and prizes associated with this competition!)
- The winning entrant(s) will be invited to *present* their initiative to the Annual Conference of the Benchmarking Club on 23rd October 2008 at One Great George Street, Westminster, London. (15min Presentation through a medium of entrant's choice)
- Prizes for the winner and runner(s) up will be presented at the conference by a senior industry figure.

Definitions

For the purposes of the competition a 'public satisfaction improvement' will be defined as one that results in a marked upturn in satisfaction as measured by the new National Highway and Transport Customer Satisfaction Survey promoted by the Benchmarking Club. Copies of the survey questionnaire can be acquired through the Club's website

Judging Criteria

There will 8 criteria against which each submission will be judged. All criteria will carry equal weighting but in the even of a tie the majority view of the judges on the better efficiency initiative will determine the winner.

- Simplicity and clarity of proposal (in concept, implementation and operation)
- Innovation (for example new tools – or better/combined use of existing ones)
- Transferability (the ability for others to adopt the idea)
- Confidence that it will deliver the desired outcome (eg convincing costings)
- Customer focus
- Communication
- Managing/minimising any adverse affects
- Proposals for 'Quality Cross Checks' to demonstrate the service has been maintained

The Judges:

Martin Duffy: Senior Consultant, Buro Happold and representative of the Association of Consulting Engineers
Barry Griffiths: SW Regional Director of the ICE and SW Regional Assembly Representative (Transport)
Paul Jameson: Consultant and Former National Chairman of CSS Highway Service Improvement Group

Prizes and Recognition:

- Winning individual/team: A cheque of £250 plus a handsome trophy, certificate and invitation to the conference overleaf to present the initiative
- Runner up: A cheque of £125 and certificate

Publicity: The October Conference is being sponsored by 'Surveyor'. Winners, runners up and their employers can expect a positive mention in Surveyor's coverage of the event. All entrants and their employers will receive an 'honourable mention' at the Conference. All entries will be posted on the National Highway Benchmarking Club Website

FLYER

Worth Entering?... Some views of last year's winners...

"The National Highways Benchmarking Club Graduate and Trainee competition was very easy to enter. It was also a good opportunity to take time out to look at the bigger picture and consider what simple but effective things could be done to improve the service. Everyone has ideas on how to do things better and the competition enabled us to share ours through an important national service improvement group and to present them at a national conference among distinguished speakers. That was a fun challenge in itself... but to top that we also won a handsome award, a cheque and a mention in an important industry journal! We would certainly recommend entering to any graduate or trainee working in the highway and transport sector".

**Tom Ransley (Fitzpatrick)
Dan Kempster (Jacobs)
Ed Gurney (Bucks CC)**



Winners: 2007 Graduate and Trainee Competition
National Highways Benchmarking Club
Awards Sponsored by **surveyor**



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Entry Form:

Your name(s).....

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Training Status (of entrant(s) named above).....

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Employer Organisation.....

Title of Public Satisfaction Improvement Initiative.....

Address

Tel No Fax

Email

In the event of winning, will you be available to present you initiative at the 23rd October Conference? Yes/No

Any queries regarding the competition please contact:

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