

Best Practices for Using Your Leisure Needs Survey Data

The Triennial Needs Assessment Leisure Needs Survey, to be conducted at approximately 93 Army installations in 2005, is intended to provide data to facilitate Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program decisions at the installation level. The report feeds into the five-year program planning process and can also be useful in daily operations planning and in marketing planning. Further, this data is used in the ISR III (Installation Status Report).

Upon completion of the Leisure Needs Survey, we want to make sure that you use the data to your installation's and programs' benefit. We have some installations that have used the data to exhaustion and some that don't use it to its best advantage. Following the 2000 Leisure Needs Survey we polled a few installations (the 80th ASG, Fort Belvoir, Fort Hood, Fort Sill, and Picatinny Arsenal) to share their 'recipes for success' for using the LNS data.

The first step in using the data is briefing your chain of command. Be sure that the Director of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (DMWR) (formerly Director of Community Activities or Director of Personnel and Community Activities) and the Commander are all given an out brief including past survey data to provide trend implications. This gives you the opportunity to build support both for the use of this iteration's data and buy-in for support of future iterations. It is important to do a good 'personal sell job' here when you have face time with your chain of command. You need to be a strong supporter and display a positive attitude about the benefits of the survey.

Once this is done, it's time to get into the details with your program managers. Be sure to distribute the relevant parts of the report to individual facility/program managers, and then set up *personal* appointments to meet with them, review the material, answer any questions, and create action plans based on the data. Be sure to show them how they compare to other programs, the Region, and the Army as a whole. Regular monthly meetings should be scheduled with facility/program managers to review action plan progress and offer promotional assistance for any new programs/events that have been created.

Following are some examples. Installations have used the LNS data to:

- Identify customers' wants and needs in the recreation delivery process
- Concentrate resources on improvements customers want in specific programs
- Develop supplemental surveys to ask customers more specific program level questions
- Provide input to the project validation assessment in the construction process instead of having the contractor conduct further research at a cost to the installation
- Support choices for special events/concerts
- Focus direction for promotional programs
- Provide to site teams for award consideration (Baldrige, state quality awards, etc.)
- Provide a 'baseline' for local surveys
- Input into marketing plans for individual programs/facilities
- Request funding to make specific program changes: dredge the Marina, enlarge the existing clubhouse, create a catering department at the club, close an under-used facility, pursue joint venture with AAFES to implement a video rental program, make golf course improvements, make customer service improvements, create a better distribution of promotional materials, create better communication strategy with target markets, make safety improvements, expand hours of operation, raise prices/fees, create a new dart league, provide quicker accessibility for golf and pool patrons, etc.

As you can see, there are a number of very specific program changes/enhancement/revamps that can take place with justification from the LNS data. So pull out the reports from the 2000 LNS and get a feel for what type of data you will receive upon completion of the next LNS and be prepared to USE that data!