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ABSTRACT

Most people don't think of being a valued customer in a government setting, much less in a Court. But, in my opinion, this is the exact setting where each person needs informed, timely and efficient service.

In New Jersey, there are over 500 municipal or limited jurisdiction Courts. Typically, the Municipal Courts handle six times the caseload than all the other Courts handle. Little formalized training (for example, seminars, manuals), though, from either the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts or the individual municipality has been available.

With 41 employees assigned to five different units, Atlantic City Municipal Court received 48,537 traffic and 16,846 criminal filings in 1993. Since casino gambling was enacted in 1978, the visitor population was recorded at an all time high of over 30,000,000 in 1990 according to the Casino Industry.

In my seven years of employment with this Court, service has been an important issue to me. Regardless of the volume of cases, each of us has the opportunity to make a difference in the type of service we provide. I believe that due to the lack of comprehensive training and service expectations from the Public, the Staff may not view service as part of an ongoing commitment in their roles. My hypothesis is that there is a correlation between the lack of service training and information about the Court with the type of service provided and the resulting perceptions. To research this, I surveyed the Municipal Court Staff, the Public who visit the Court and the Attorneys who practice there to

- rate Customer Service perceptions in general,**
- rate Customer Service within the Atlantic City Municipal Court and**
- rate future Customer Service training and enhancements.**

Clearly, Customer Service perceptions need improvement with only 23.3 % of the Staff and 21.0 % of the Public reporting *knowledge of a Mission Statement for the Court*. Further in *selecting the Court Customers and the most important Court Customer*, there were some unusual responses. One of those responses was the selection of the Police as the most important Customer by 3.3% of the Court Staff. Since the Court must maintain a balance between prosecution and defense, identification of the Police (part of the prosecution) as the most important Customer could indicate biases and could create actual or perceived impropriety.

Additional comparisons were made with the survey result of rating service. Delays of 11-15 minutes for service were noted for 41.0% of the Public and 18.6% of the Attorneys. Since no statewide, county or municipal service policy standards are currently published comparisons or evaluations of the delays cannot be made.

The remaining section of *rating future service training and enhancements* advocated additional training in telephone skills as the first priority according to Attorneys while the Staff and Public rated Court information as the priority.

Many Courts within New Jersey and nationwide have instituted a wide range of enhancements to improve service, for example, use of pamphlets and educational seminars. In addition, many of these Courts are utilizing the resources available in private industry.

I believe the Public wants a change, which would reinvent government based upon standards previously only thought to be applicable in private industry. Why shouldn't a Court be cost efficient and provide quality service? This was supported by the general comments provided during the survey process. Perhaps, the most important comment and certainly the one that inspired me the most throughout this project was one made by of the Public survey group. This person said, "Please don't stop trying to make it better."

In a public sector environment in which people do not have a choice of vendor, it is essential that this comment become our dictate.

INTRODUCTION

CUSTOMER SERVICE ISSUES TODAY

In the book, "*Reinventing Government*," the authors ask, "When was the last time you felt like a valued customer at your children's school? How about your motor vehicles' office? Your city hall?"¹

Most people don't think of being a valued customer in a government setting, much less in a Court. But, in my opinion, this is the exact setting where each person needs informed, timely and efficient service. The type of service provided, for example, at an information window can either stem or fuel a confrontation. In Municipal Courts or any bureaucracy, it is easy for people to forget what their purpose is. Government and public employment on any level should be analogous with quality public service. In many of our daily activities as consumers, we can make choices regarding the service we receive. This is our right as consumers and we can choose to exercise this right. However, when you are the Court's Customer, you are not free to shop around if you feel dissatisfied with the service.

In New Jersey, there are over 500 municipal or limited jurisdiction Courts. Typically, the Municipal Courts handle six times the caseload than all the other Courts in the State of New Jersey handle. In 1984, over five million cases ranging from minor criminal to zoning to motor vehicle and parking violations were heard in the New Jersey Municipal Courts.²

ATLANTIC CITY MUNICIPAL COURT

Atlantic City Municipal Court is one of those New Jersey Municipal Courts. With its roots both within the Municipality of Atlantic City and the State Court system, the Court is under the jurisdiction of the State's Administrative Office of the Courts while dependent upon the individual municipality for funding, personnel and facilities. The Court employs 41 full time Staff persons assigned to five different units. Those units

are Administration, Intake, Case Management, Financial and Security. Within each unit are teams with specific assignments. Each unit is coordinated by a manager or managers with a civil service title specific to their particular duties. For example, in the Financial Unit, the Bail Recorder coordinates the financial duties while the Supervisor of Accounts coordinates any auditing functions.

Atlantic City Municipal Court also employs two full time Judges and four cross assigned Judges who are used to cover such things as vacations, conventions or conflict cases. One Judge generally handles traffic cases while the other handles criminal cases. Each Judge sits 10 sessions a week for a total of 20 Court sessions. Two of these sessions are held in the evening to allow for some staggered scheduling. The judicial head of the Court is the Presiding Judge, the Honorable Bruce F. Weekes. The administrative head of the Court is the Court Director, this paper's author. The remaining Staff persons are classified within titles ranging from Data Entry Machine Operator and Clerk Typist to Deputy Court Clerk and Violations Clerk. Each staff person in the course of their duties has the opportunity to provide service to any entity they come in contact with whether it be a defendant, an attorney, a police agency or just an interested bystander. Staff are also cross trained within their particular units to maximize staff coverage.

The City of Atlantic City, of which the Municipal Court is a part, has undergone a continual transformation from a small-town beach resort with a famous Boardwalk (circa 1870) to the gambling Mecca of today.³ In 1977, the year prior to casino gambling, 34,937 traffic filings and 5,968 criminal filings were received. Court staff received and disbursed \$671,545 in fines, costs and assessments to the appropriate agencies.⁴ Since casino gambling was enacted by a state referendum, the Resorts Hotel and Casino opened on May 26, 1978 followed by eleven additional combination hotel/casinos. Atlantic City became the largest seaside resort within a days drive of one-third of the nation's population. It is estimated that visitors to Atlantic City topped 30,000,000 in 1990. Atlantic City's emergence as a major attraction has evolved into a transient city impacted by hordes of tourists.⁵ It is no surprise, then, to compare the case filings in 1993 with those in 1977 and find significant increases. In 1993, 48,537 traffic filings and 16,846 criminal filings were received. Respectively, these totals represent a 38.9% increase in traffic filings and a 182.3% increase in criminal filings. Further, in 1993, Court Staff received, processed and disbursed over four million dollars. Government services that were normally rendered to a resident community

were hard pressed to meet the needs of such a large influx of people while providing quality service.

In my past seven years of employment at the Atlantic City Municipal Court, service to the public has continued to be an important issue for me. In 1989, I began to receive a consistent number of complaints (usually 3-4 a week) from Attorneys and the Public. It was also reported to me that an increasing number of complaints were received by our Assignments Judge's office.⁶ A majority of these complaints were received from Attorneys. In attempting to research this issue further, I conducted an unscientific poll of Attorneys in May of 1989 by publishing a survey form in "The Docket"⁷ newsletter. I received 38 responses providing specific examples of what the attorneys perceived as problems with the Court.

Some of the issues raised by the Attorneys were relatively easy to address and have resulted in ongoing changes at the Court between 1989 and the present. For example, during our relocation to our present building, we had pay phones installed near the Courtrooms and created an Attorney-Client conference room. We also reassigned staff to create the team assignments as previously mentioned, ensuring availability of service even if one team member wasn't available. Our commitment to this availability of service was foremost in our minds when two night Court sessions were scheduled per week and a postponement policy brochure was published.

CUSTOMER SERVICE GOALS

Regardless of the volume of cases, each of us has the opportunity to make a difference in the type of service we provide. Public service, especially in a Court environment, is a challenge to those of us committed to this system. The increasing commitment to quality service is evidenced by the strides many other Courts have made in becoming "Customer Friendly." Some Courts have made large strides in service by providing kiosks for Customers, special telephone lines to pay fines by credit or bank cards. Other Courts developed pamphlets and informational seminars. Still others provide on site day care for persons having business at the

Court.⁸ Whatever the size or the budget of the Court, Customer Service is an ongoing commitment to consider the Court's Customers in all aspects of the Court's operations. Customer Service is not a one time seminar or instructing staff persons to say, "May I help you?" It is a comprehensive plan which requires each staff person from the Judge to the entry level Clerk to be a part of this commitment. Each day, we notice or subpoena many different types of people to come into the Court. Each person that comes there feels wronged in some way. Each person wants an explanation of why they are there and how they can resolve their problem as quickly as possible. Staff persons need to know not only how to do their job but the manner in which it is expected to be done. The manner in which Court employees, especially Municipal Court employees, serve their customers will have a lasting affect upon how those Customers view the municipality and the Court system as a whole.

Until recently, there has been little correlation between the large caseload the Municipal Courts are responsible for and the attention and specific guidance from the Administrative Office of the Courts in New Jersey, especially in the area of service. To address changing attitudes of the Public, a Service Delivery Committee was established by the Administrative Office to specifically study service in the Courts. Representation from each type of Court (i.e. Family, Civil) is on this committee and more important, the Municipal Courts have been included as a part of these efforts. I have been asked to join both the Municipal Court Sub-Committee and main Service Delivery Committee researching this topic.

" In 1990, some 76.4% of individual employment in the United States was in service-producing industries (including government at all levels) and only 23.6% were in goods producing."⁹ This percentage is indicative of the attention that must be directed to service. Government is often overlooked as a service producing environment because it is not driven by a profit margin. Funding is not dependent upon the amount of sales made or contracts signed. How often have we heard or said that something is close enough for government work or that government employees do not really work? These types of biases which have existed for years, must be eliminated if we are to truly create a service environment. Today, there is finally an expectation from the public for government to be accountable just as if services were in the private sector; that service should be the cornerstone of public employment, not an afterthought.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

As there are continual changes with any organization, coupled with the need to do more with less and to meet the new expectation from the Public, all future actions and plans must be re-focused given the mission of quality service.

I selected the topic of Customer Service because I feel that this has been a topic long ignored within my Court and generally in Municipal Courts in the State of New Jersey. Selecting service issues will also allow me to focus, both in this paper and on the Committee on the changing needs of the community we serve, both now and for the future.

I believe that, due to the lack of comprehensive training and lack of service expectations from the Public, staff may not view service as part of their role. My hypothesis theorizes that there is a correlation between the lack of service training and information about the Court with the type of service provided and the resulting perceptions.

To obtain the necessary information to accomplish this, I decided to survey three groups: the Court staff, the Attorneys who practice in the Court and the Public who visit it. I feel it is important to ascertain who the Court staff, the Attorneys and the Public perceive to be the Court's customers. Second, are their views indicative of the roles they play in the Court and how they interact with one another? Third, are service issues related to a lack of resources, a lack of training or both? Further, can Customer friendly tools, for example, informational booklets, help the perception of the Public and Attorneys with respect to the Court's operations ?

The balance of this paper is divided into four sections: a literature review summarizing the different strides other Courts have made with respect to service, a methodology section detailing the creation and utilization of the surveys, an analysis of the survey results and finally my conclusions based upon the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MUNICIPAL COURTS

In a telephone interview with Dennis L. Bliss, Assistant Director for Municipal Court Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts in Trenton, New Jersey, he stated, "Training to address Customer Service issues have been on the plate for Municipal Courts for some time." ¹⁰ He further indicated that "In the past, Customer Service in Municipal Courts was an issue limited to being raised as a short speech at the beginning of the Principles of Municipal Court Administration course for Staff and as a short speech to the new Judges by the Chief Justice. While this raised a consciousness to this issue, it would tell the Staff and Judges, here's what is expected of you but not how to achieve it." ¹¹ In Mr. Bliss' opinion, the Cardinal Rule of Management is not only telling people what you want them to do but giving them the tools and the training to do it.

My research into existing documents and training specifically for Municipal Court employees supports Mr. Bliss' comments. Nine years have passed since the New Jersey Municipal Court Procedures Manual and the Supreme Court Task Force Report on the Improvement of Municipal Courts were promulgated.

Perhaps the most critical of the recent steps taken by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts has been the creation and installation of a Automated Traffic System (ATS) within Municipal Courts. As of this date, 308 of the 536 Municipal Courts are on-line.¹² Installation of a similar criminal system within the Municipal Courts began in 1993. This computer system was a giant step in improving service to the Public. A person could go to a Court on ATS in northern New Jersey and receive information or post bail on a case listed in a Court miles away. Police agencies also enjoy improved service since they are on-line creating the charging documents for Courts on the Automated Criminal System and can access warrant information statewide on Municipal charges. This was a luxury previously only available on the most serious charges through NCIC.¹³

Individual Courts, in response, to changing public expectations have undertaken their own programs to improve service. In Atlantic City Municipal Court, for instance, we have created, distributed and published in "The Docket", a postponement policy brochure. In our Vicinage¹⁴, a full day training session, entitled "Back to the Basics" was held for selected Municipal Court personnel and the Judges. This course was the first yearly retreat scheduled for the Court personnel on the Municipal level. It was designed to focus on our changing goals regarding service. Similar retreats have been held for years for the employees on the Superior Court level.

OTHER NEW JERSEY EFFORTS

In other Courts in New Jersey, similar efforts have been undertaken to initiate a focus on service. The Administrative Office of the Courts, Civil Practice Division published brochures entitled, "A Guide to the Court" for Special Civil Part, Landlord/Tenant and Small Claims Courts. The brochures provided a simple explanation and guide how to file a complaint, to answer a complaint and file an appeal.

As part of the Service Delivery Committee, individual sub-committees represented by the different types of Courts and training entities were given the assignment to research current service programs and determine what changes could enhance service delivery for the future.

NATIONWIDE COURT IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

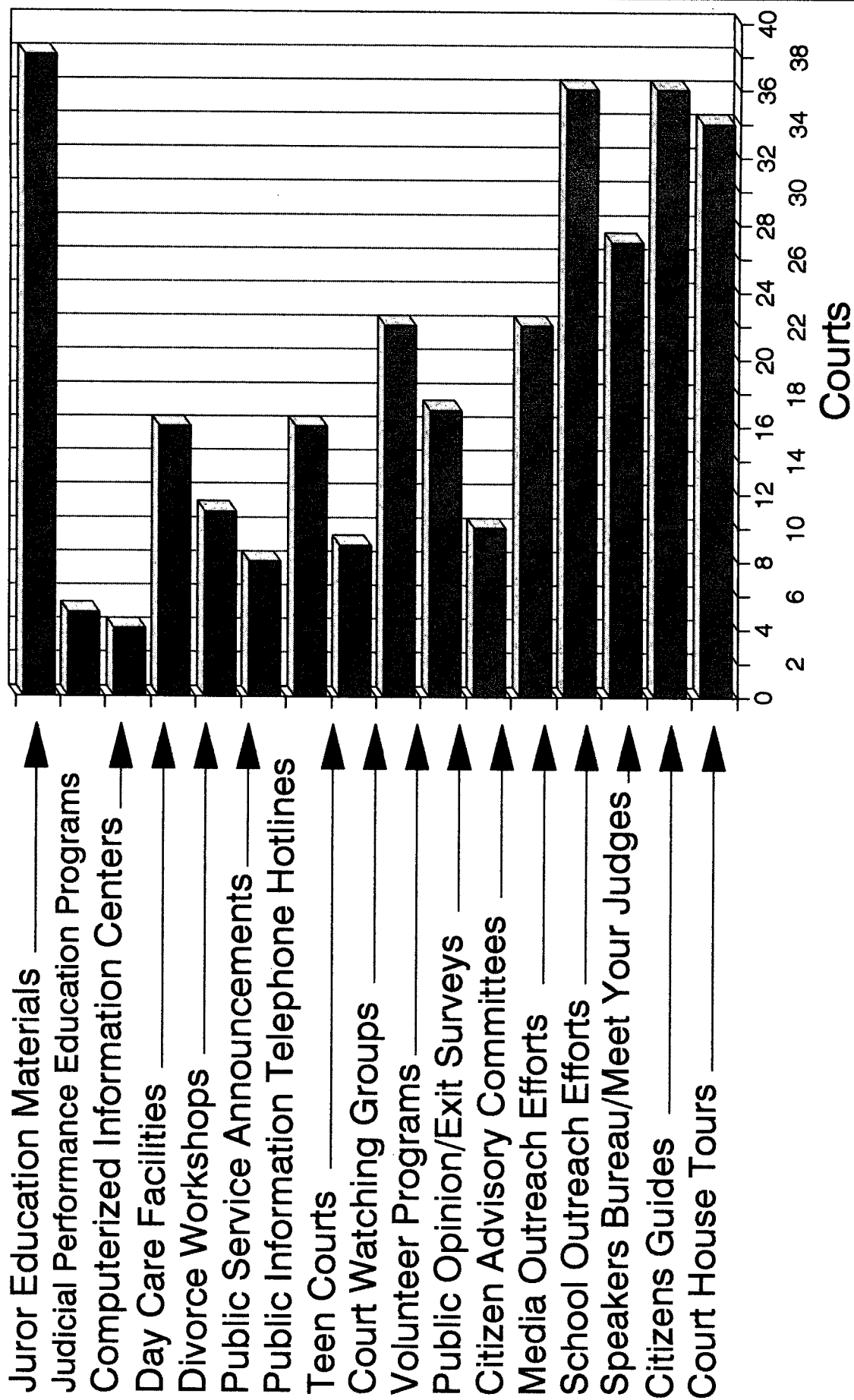
Nationally, there were significantly more steps taken by Courts to improve service than locally. Imagine a person walking up to a computer screen and touching a few buttons to request a postponement or using a touch tone telephone and their credit card to pay their traffic summonses. One might think that these are scenes from a futuristic movie. In actuality, they are examples of the technological enhancements already in place improving service to thousands of Court patrons.¹⁵

The Alaska Court System, in November, 1992, promulgated Customer Service Standards for the Alaska Court Staff to follow. Additionally, they created a simple exit survey which would rate the service received by the Customer. It should be noted that the surveys were postage paid to increase responses. These standards are comprised of four sections: Alaska Court System Goal, the Customer Service Protocol, Telephone Protocol and [how to handle] Customers in Distress.

The Information Service of the National Center for State Courts compiled a summary of the initiatives taken by State Courts to improve Court-Community Relations. "The State Justice Institute awarded a grant to the Conference of State Court Administrators and the National Center for State Courts to begin the process of building a national, citizen-based constituency for the Courts."¹⁶ Surveys were conducted by the Information Service of the National Center for State Courts between May and July of 1993. Responses were received from 40 States and the District of Columbia.¹⁷ These surveys documented specific efforts by each state in 17 areas. As noted in the summary, many programs implemented at the state and local levels were not easily categorized.

Chart 1

Court - Community Relations Survey Summary



PRIVATE INDUSTRY

The integration of private industry into government has also given us tools to improve service. IBM Multimedia Training is being used at the Oregon Judicial Department. Six portable IBM Multimedia Learning Centers are being rotated through 30 judicial locations in the state, serving a total of 1300 employees to upgrade the skills of their employees. These programs are available specifically to address service training issues and are cost effective for a Court since employees with differing needs and skills can be trained on the same equipment.¹⁸

Finally, A T & T's Language Line has been an asset to many different organizations from the Courts to Police Departments to private industry requiring the services of interpreters often at a moments notice. The installation of the Language Line permits dial up access to interpreter services. Use of a system as described could greatly reduce the number of cases being postponed due to interpreter problems. Even if the need for an interpreter was not noted on the case, this innovation could provide the difference between servicing the Public or sending a group of unhappy participants away from the Court pointing fingers as to who didn't do their job properly. States already using this service include Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Wyoming and the District of Columbia Courts.¹⁹

Finally, Osborne and Garbler in "*Reinventing Government*," indicate that a Customer-Driven government [is] meeting the needs of the Customer, not the bureaucracy.²⁰ Their advice is to "get close to the Customers."²¹ These authors offer dozens of ways to listen to the voice of the Customer. Many of these ideas are already being used by Courts nationwide as indicated by the Court-Community Relations Survey Summary from the Information Service of the National Center for State Courts. To improve service, these same ideas should be embraced by Courts and their funding sources on the municipal level.

METHODOLOGY

My goals included the identification and examination of the different relationships between what I deemed as a core group of users to the Court: the Staff, the Public and the Attorneys and how their perceptions related to Customer Service.

In preparation for creation of these surveys and the format in which they would be distributed, I reviewed the results previously obtained during the unscientific survey conducted with the Attorneys in 1989. During this survey, a minimal number of responses were received from the Attorneys. A review of the questions asked revealed that the survey contained too many open ended questions, did not contain adequate directions and did not follow any planned format. Additionally, by not controlling the dissemination or the collection of these surveys, analysis of the responses was sketchy at best. These weakness' reduced the validity of the surveys and chances for a higher number of returned surveys. Determined not to repeat these same mistakes and armed with the instructional information from Phase II, I set out to create the surveys to be used for this paper.

THE SURVEYS

To research who the Court Staff, the Pubic and the Attorneys viewed as the Court's Customers and their perceptions regarding the service issues in general, service in the Atlantic City Municipal Court specifically and future enhancements for improvement of service, I designed, distributed and collected surveys among my core groups.

A preliminary draft format of questions was initially prepared for each survey. In designing these questions, I had to be mindful of my future format for the balance of

the paper to be assured that the essential issues that I wanted to obtain data on were included. To accomplish this, I divided the questions into three categories. First, what perceptions did each group have as to overall Customer Service issues being a part of a Court setting, the Court's Mission, and the Court's Customer group. Second, I wanted to evaluate the current level of service at the Atlantic City Municipal Court. With respect to the Public and Attorneys, what service they received was questioned. With respect to the Staff, what service they felt they provided was questioned. Third, I included questions to rate the types of enhancements the core groups felt would improve service for the future. Finally, I included a section for open comments.

My first typed draft underwent a redesign based upon comments from my advisor and an initial pretest. Generally, some of the questions and instructions in the surveys were cumbersome. Further, the answers in the multiple choice questions of true or false did not provide enough of a range to obtain accurate views. To address the suggestions made for improvement of these surveys, several changes were made. The format underwent a redesign to limit the number of questions to 20 on each survey and the order in which these questions were listed. Instructions on answering the questions were more clearly defined and were included immediately prior to that individual section. Answers on the multiple choice questions were changed from *true* or *false* to *more often true* or *occasionally* or *more often false*. Another pretest was conducted on the three surveys with positive results and no further changes were made. For the record, identification of persons answering any of the three surveys was not required.

STAFF SURVEYS

36 surveys were distributed to the Staff of the Atlantic City Municipal Court that were present on the distribution days. Judges were not included in the distribution, however all remaining Staff levels were included. I did not include myself in the surveying process. These surveys were distributed on December 6, 1993 and December 7, 1993. Of the 36 surveys distributed, 30 were completed and returned. All but three of the surveys were returned anonymously. Each Staff person was permitted to complete the surveys in the location of their choice and return the completed survey to a basket located at the secretary's desk. The completed surveys were returned between December 7, 1993 and December 10, 1993.

PUBLIC SURVEYS

It was originally planned that 10 surveys would be distributed and collected per day for a period of 10 days. My concerns that the surveys might take longer than five minutes was alleviated by the reduction of the number of questions to 20. I did not advise the Court Staff in advance when the Public surveys would be conducted. When at all possible, the surveys were conducted out of the view of Court Staff.

The Public surveys were conducted between December 6 and December 30, 1993. Certain surveys days during this period were suspended due to the postponement of cases and the holidays. To obtain the desired amount of Public surveys, the number of days the Public surveys were conducted were extended to offset the large number of refusals received. A count was kept of those persons refusing to complete the Public survey. Of the 67 persons that refused a survey, 52 would not cite a reason, five cited fear of reprisal and 10 cited a lack of time.

Due to the large number of refusals and the time constraints imposed by both the paper and my responsibilities as the Director, the services of a select group of Court Staff were used to aid me in distributing and collecting the surveys. As of December 30, 1993, 100 Public surveys were completed and all further efforts ceased. No Public surveys were mailed and no distinction was made as to what capacity the Public represented at the Court. All surveys were conducted in the Public area of the Atlantic City Municipal Court.

ATTORNEY SURVEYS

My initial plan for creating a database of Attorneys was to research the Court calendars for any Attorneys appearing within a six month period. In discussing this plan with my advisor we discussed the possibilities of a biased or incomplete sampling. We decided that a better plan would be to contact the Atlantic County Bar Association and obtain a list of Attorneys from them.

I initially contacted John Rosenberger, Esquire, a Municipal Court Liaison from the Bar Association in November 1993. Upon Mr. Rosenberger's advice, I contacted the secretary for the Bar Association. There was a delay in sending the list of Attorneys to me since the Bar Association originally wanted me to pay for the listings. After reviewing the project with the secretary for the Bar Association, I received a decision from them that they would consent to providing the list to me without charge. Upon receipt of the list, I reviewed 494 listings. Many firms had several listings of Attorneys. If multiple Attorneys were listed from the same firm, I addressed the survey to the Office Manager with a request to forward the survey to the Attorney who handles the largest number of cases in the Atlantic City Municipal Court. With each survey, I enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope. A secondary review of the project in general was conducted with Mr. Rosenberger with the revised survey being faxed to him on December 6, 1993.

230 surveys mailed to Attorneys on December 7, 1993. 123 responses were received. Of those responses, 24 Attorneys declined to complete the survey, 13 Attorneys returned the survey indicating that their practice did not include Municipal Court cases and 86 Attorneys completed the survey.

TOTAL RESPONSES

Staff Surveys	30 responses of 36 distributed	83.3%
Public Surveys	100 responses of 167 distributed	59.8%
Attorney Surveys	86 responses of 230 distributed	37.4%

DATABASE

All surveys, attorney listings and data received were compiled and entered by me on my home computer using an AMI PRO application on a Windows 3.1 program. This program was also used to write all sections of the paper. All computer graphics were done using Quattro Pro 5.0 version for DOS. All printing was done on my Hewlett Packard Deskjet 550C printer.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

As previously stated, my hypothesis theorized that there is a correlation between the lack of service training and information about the Court with the type of service provided and the resulting perceptions. To analyze the data collected from each of the three surveys, the questions were broken down into three categories to be analyzed. These categories are

- Rating Customer Service Perceptions in General
- Rating Service within the Atlantic City Municipal Court
- Rating Customer Service Training and Enhancements for the Atlantic City Municipal Court

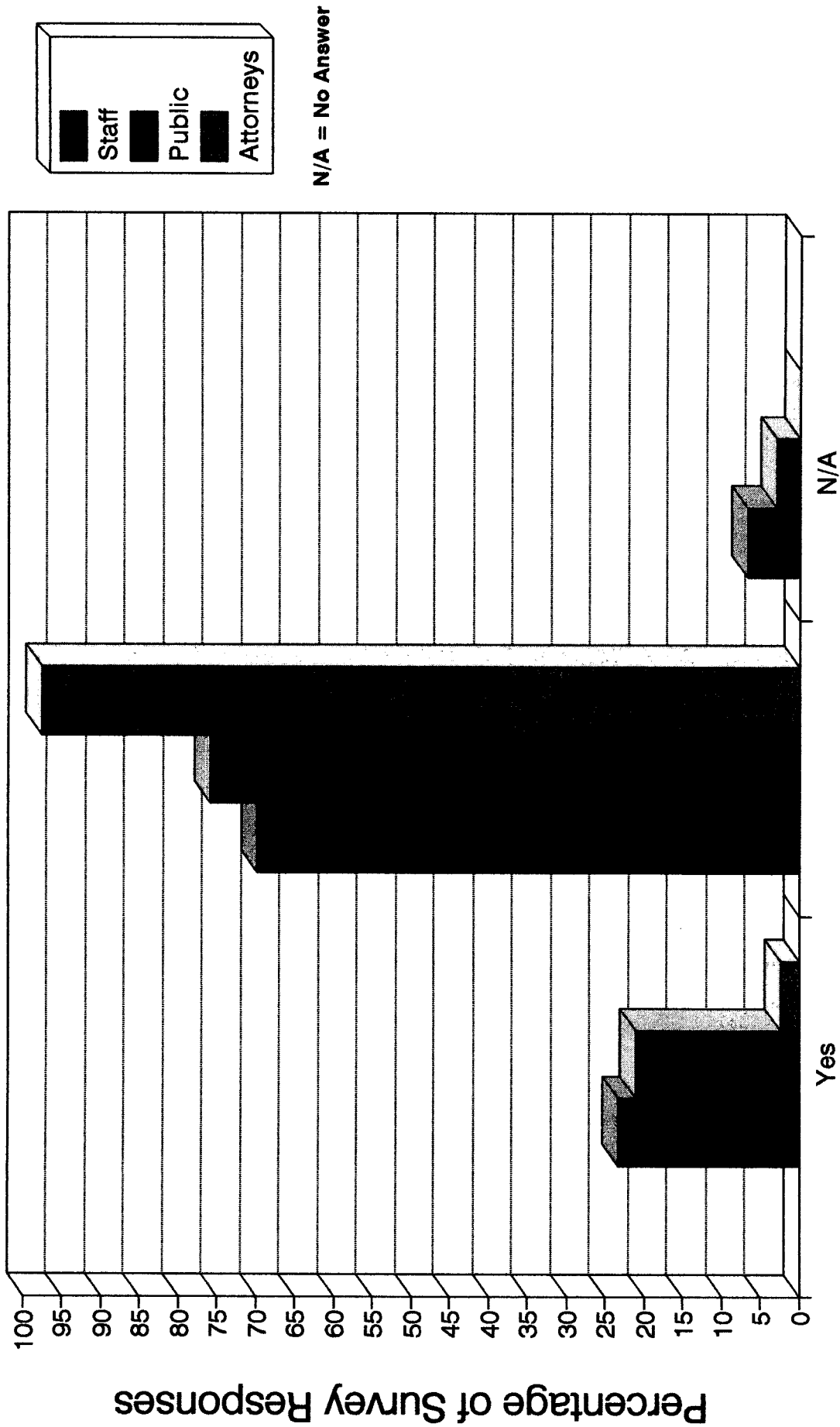
Within each category, the questions are further broken down for analysis into those questions that were included in all three surveys, those included in two of the surveys and finally those questions included on any individual survey. Appendices A, B and C list the results of the three surveys for the Public, Staff and the Attorneys for each individual question.

RATING CUSTOMER SERVICE PERCEPTIONS IN GENERAL

The first category in rating Customers Service perceptions posed three questions to the Court Staff, the Public and the Attorneys regarding the Court's Mission Statement. The first question asked whether a person had knowledge of the Court's Mission Statement. Chart 2 compares the percentages of the responses by the core survey groups. Comparatively, 23.3% of the Staff and 21.0% of the Public responded that they

Chart 2

Knowledge of A Mission Statement



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

knew of the Court's Mission Statement while only 2.3 % of the Attorneys did. Interestingly, five Attorneys who responded negatively regarding knowledge of a Mission Statement indicated that they did not know what a Mission Statement is.

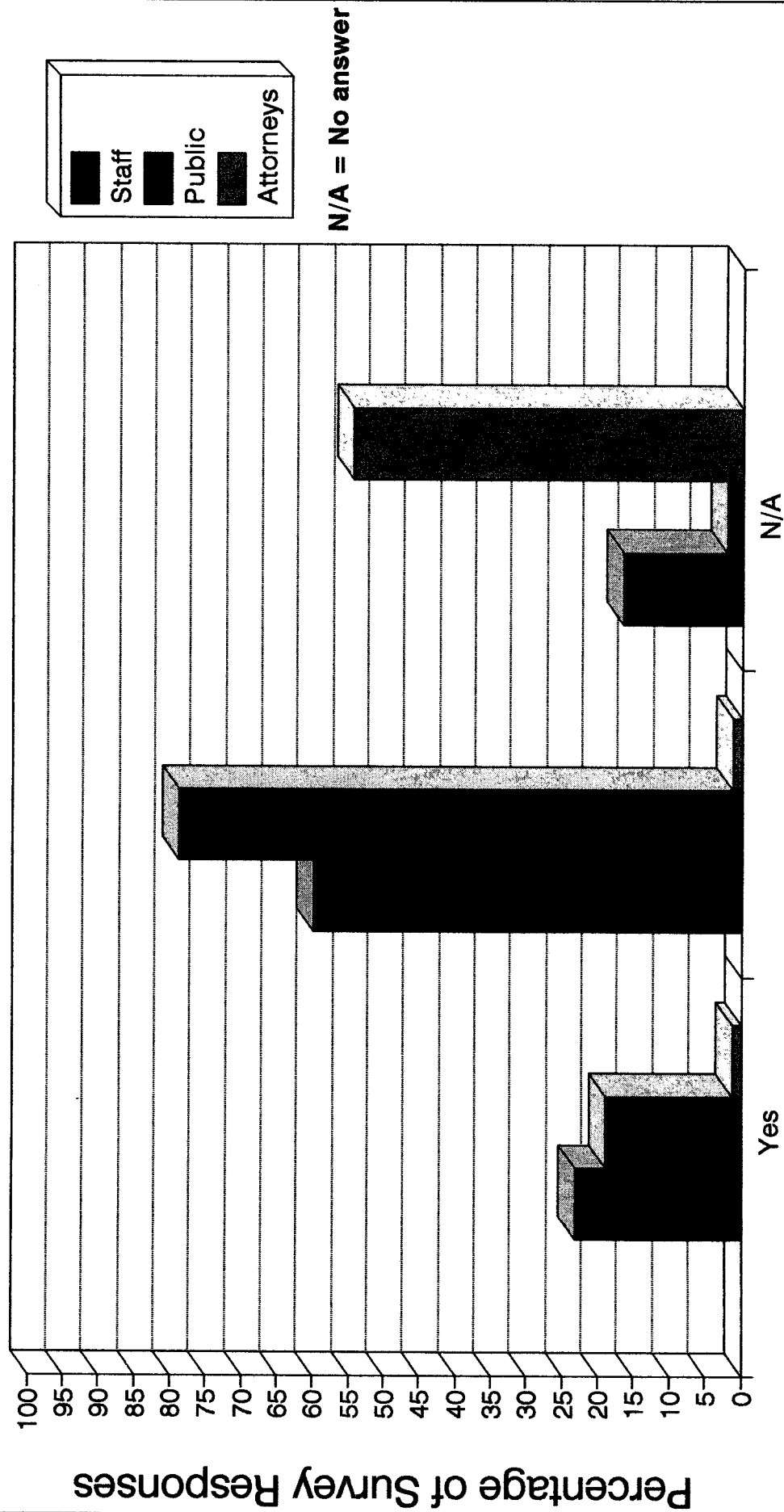
The second question asked that if the person had knowledge of a Mission Statement, did they also read it? Chart 3 compared the responses to that question. Of the 23.3% of the Staff indicating that they had knowledge of the Mission Statement, the same amount of Staff read it. Only 19% of the 21% of the Public who had knowledge of the Missions Statement read it. The Attorney responses of having knowledge of and reading a Mission Statement dropped to 1.2%.

The third question in the Mission Statement series was whether Customer Service should be included in the Court's Mission Statement. Comparatively, while all three survey groups had high percentages of positive responses (Staff 53.3%, Public 88.0% and Attorneys 94.2%), a portion of each group provided no answer. Additionally, five Attorneys felt that I should change the terminology I was using because in their opinion a Customer constituted a monetary relationship. I disagree with their opinion and I believe that this opinion is indicative of the need to educate all the participants in the Court process to the changing focus of Customers.

Charts 5 and 6 illustrated the responses in percentages to the second category of questions rating perceptions. The first question asked the survey groups *who they perceived to be the Court's Customers*. This question listed the Defendant, the Attorney, the Complainant, Agencies (i.e. Probation, Jails), Police and Interested Public as possible choices. As expected, the selection of the Defendant as the Court's Customer was high with 96.7% of the Staff, 91.0% of the Public and 94.2% of the Attorneys answering affirmatively. Surprisingly, only 47.0% of the Public selected Attorneys as the Court's Customers while the Staff and Attorneys rated them 83.3% and 88.4% respectively. The selection of Complainants as the Court's Customers was generally consistent with 93.3% of the Staff, 86.0% of the Public and 88.4% of the Attorneys responding. Between the survey groups, Agencies received the most positive responses from the Staff at 86.6% . The Public rated them at 38.0% and Attorneys rated them at 53.5%.

Chart 3

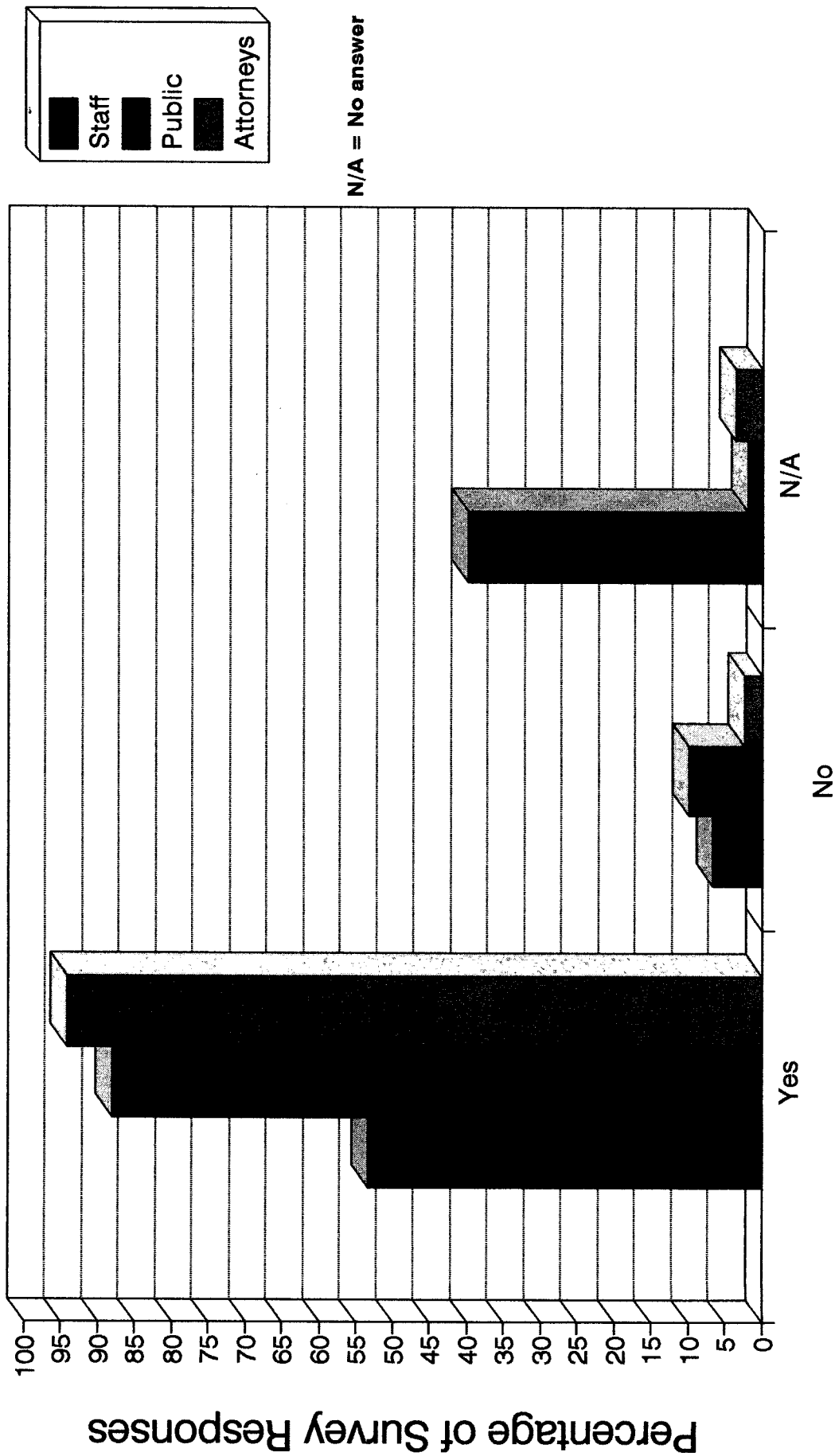
Knowledge Of and Read Mission Statement



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 4

Customer Service Should Be a Part of The Mission Statement



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Rating the Police as the Court's Customers with 83.3% of the Staff, 41.0% of the Public and 55.8% of the Attorneys was very similar to that of Agencies. The final group, the Public was rated as the Court's Customer by 86.7% of the Staff, 79.0% of the Public and 62.8% of the Attorneys.

In questioning the survey groups as to *who was the Court's most important Customer*, the respondents were permitted to write in their choice. The Staff rated the most important Customer as follows:

Defendants	60.1%
All Groups	23.4%
Public	3.3%
Complainants	3.3%
Police	3.3%
None of the groups	3.3%

3.3% of the Staff provided no answer to the question.

The Public rated the most important Customer as the

Defendants	31.0%
All Groups	22.0%
Complainants	21.0%
Public	10.0%
Attorney	10.0%
Witnesses	3.0%
Police	1.0%

2.0% of the Public did not respond.

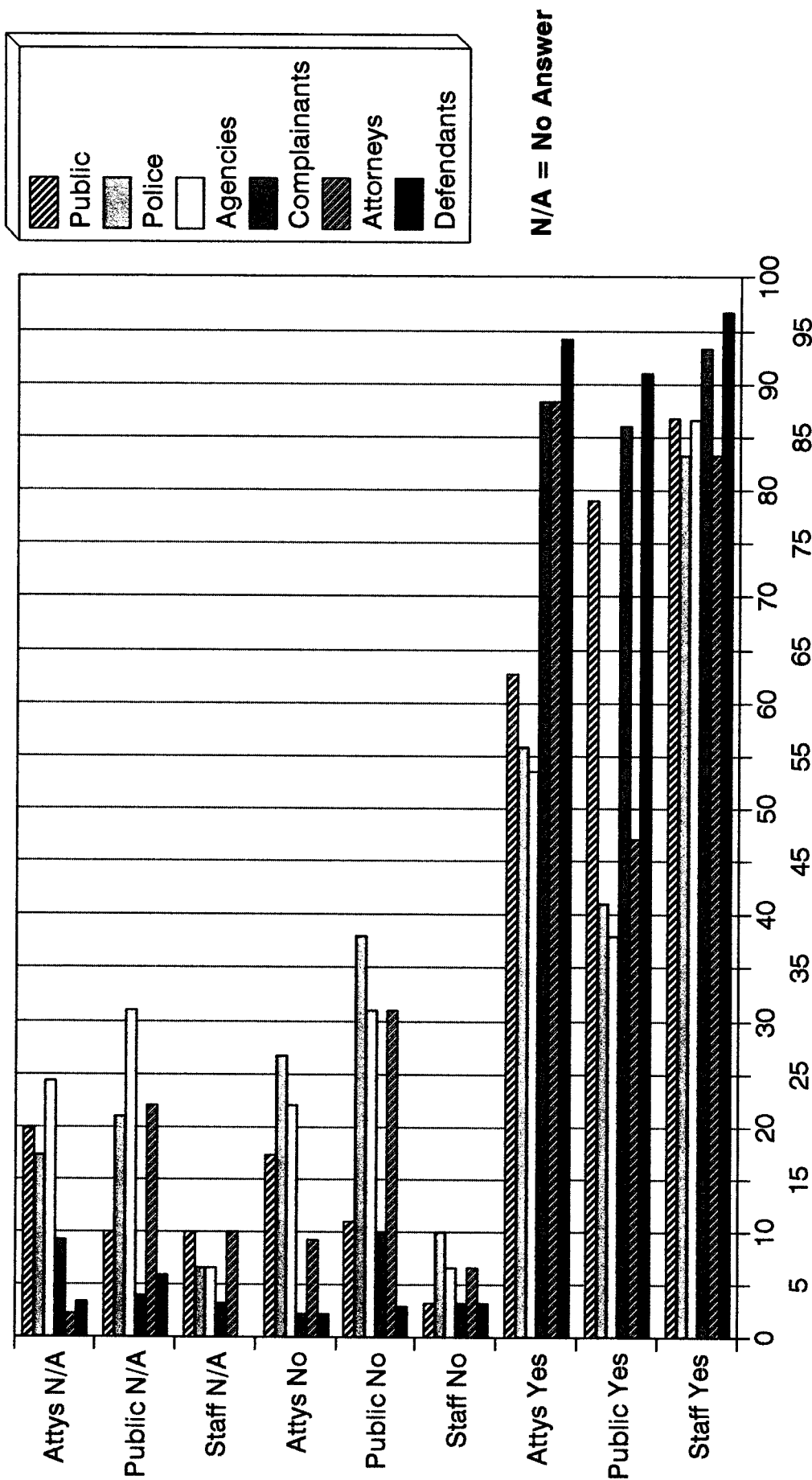
The Attorneys survey group rated the most important Customer as the

Defendants	24.4%
Attorneys	23.4%
All groups	19.8%
Complainants	13.9%
Public	5.8%
Police	3.5%
Witnesses	2.3%

6.9% of the Attorneys did not respond.

Chart 5

Perceived Court Customers

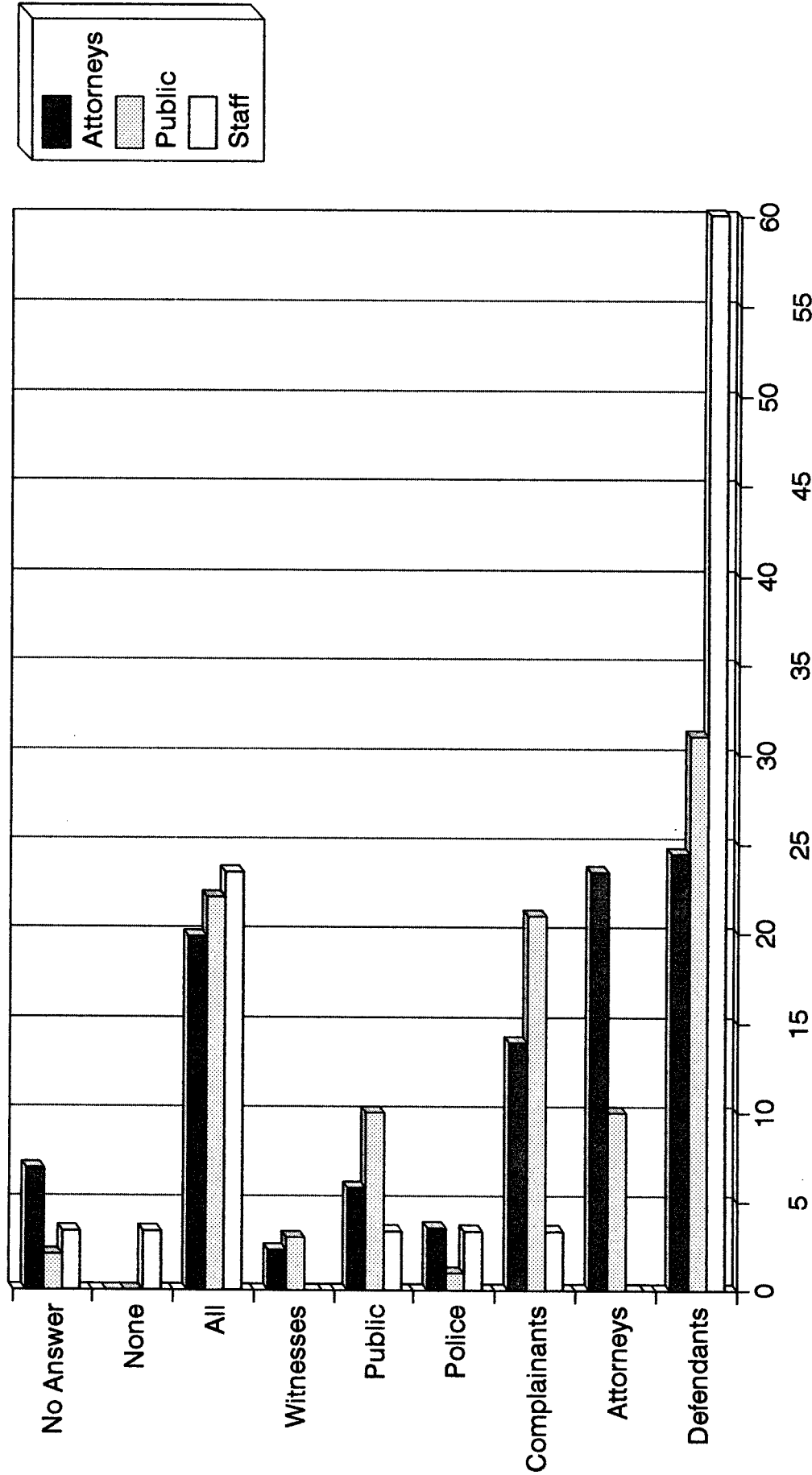


Percentage of Survey Responses

Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 6

Most Important Court Customers



Percentage of Survey Responses

Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

The next category of questions dealt with individual survey group's feelings towards one another and their resulting perceptions. Chart 7 illustrated the percentages of *whether the Court Staff can make a difference in helping the Public even if they can't give you the information you want*. Only the Staff and Public groups were surveyed for this question. The old adage that it's not what you say but how you say it appears to apply here with 66.7% of the Staff and 58.0% of the Public answering *more often true* and 20.0% of the Staff and 23.0% of the Public answered *occasionally*.

The Staff, Public and Attorneys were further queried as to their feelings regarding statements that the *Court Staff are unreasonable in what they expect the Public to know about the Court process*. Charts 8 and 9 are the accompanying illustrations for these questions. The Public indicated that 47.0% of the time, this statement was *more often true*, 8.0% of the time *Occasionally* and 34.0% of the time *more often false*. The Attorneys responded *more often true* 26.7% of the time, 38.4% *occasionally* and 20.9% *more often false*. Responses were not received for 11.0% of the Public and 14.0% of the Attorneys. The Court Staff were asked to respond to statements that the *Defendants and Attorneys were unreasonable in their expectations of the Court Staff*. The Staff responded that these statements were *more often true* 43.3% of the time for Defendants and 40.0% of the time for Attorneys and *occasionally* 46.7% of the time for Defendants and 43.4% of the time for Attorneys. These responses are listed in Chart 9.

In the final statement in this category, the Staff were asked to respond to *whether they thought Attorneys should be better prepared when contacting the Court*. Chart 10 indicates that 83.4% of the Staff responded as *more often true* and 10.0% responding as *occasionally*.

It is clear to me from such a low percentage of positive responses to knowledge of a Mission Statement that our Mission Statement has not received adequate attention or publication. If 70.0% of the Staff do not know that there is a Mission Statement, they won't know that Customer Service is a part of that statement and a goal of our Court. The Atlantic City Municipal Court's Mission Statement is "To efficiently and expeditiously adjudicate all cases filed within our jurisdiction while providing exemplary public service." It has been distributed to the Court Staff during staff meetings but has not been publicly displayed for approximately two years.

Chart 7

Court Staff Can Make A Difference in Helping The Public

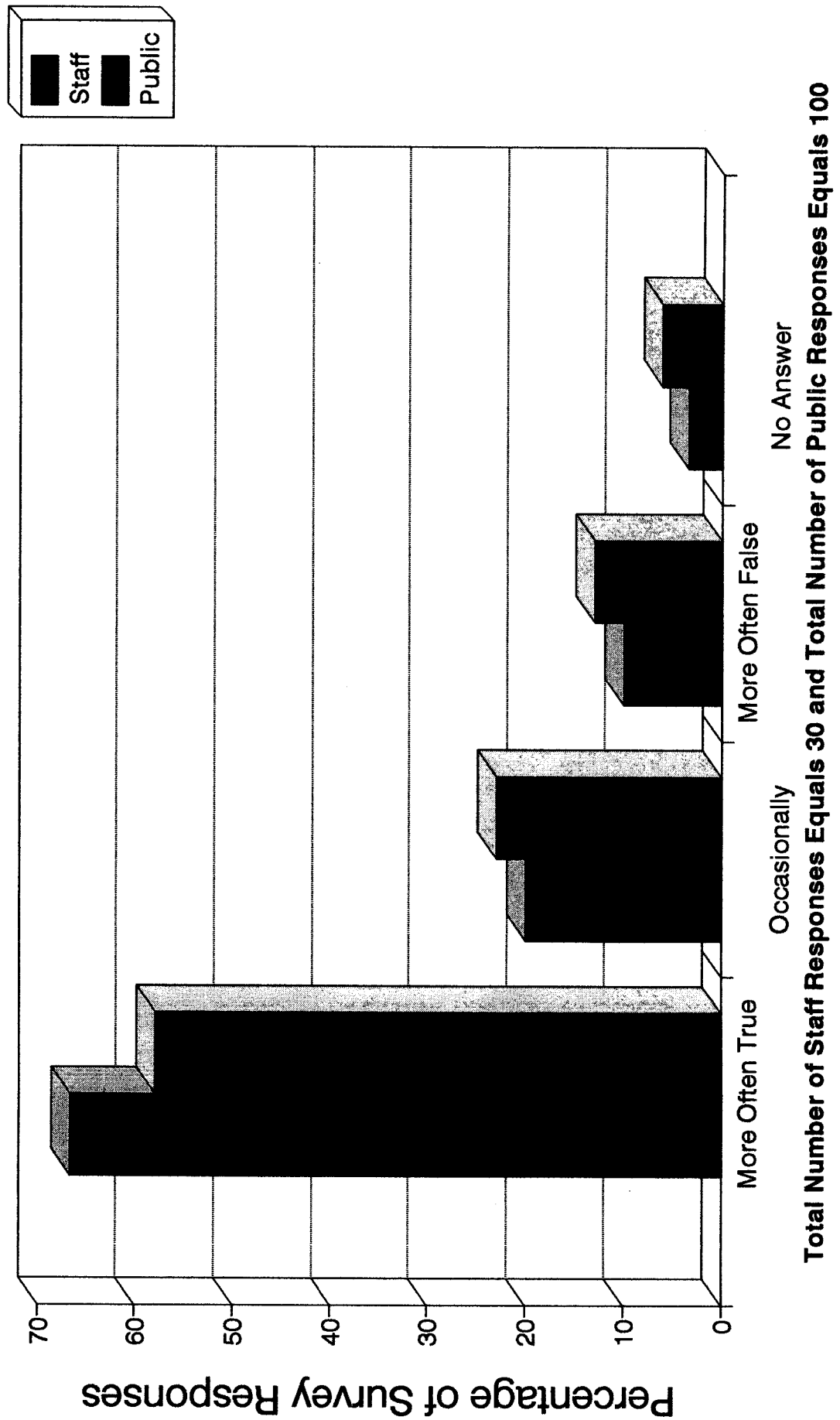
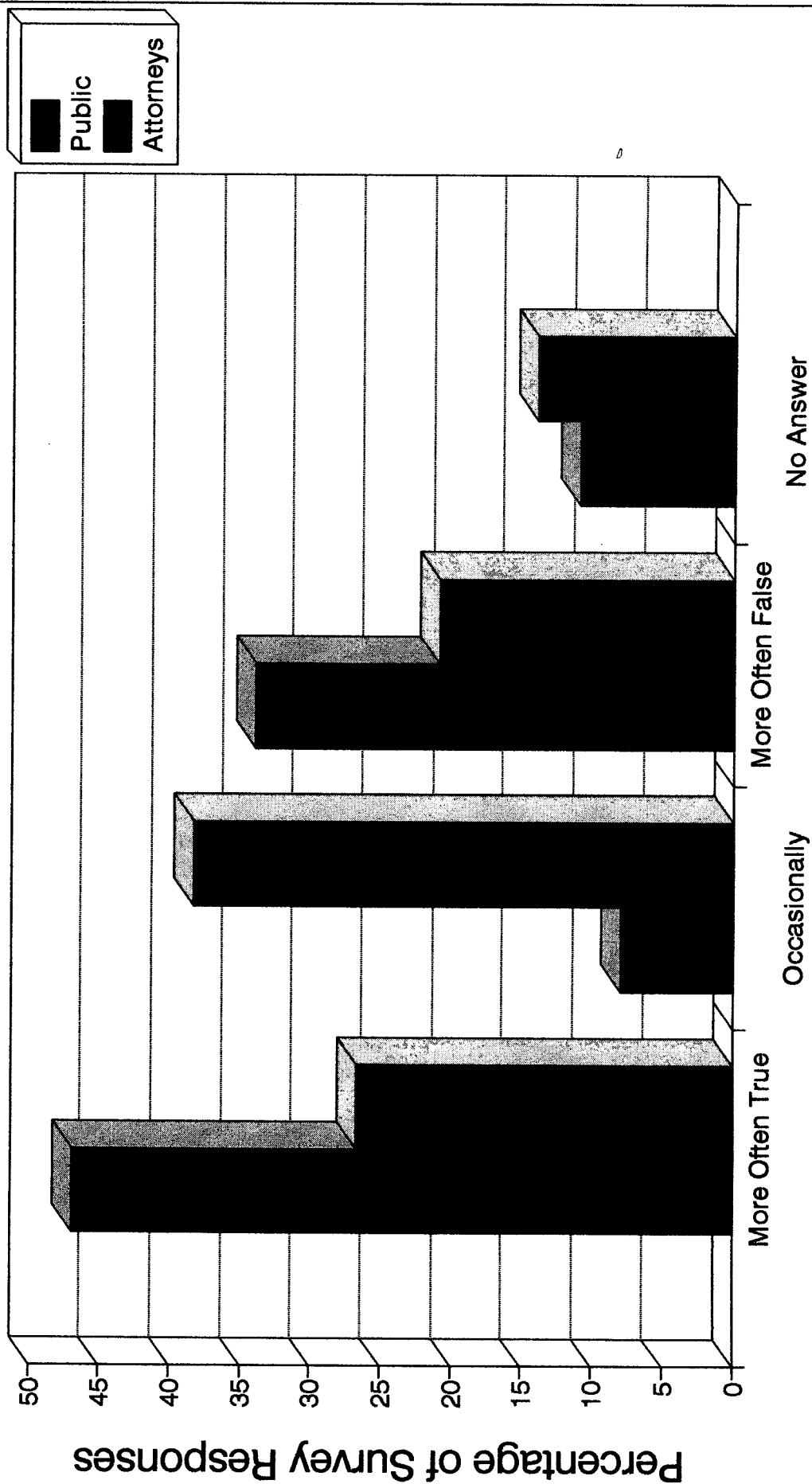


Chart 8

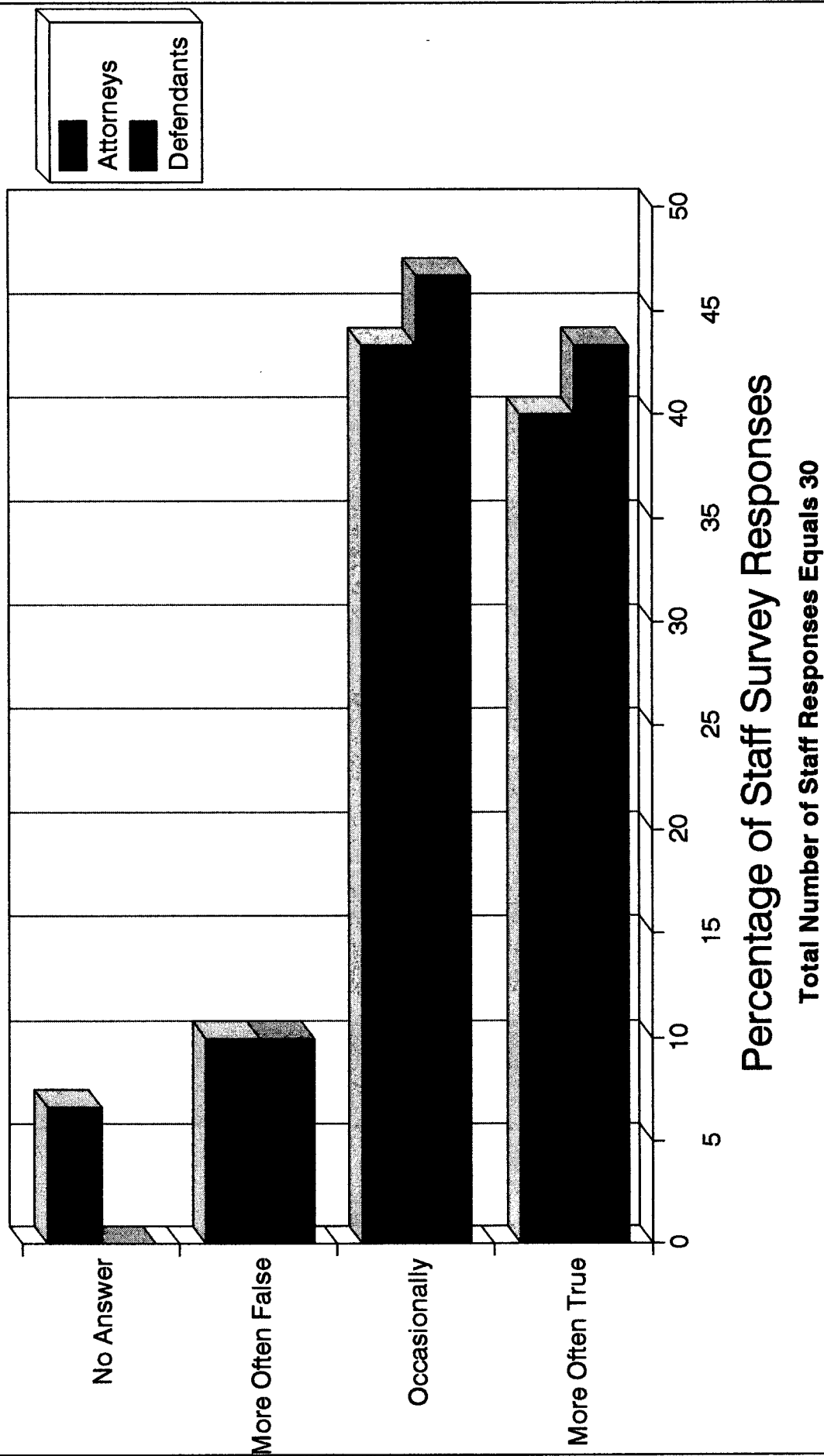
Expectations of Court Staff Are Unreasonable



Total Number of Public Responses Equals 100 and Total Number of Attorney Responses Equals 86

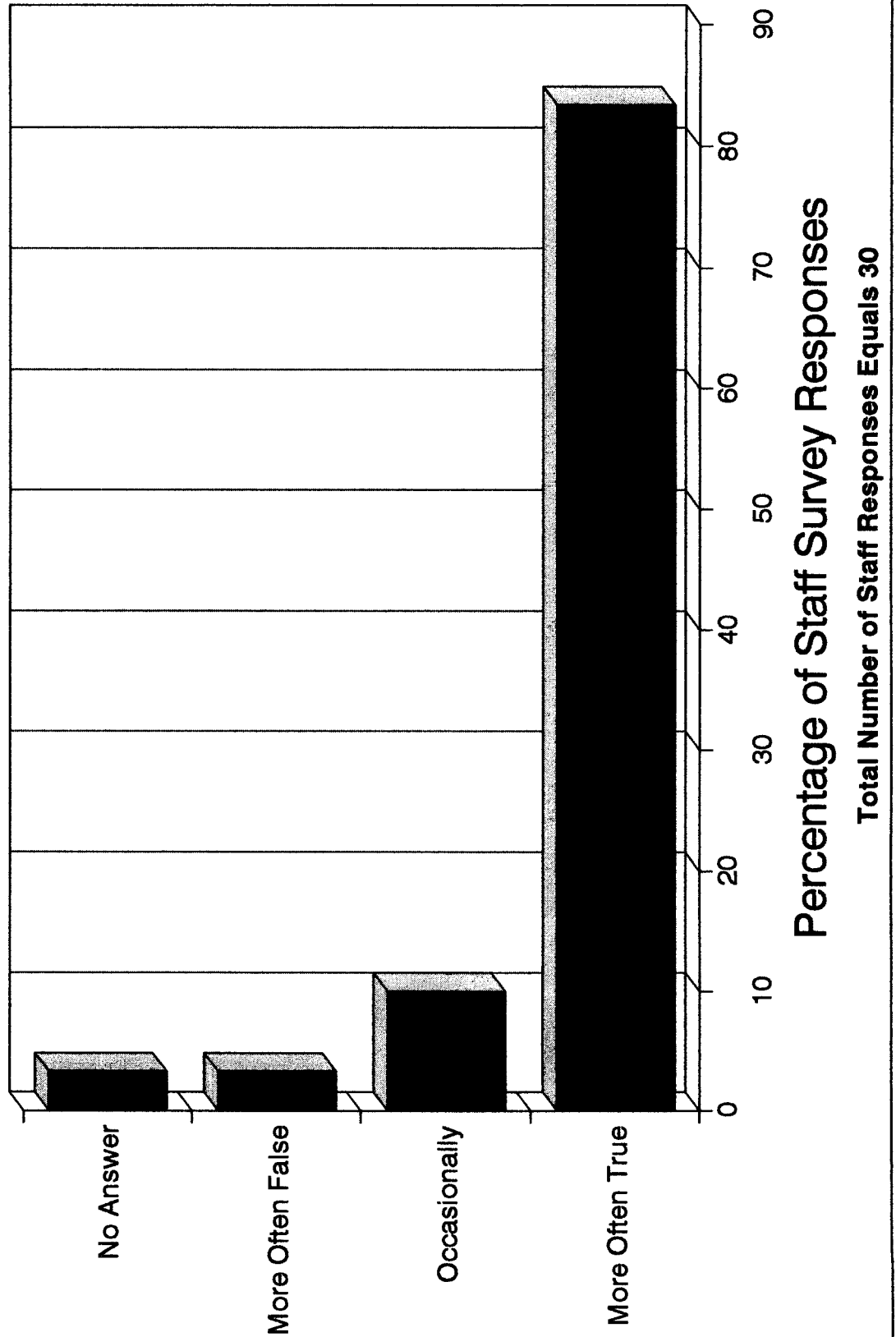
Chart 9

Defendants & Attorneys Unreasonable In Expectations from Staff Core Group



Attorneys Should Be Better Prepared When Contacting The Court

Chart 10



My theory that there is a correlation between the lack of knowledge and Customer Service problems is supported by the responses to *who are the Court's Customers and the most important Customer*. This lack of education also applies to the Public and Attorneys. It is now clear why so many Courts have used information pamphlets to reach out to the different groups the Court's services.

Further, if the survey groups have perceptions of one another being unreasonable in their expectations, it is highly likely that these preconceived notions play a role in the type of service provided and overall feelings about the Court system in general.

RATING CUSTOMER SERVICE WITHIN THE ATLANTIC CITY MUNICIPAL COURT

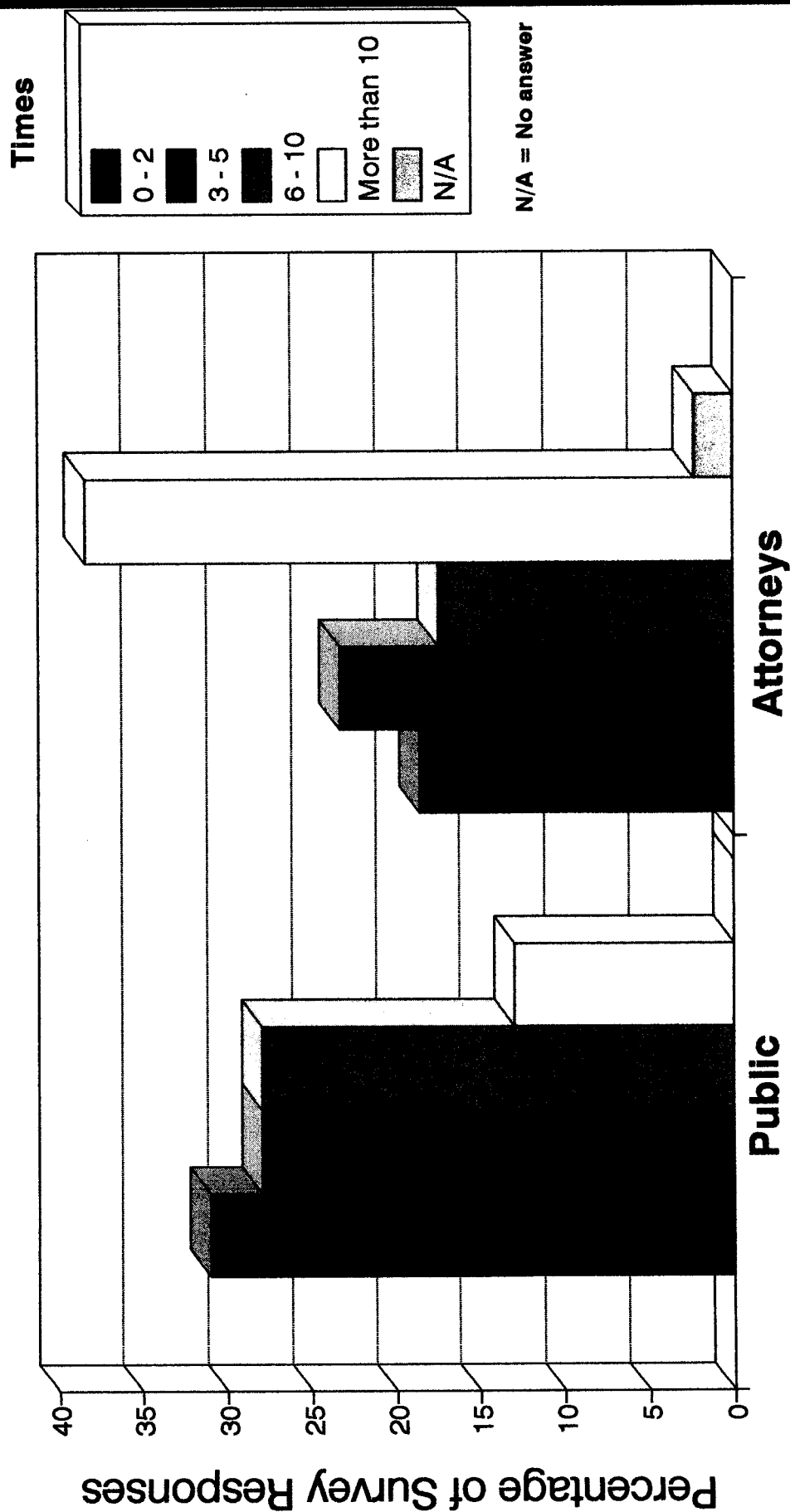
This second section was designed to rate the type of service currently received and given at the Atlantic City Municipal Court. Charts 11 and 12 report on the number of times the Public and Attorneys surveyed *telephoned the Court in the last six months and how long each party waited for service*. Thirty one percent of the Public and 18.6% of the Attorneys telephoned the Court between zero and two times, while 28.0% of the Public and 23.3% of the Attorneys telephoned between three and five times, 28.0% of the Public and 17.4% of the Attorneys telephoned between six and ten times. Finally 13.0% of the Public and 38.4% of the Attorneys telephoned the Court more than ten times. All of the Public answered the question while 2.3% of the Attorneys did not answer the question.

These same groups indicated *how long they waited to be served by phone*. Fifteen percent of the Public and 19.8% of the Attorneys waited between zero and two minutes. Six percent of the Public and 33.7% of the Attorneys waited between three and five minutes. 17.0% of the Public and 20.8% of the Attorneys waited between six and ten minutes. 41.0% of the Public and 7.0% of the Attorneys waited between eleven and fifteen minutes. Finally, 21.0% of the Public and 4.7% of Attorneys waited over fifteen minutes. All of the Public answered the question while 14.0% of the Attorneys failed to answer the question.

It is interesting to note that over 74.0% of the Attorneys waited between zero and ten minutes to be served by phone while over 70.0% of the Public waited between six and fifteen minutes plus. This is most likely due to Attorneys using telephone numbers other than the main phone numbers for the Court.

Chart 11

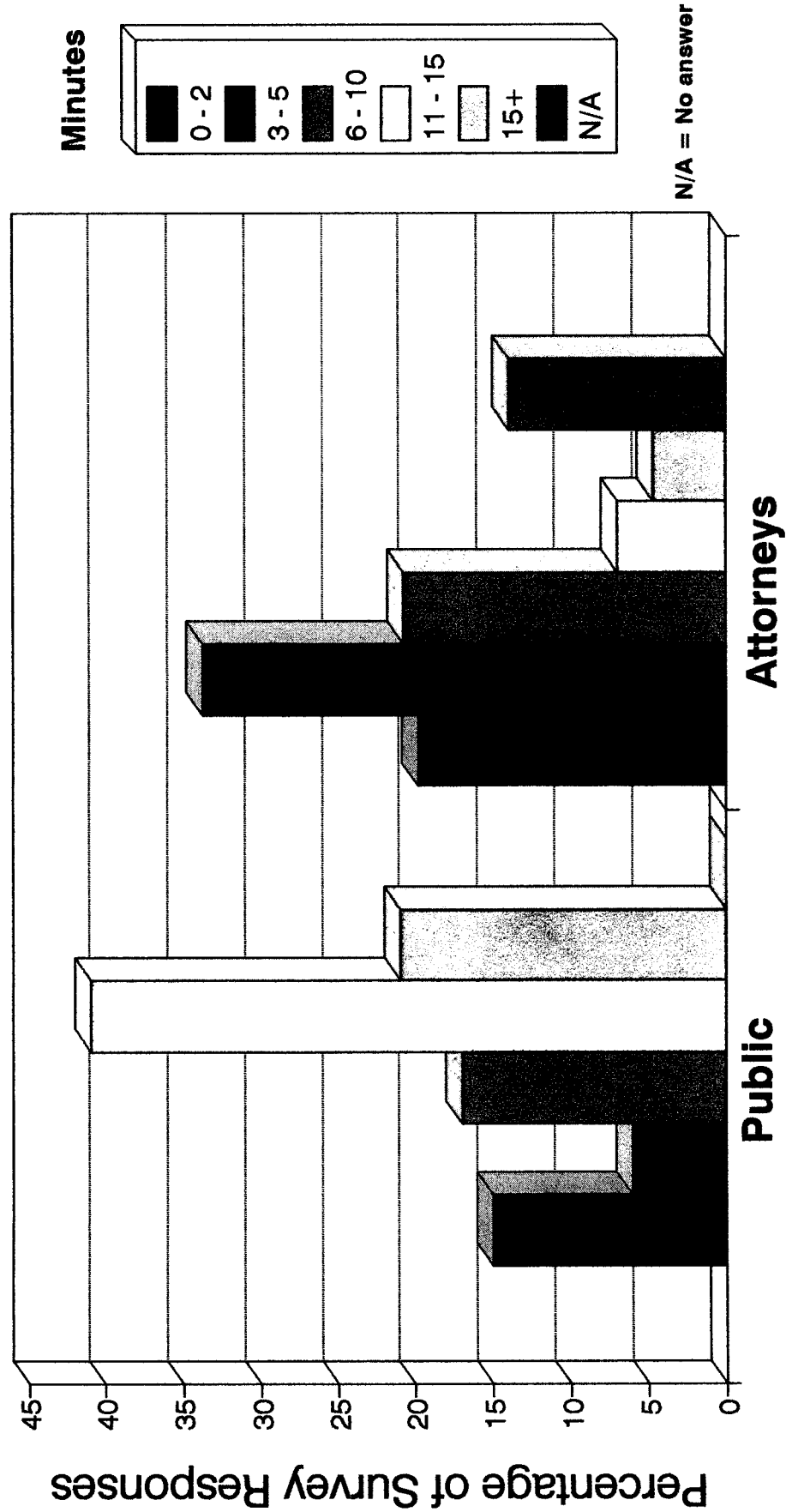
Number of Times In The Last Six Months You Telephoned The Court



Total Number of Public Responses Equals 100 and Total Number of Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 12

How Long You Waited To Be Served By Telephone



Total Number of Public Responses Equals 100 and Total Number of Attorney Responses Equals 86

Charts 13 and 14 rate the *Public and Attorney survey groups' visits to the Court, for service in the last six months and how long they waited for service during those visits.* According to the Public and Attorney surveys groups, they came to the Court for service as follows:

	Public	Attorney
0 - 2 times	38.0%	26.7%
3 - 5 times	14.0%	27.9%
6 - 10 times	23.0%	17.5%
10 + times	25.0%	26.7%

How long each person waited for service is listed as

Minutes	Public	Attorney
0 - 2	11.0%	9.3%
3 - 5	9.0%	19.8%
6 - 10	26.0%	27.9%
11- 15	41.0%	18.6%
15 +	13.0%	5.8%

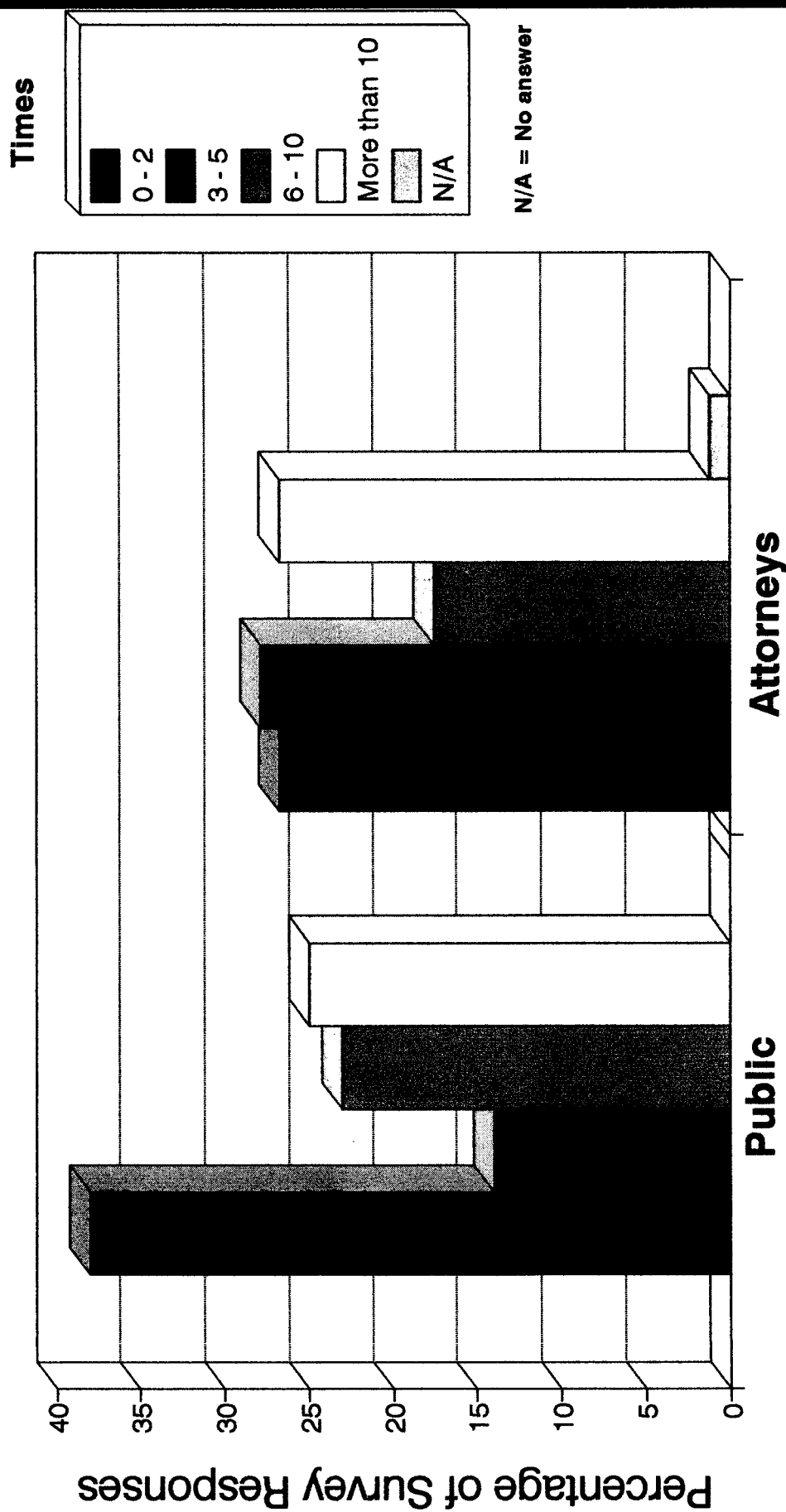
Each survey group was asked to rate the statement that *Court Staff generally are helpful and courteous.* The Staff indicated that this statement was *more often true* 33.3% of the time, *Occasionally* 56.7% of the time and *more often false*, 10.0% of the time. The Public responded as 22.0% being *more often true* , 39.0% *occasionally* and 28.0% *more often false*. The Attorneys responded that 41.9% of the time, this statement was *more often true*, 26.7% *occasionally* and 27.9% of the time, this statement was *more often false*. Chart 15 details those responses.

Chart 16 measures the responses of the survey groups to whether *adequate directional signs are available* . Interestingly, slightly less than half the Public and Attorneys felt that this statement *was more often true*. Slightly more than half of the Staff felt this statement *was often false*. No responses were received from 24.0% of the Public to this question.

As detailed in Chart 17, *responding promptly to requests for information*, also appears to be more of a problem than not with 23.3% of the Staff, 46.0% of the Public and 39.5% of the Attorneys responding to this as *more often false*. Of importance is that 50.0% of the Staff rated this statement as *occasionally*.

Chart 13

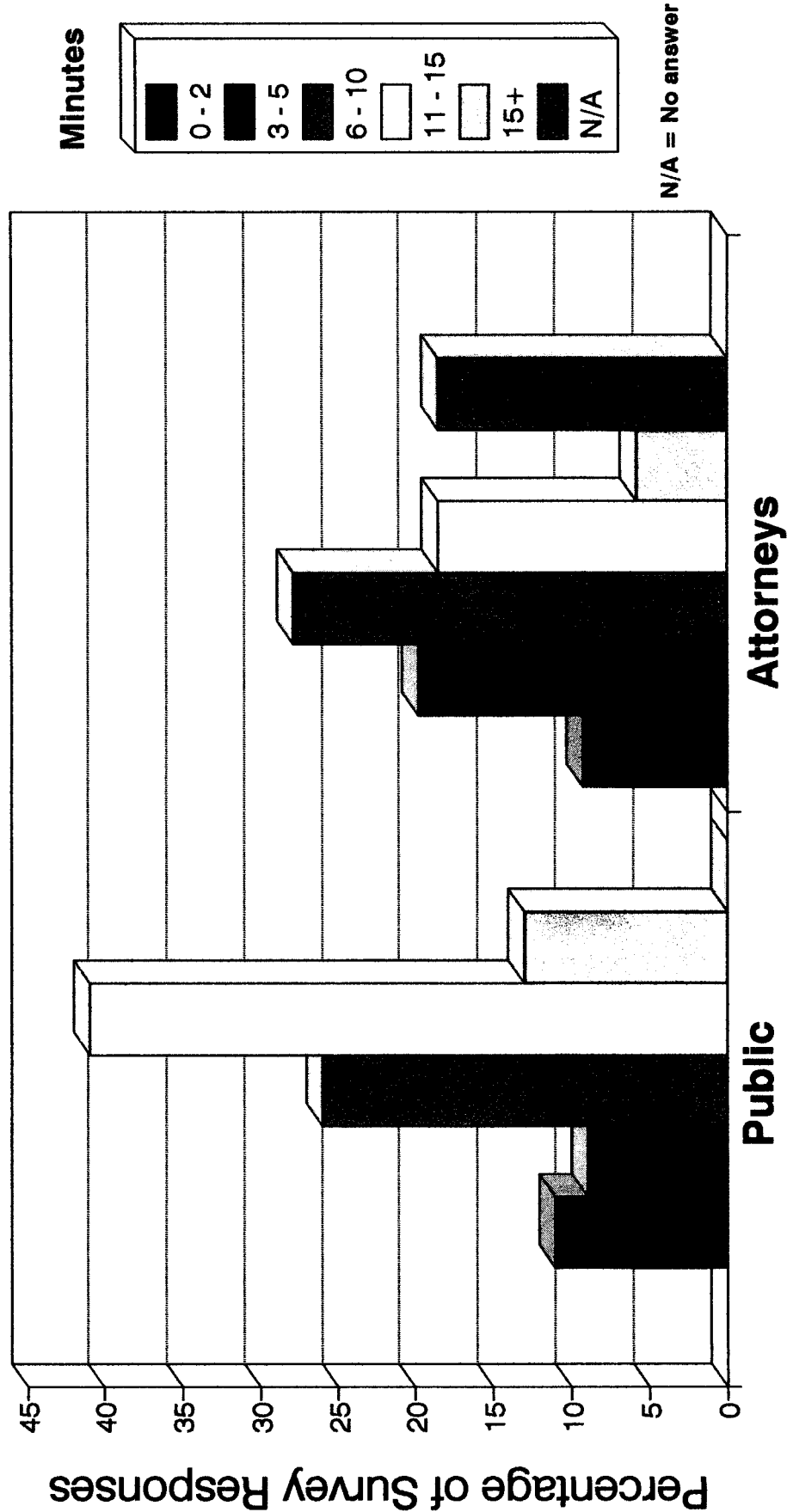
Number of Times In The Last Six Months You Came To The Court



Total Number of Public Responses Equals 100 and Total Number of Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 14

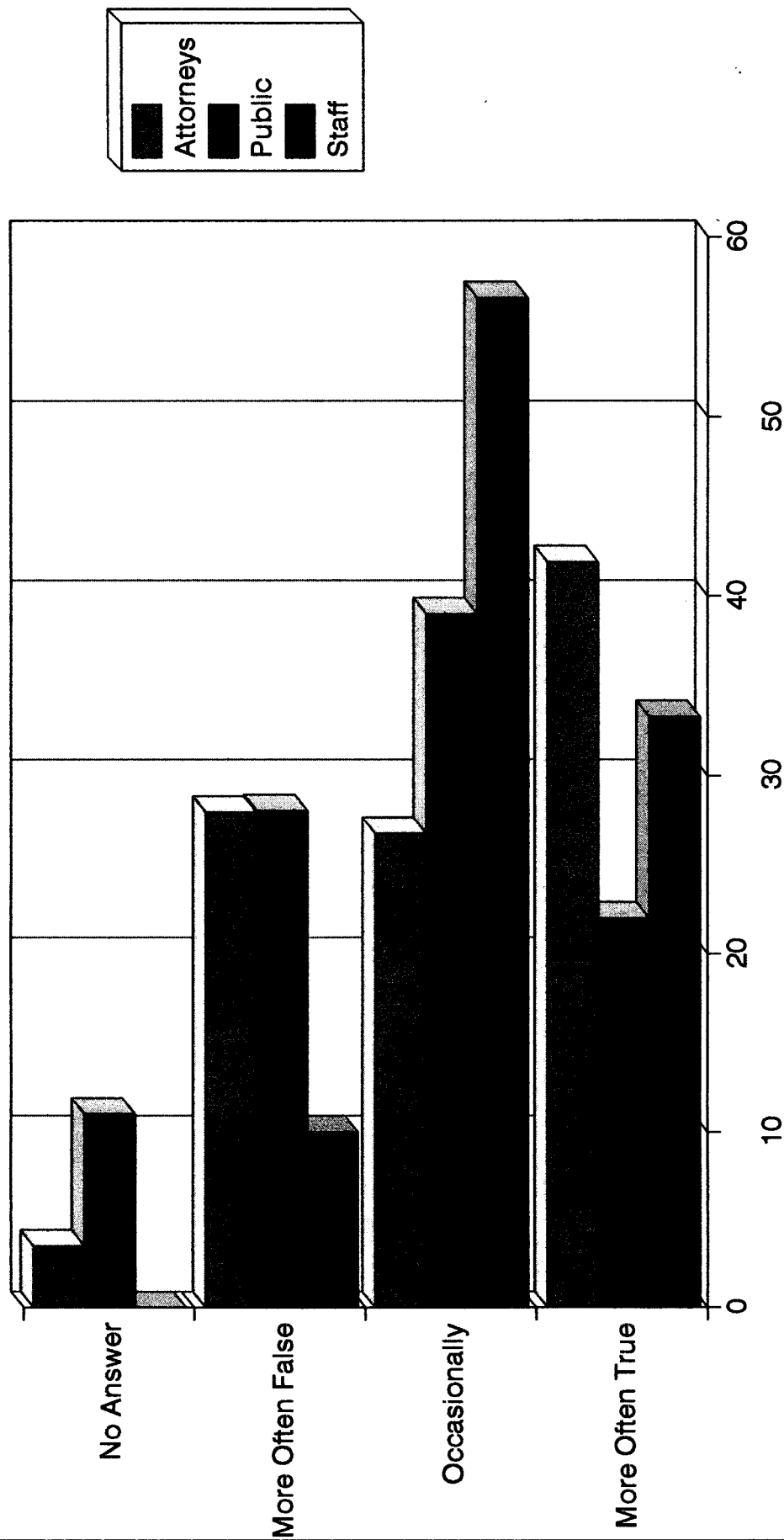
How Long You Waited To Be Served In Person At The Court



Total Number of Public Responses Equals 100 and Total Number of Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 15

Court Staff Generally Are Helpful And Courteous

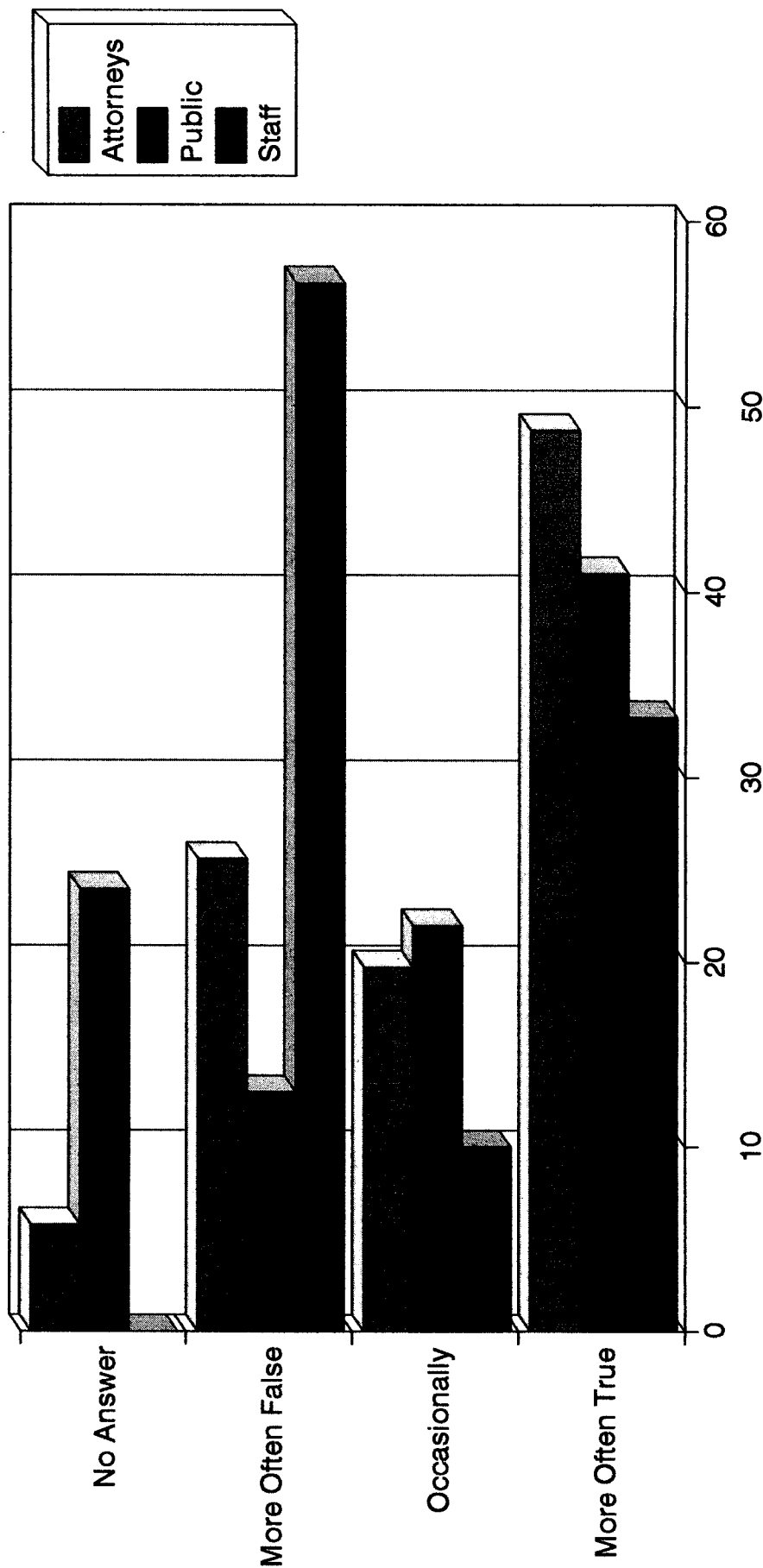


Percentage of Survey Responses

Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 16

Adequate Directional Signs Are Available

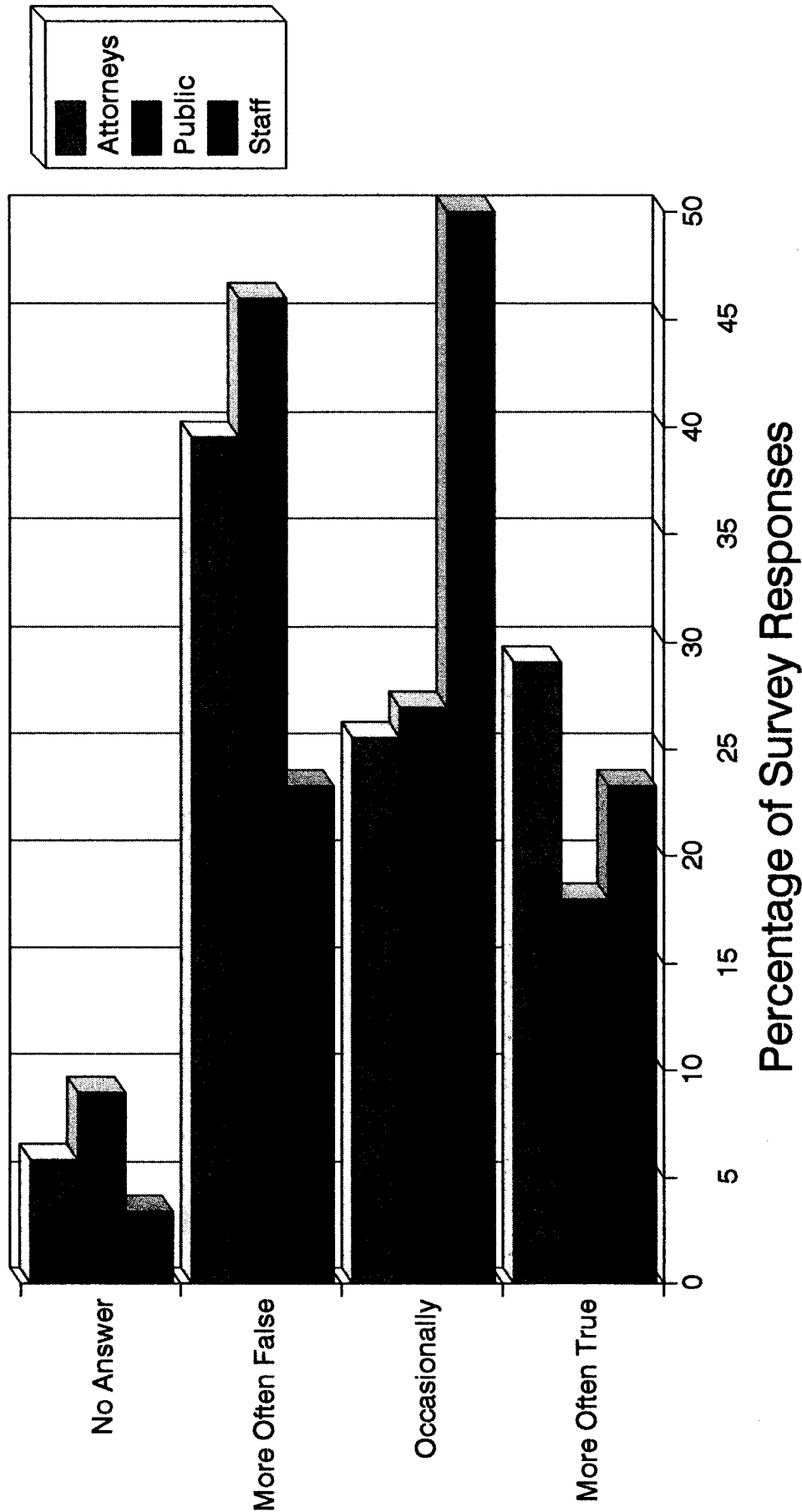


Percentage of Survey Responses

Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 17

Requests For Information Are Answered Promptly



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 18 indicates that the majority of the responses to the statement *it is difficult to contact the Court by phone* in the *more often true* (Public 53.0% and Attorneys 41.9%) and *occasionally* (Public 28.0% and Attorneys 39.6%). Only 7.0% of the Public and 13.9% of the Attorneys responded to this statement as *more often false*.

In rating the Public response as to *whether Attorneys complain about the Court and its' Staff*, 41.0% of the Public indicated that this is *more often false*. The specific percentages for the responses are shown in Chart 19.

As part of the Attorney survey, they were asked to indicate how they felt about the statement that the *Court Staff did not make enough of an effort to help me*. As anticipated, 30.2% of the Attorneys indicated that this statement was *more often true* and 37.3% indicated *occasionally*. The percentage of responses are detailed in Chart 20.

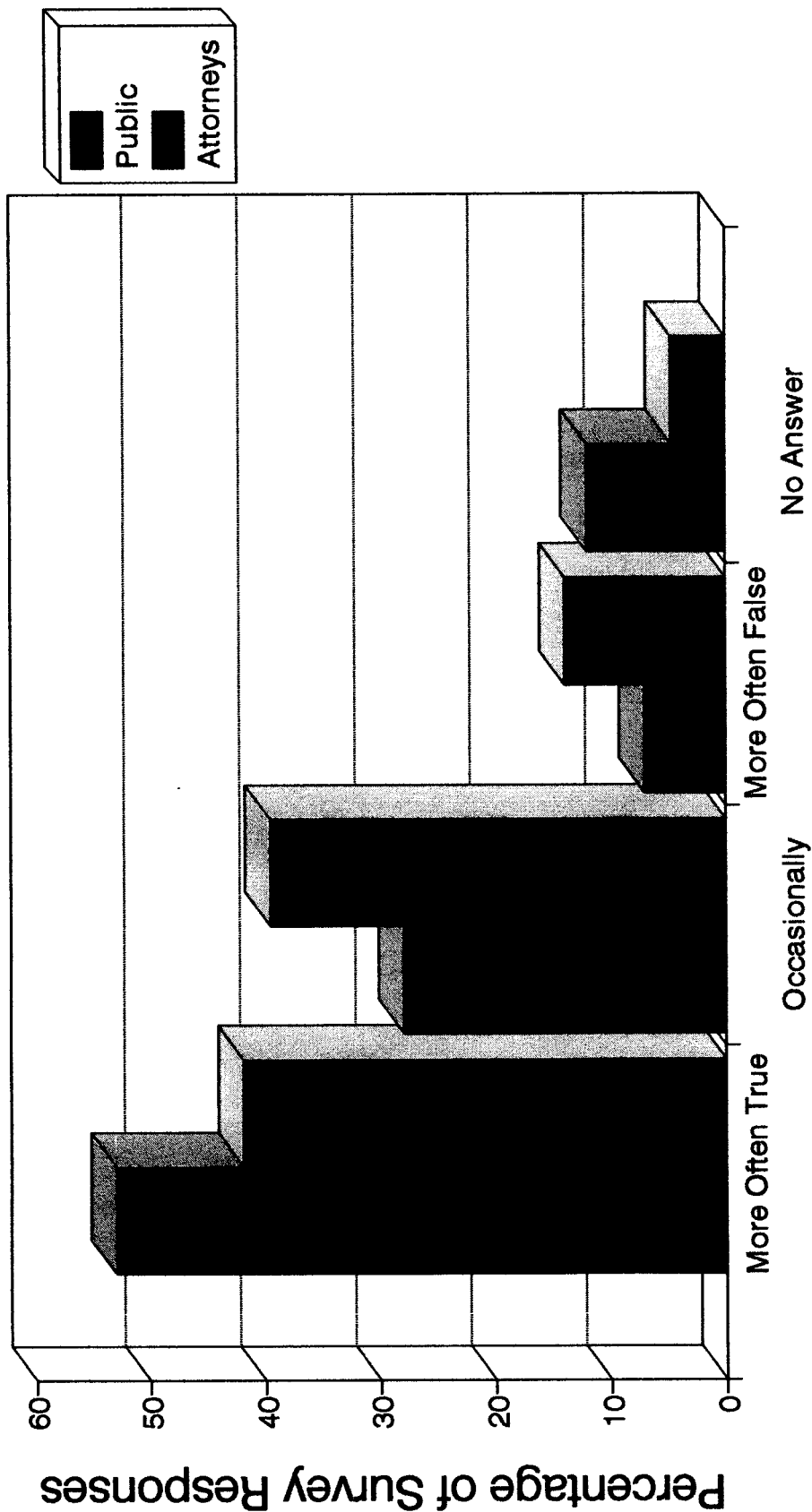
Chart 21 provides the percentage responses to whether *notification of scheduled Court dates are generally received by the attorneys*. 59.3% of the Attorneys responded to this statement as *more often true* with 24.4% responding as *occasionally*. Only 12.8% of the Attorney's rated this as *more often false*. This was a remarkable improvement from the results of the unscientific survey previously conducted wherein notice problems were significant.

The Staff were surveyed as to the final three questions in this category. Charts 22, 23, and 24 detail the results to each survey question. The Staff rated themselves on *how helpful and courteous the attorneys thought they were* and *whether the agencies collecting information or the Public viewing them from the payment window area view them as professional*. It is obvious from these answers that the Staff themselves perceive problems with the Attorneys, different Agencies and the Public.

An analysis of the responses of the second category indicate that service issues remain a problem specifically in the Atlantic City Municipal Court. As stated, little training has

Chart 18

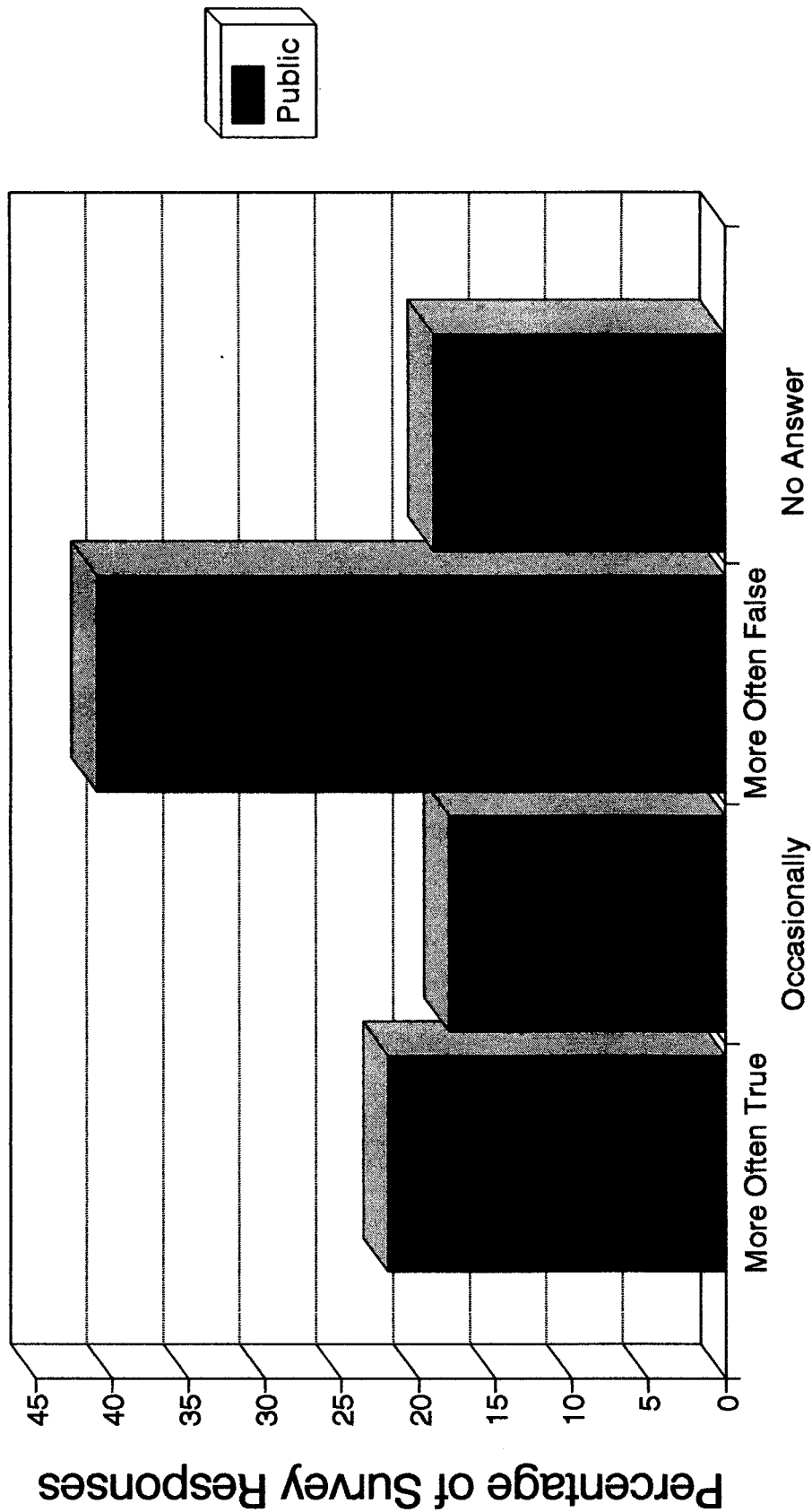
It Is Difficult To Contact The Court By Phone



Total Number of Public Responses Equals 100 and Total Number of Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 19

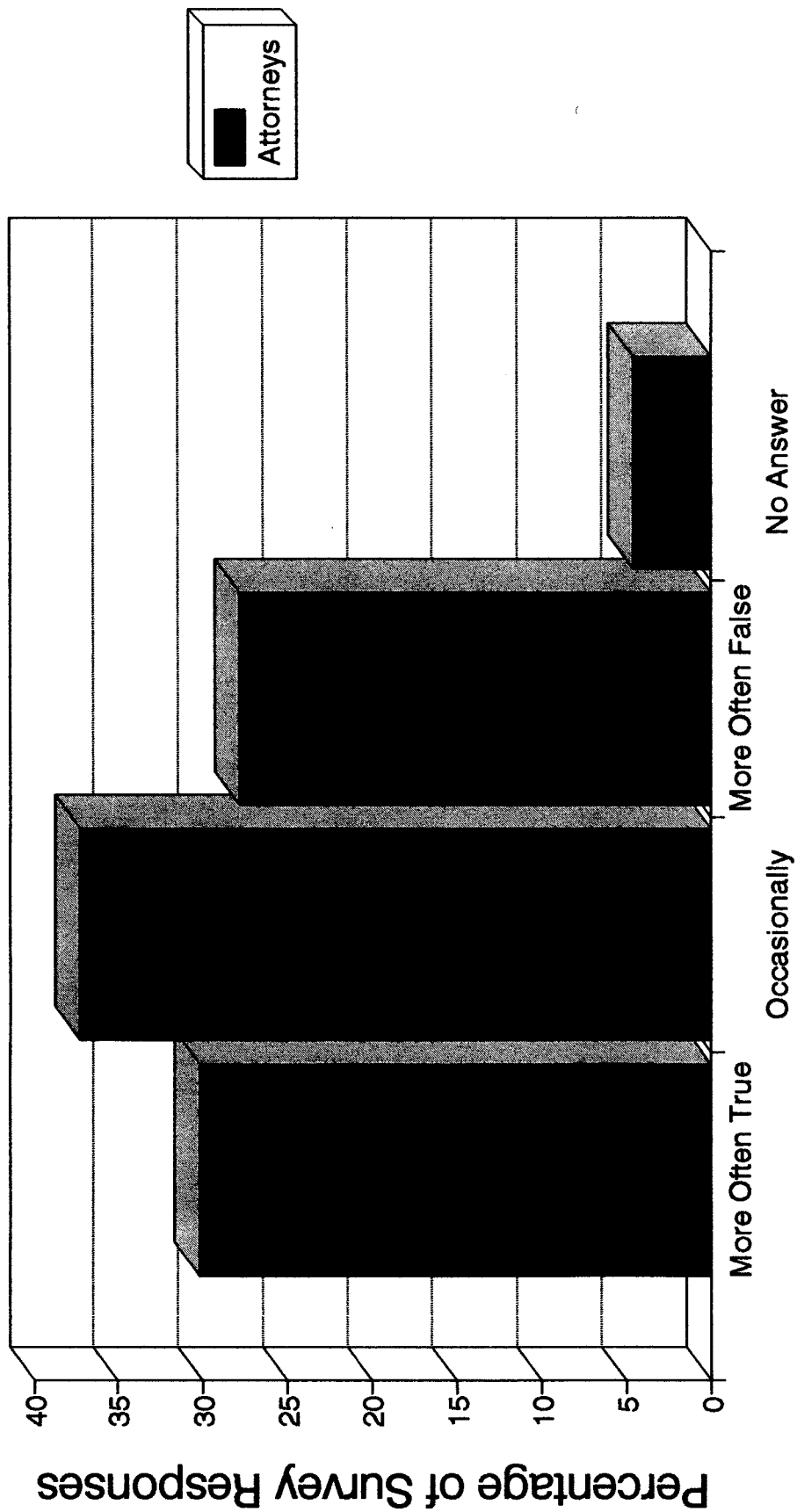
Attorneys Complain About The Court And It's Staff



Total Number of Public Responses Equals 100

Chart 20

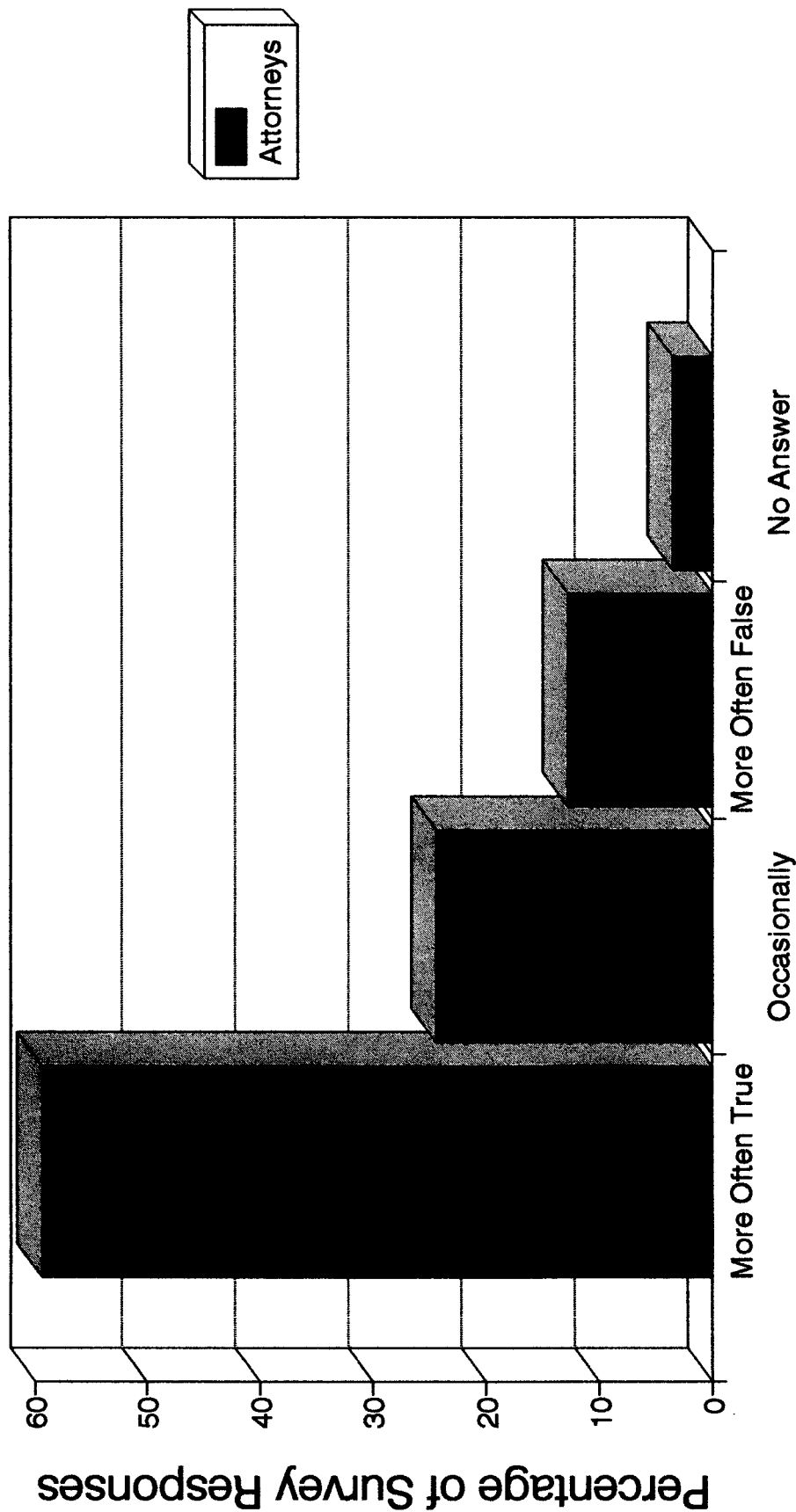
Court Staff Do Not Make Enough Of An Effort To Help Me



Total Number of Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 21

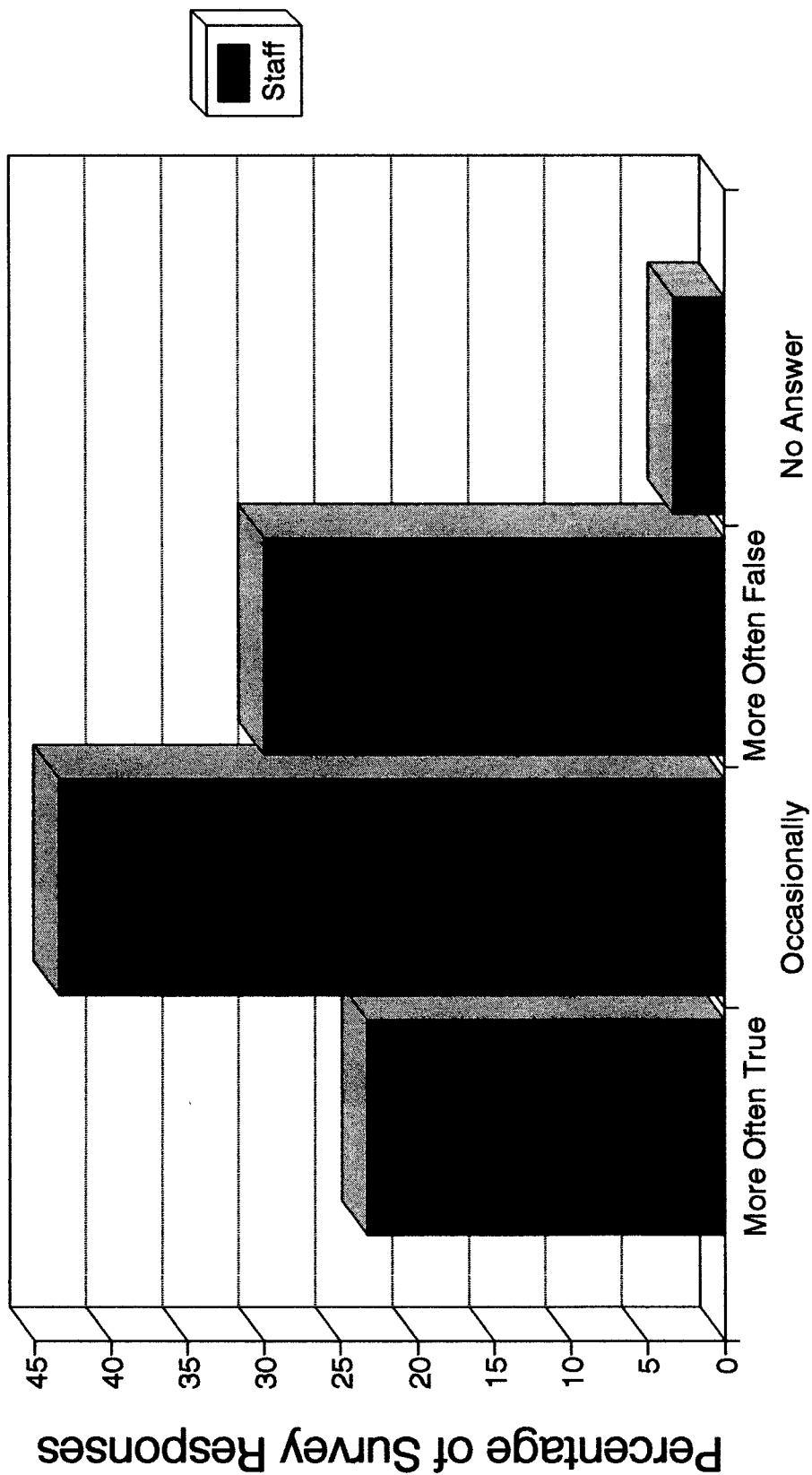
Notification Is Generally Received For Scheduled Court Dates



Total Number of Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 22

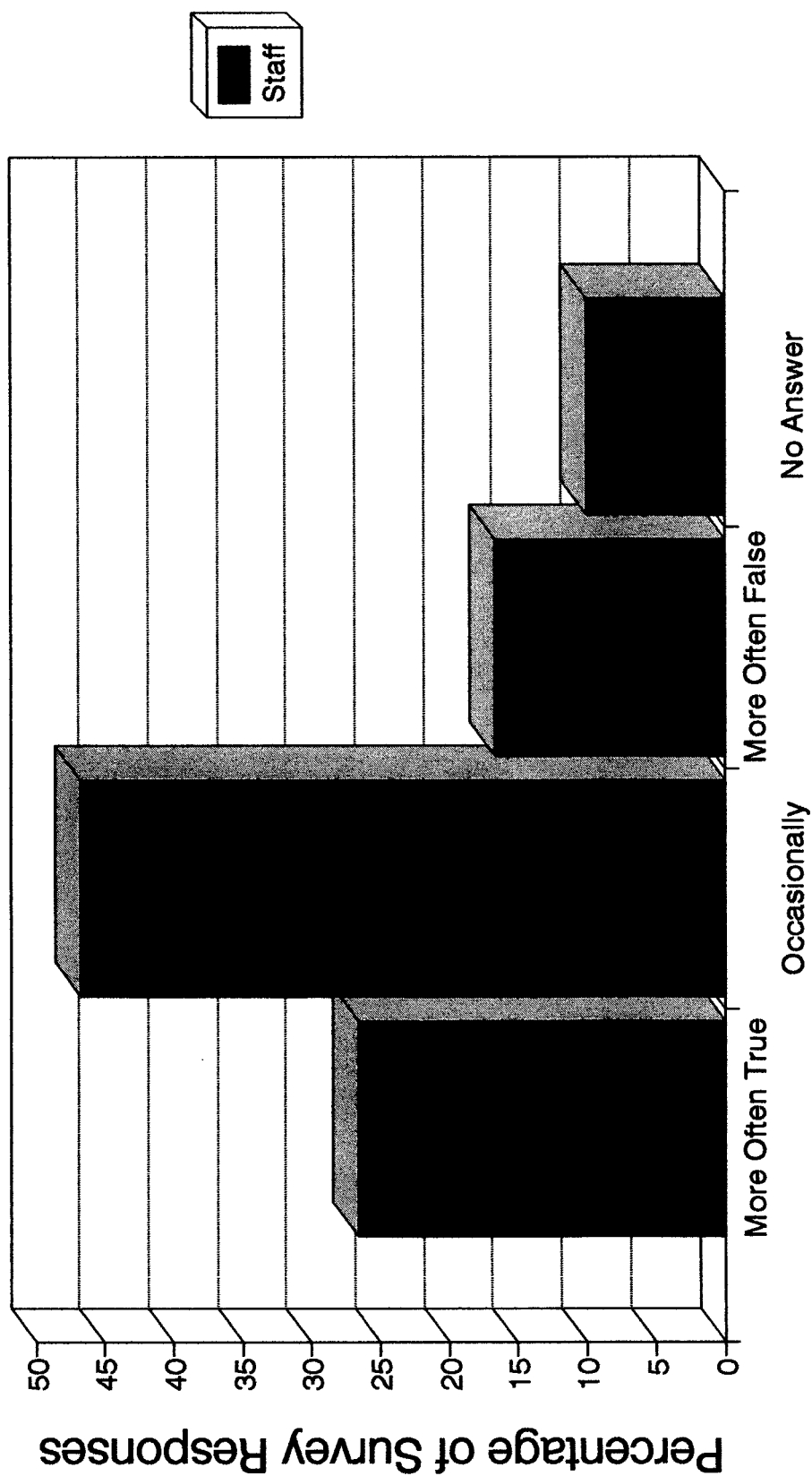
Attorneys Generally Feel That Court Staff Are Helpful And Courteous



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30

Chart 23

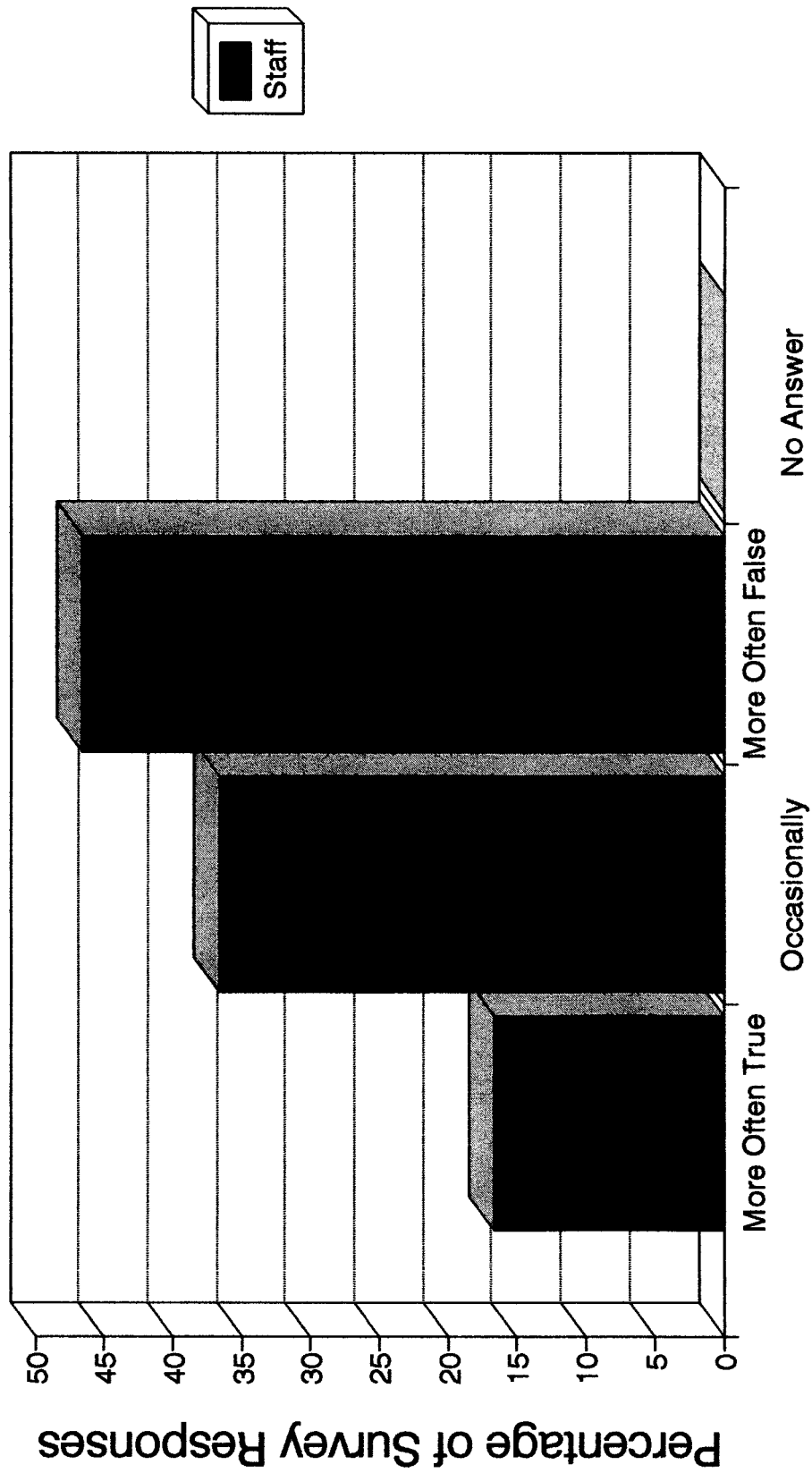
Agencies Collecting Information View Court Staff As Professional



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30

Chart 24

**Public At Court Window Operations View
Court Staff As Professional**



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30

been available to the Municipal Courts. If the Public and Attorneys continually wait to be served, their perceptions will impact not only on the interaction with the Staff but on the long lasting perceptions of these groups of the Courts in general and the individual Municipalities. These responses also answer my third question, *are service issues related to a lack of resources, a lack of training or both*. Clearly, not being able to look up information quickly enough because you are not computerized is a lack of resources. However, not answering a phone quickly enough or responding efficiently to those seeking attention at a payment window represents not only a lack of training but a lack of interest. This could be due to the low opinion that the Staff has of the service they provide.

RATING FUTURE CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING AND ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE ATLANTIC CITY MUNICIPAL COURT

To analyze and prioritize future training, the survey groups were asked to rank training in three areas:

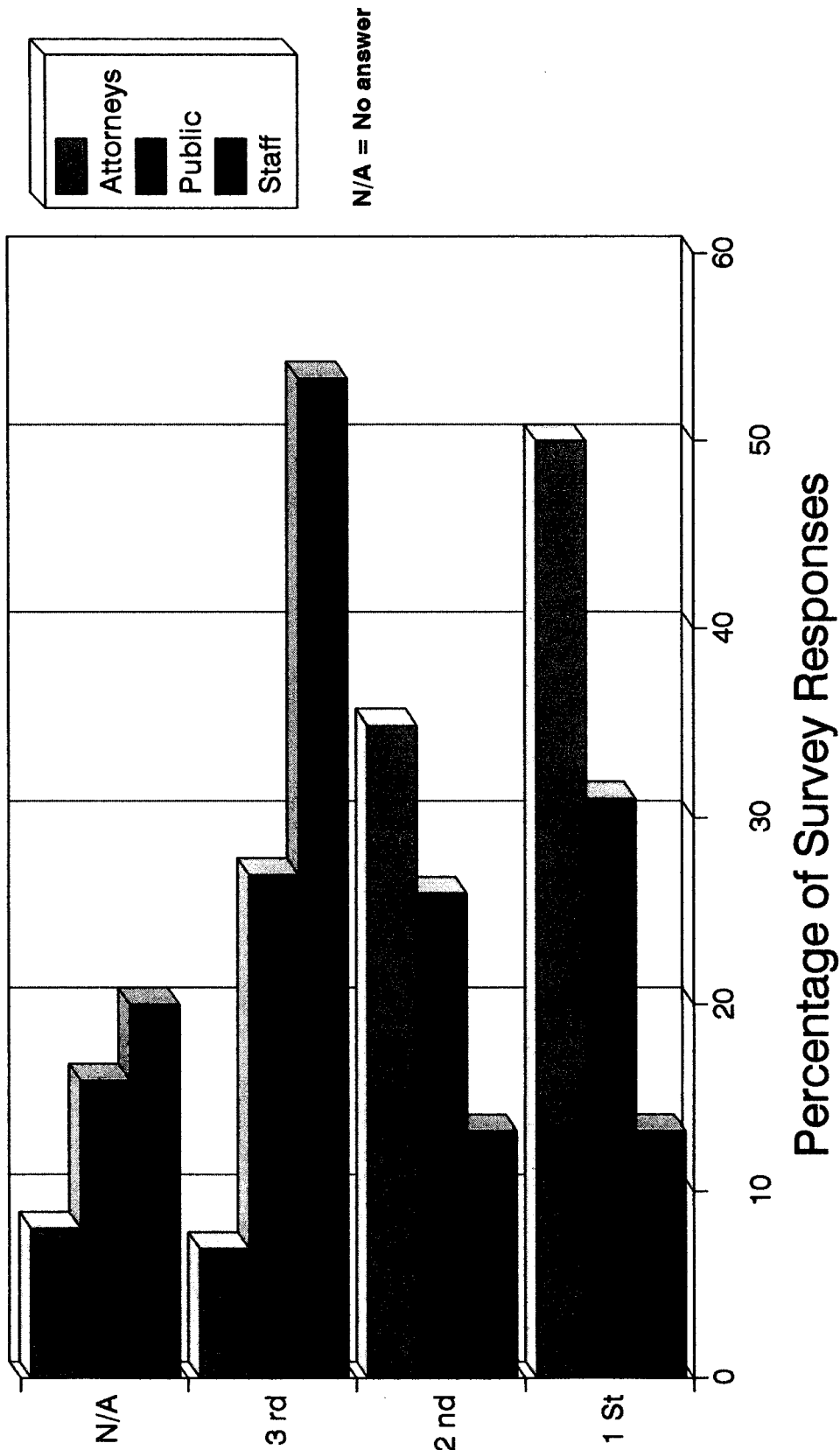
- Telephone Skills*
- Dispute Resolution Training*
- Court Information Training*

Attorneys rated telephone skills in first place while the Public and the Staff selected Court Information Training. Court Information Training would include use of brochures and regularly scheduled seminars on performance improvement. Comparatively, the surveys indicated the Attorneys waited less time for service on the phones than the Public but nevertheless telephone skills training was rated as the most important training. Charts 25, 26 and 27 represent the responses given by the survey groups as they prioritized the different training that was suggested.

It is my opinion that the Public rated information as the most important because they want answers when they come or call for service at the Court. I think the Staff rated Court Information Training first because, for the most part, they want the tools to do a good job. This again relates to filling the need both for resources and training. Resources of additional funding and support from the individual Municipality and the Administrative Office of the Courts can help provide the materials needed for brochures, kiosks or videos.

Chart 25

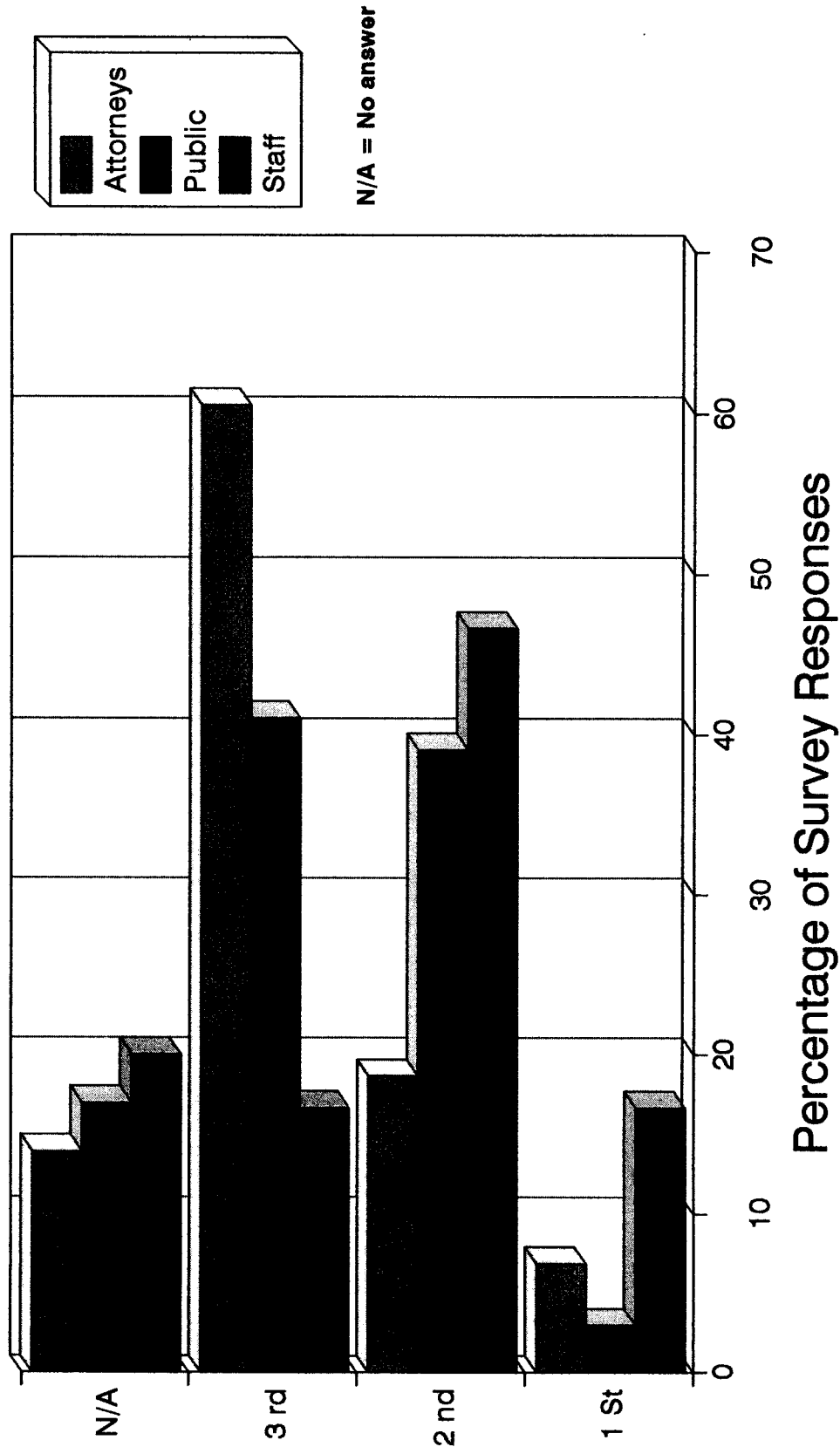
Prioritizing Future Telephone Skills Training



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 26

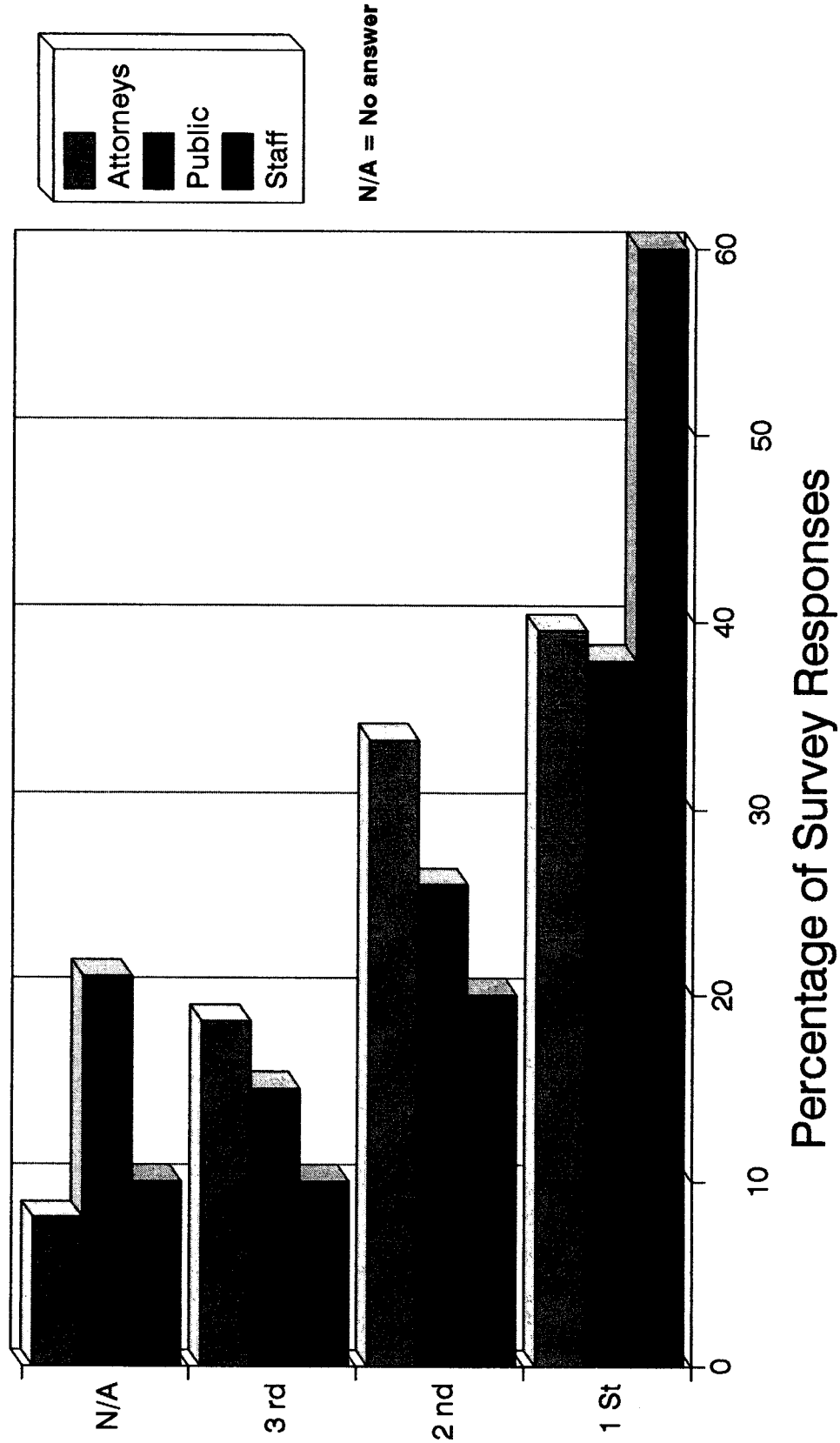
Prioritizing Future Dispute Resolution Training



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 27

Prioritizing Future Court Information Training



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Less than half of the Staff rated the *need for both resources and training as more often true*. The Public responses span the range of answers, however, the Attorneys responses of 41.9% rated this statement as *more often false*. The percentages for the individual survey groups are in Chart 28.

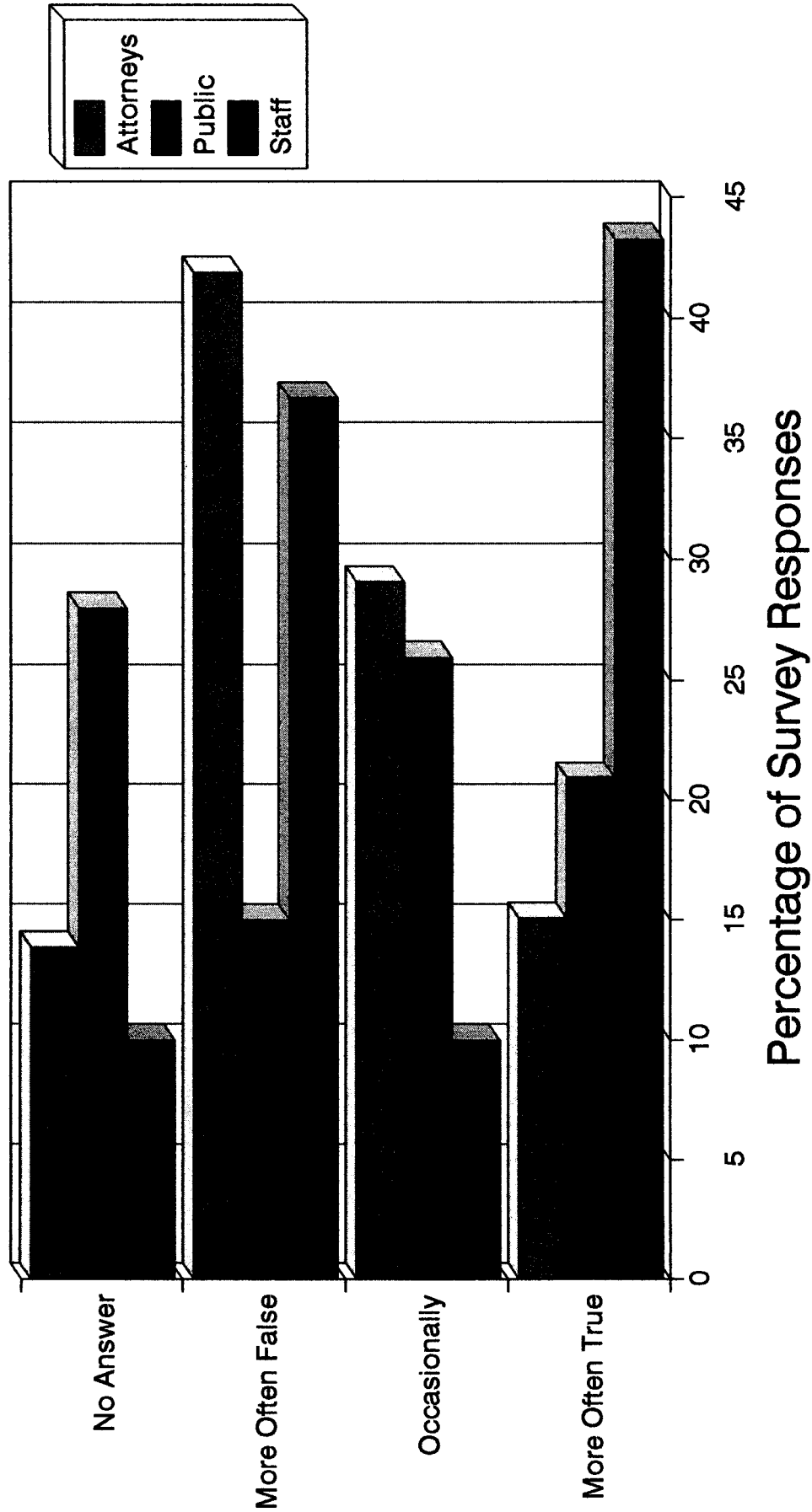
Overwhelmingly, the Staff, Public and Attorneys indicated in Chart 29, that *an informational pamphlet should be available for the public* with 80.2% of the Staff, 63.0% of the Public and 64.0% of the Attorneys responding.

Finally, each survey group was offered the opportunity to make general comments. While I was prepared for almost anything, I was surprised that only a little more than half the Attorneys and Staff had any comments while 37.0% of the Public included comments. A good portion of the comments were individual gripes (mostly unprintable) and of little significance to this paper. Several of the comments were helpful.

Perhaps the most important comment and certainly the one that inspired me throughout this research paper was one made by one of the Public survey group. This person said, "Please don't stop trying to make it better."²² In a Public sector environment in which people do not have a choice, it is essential that this comment becomes our calling.

Chart 28

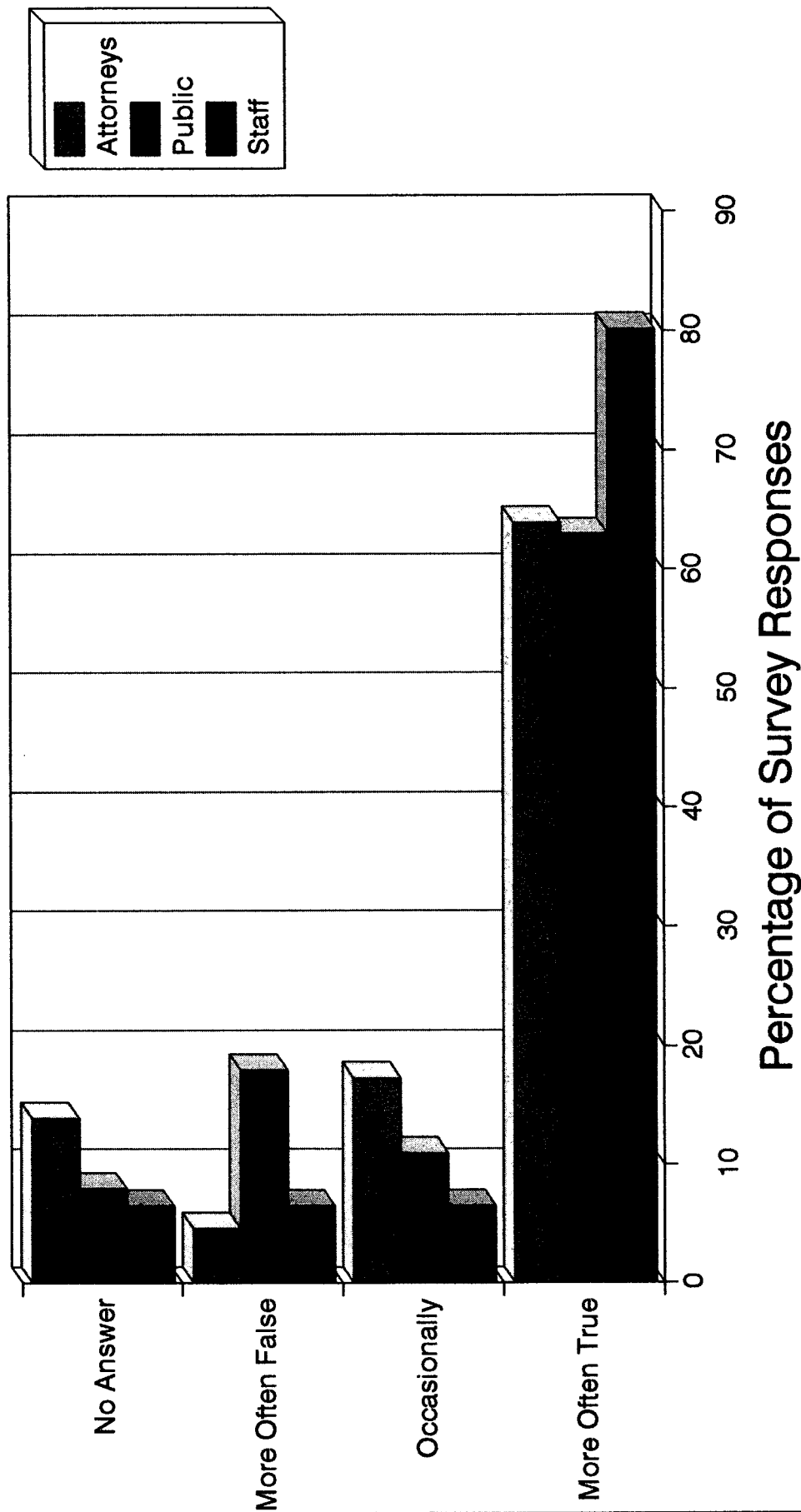
Resolution of Service Issues Require Additional Staff And Equipment



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 29

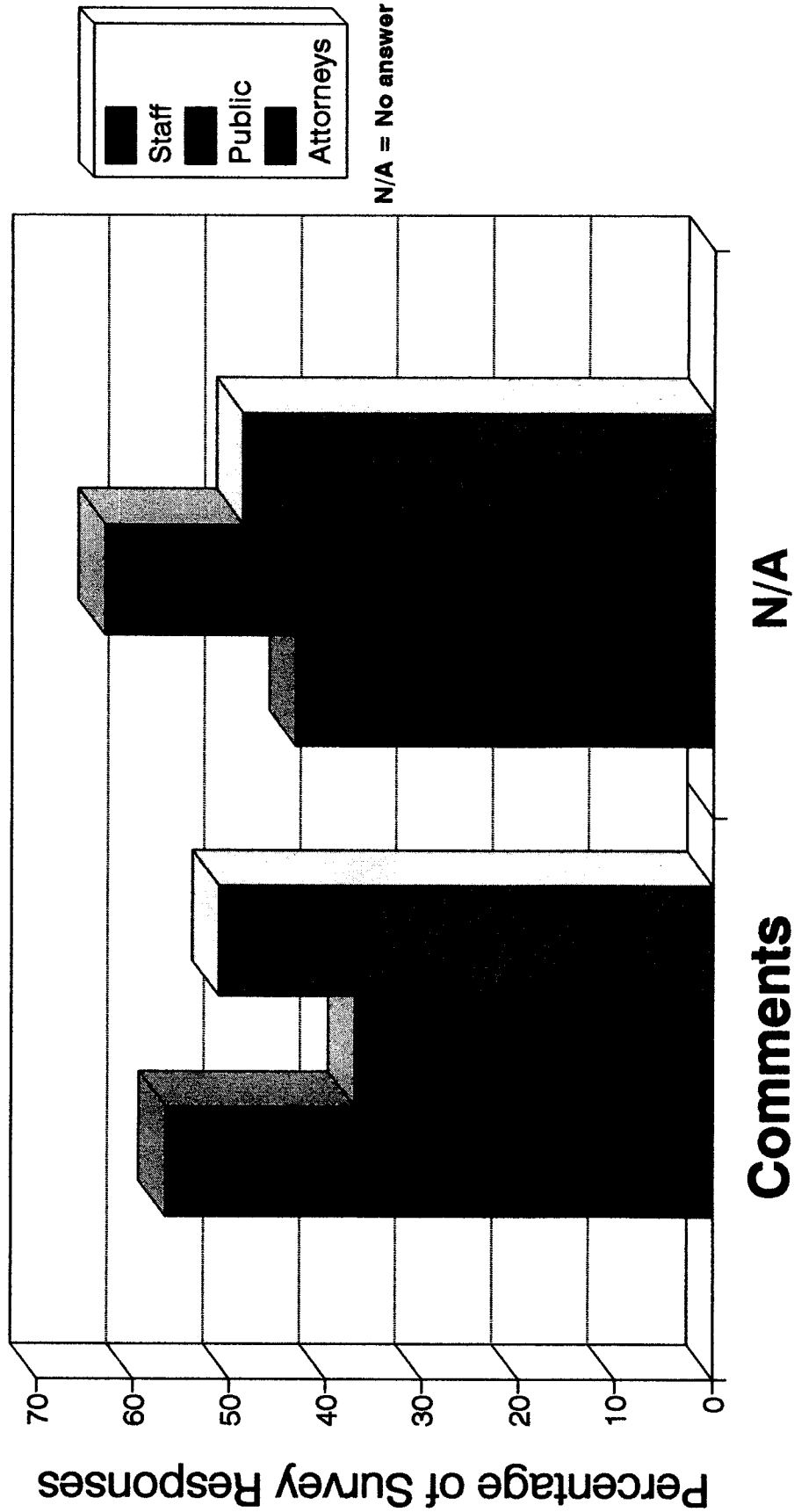
An Informational Pamphlet Should Be Available For The Public



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

Chart 30

**Number Of Core Groups Responding With
General Comments**



Total Number of Staff Responses Equals 30, Public Responses Equals 100 and Attorney Responses Equals 86

CONCLUSIONS

As stated, my hypothesis theorized that there is a correlation between the lack of service training through tasks and standards and Court information with the type of service provided and the resulting perceptions. Service training would be based on an ongoing commitment to identify and focus on the Customer in all procedures. Additionally, specific service standards for example, how long to keep a Customer on hold, would be designed and implemented. I believe that due to the lack of comprehensive training and standards and a lack of service expectations, Staff may not view service as a regular part of their role.

To obtain the necessary information to analyze my theory, four main topic areas were identified and became the focus of the surveys. The Court Staff, the Public and the Attorneys were surveyed to examine their feelings and responded to questions and statements in the these topic areas:

- Identification of who the Court's Customers are.
- Are the views of these groups indicative of the roles they play in the Court and how they interact with one another?
- Are service issues related to a lack of resources or training or both?
- Can Customer friendly tools, for example, an informational pamphlet, help the perceptions of the Public and the Attorneys with respect to the Court?

In rating the Customer Service perceptions, I identified the lack of knowledge of the Court's Mission Statement among the responding survey groups. A Mission Statement serves as a cornerstone for any particular organization. Without that cornerstone, Staff persons may have limited or no goals or expectations. Without the goals, there are no standards by which Customers can be served or service can be rated. The Atlantic City Municipal Court's Mission Statement as previously stated was distributed to Staff persons and was posted in the Public area of the Court at one time. It has not been publicly posted for at least two years.

My first recommendation is to review, amend and publicize the Mission Statement so that it is available for reference for the Staff, Public and Attorneys. I think our Mission

Statement should be expanded to better explain our goals. I also think additional emphasis must be placed on the continued visibility of the Mission Statement. At a minimum, the Mission Statement should be distributed to the Staff, at least once a year, printed and posted at the Information and Payment Window areas, in the Public waiting areas and in the Staff offices. It should also be included in the postponement policy brochure distributed to Attorneys, any Court informational pamphlets designed in the future and any comments or suggestion cards available for response.

My second recommendation in this section would be the development of tasks and standards for each Staff person and procedure in the Court. This will enable the Court to spell out precisely the standards for performance and create a mechanism for accountability.

The second issue within the perceptions of Customer Service was the identification of the Court's Customer. It is clear from the ratings that the Staff are not exactly clear who the Court's Customers are. The Staff should consider the Court's Customers to be any party seeking a service at the Court. That party could be a Defendant, a Witness, a Complainant, an Attorney, Police, an Agency (i.e., Probation) or a co-worker from another Court. It is equally important for the Staff, the Public, the Attorneys or any other party to understand who the Court's Customers are. Educating those entities other than the Staff could be accomplished by a pamphlet indicating that "Serving you is important to us."

My third recommendation is to enact a Customer Identification and Importance program for the Court. It is important for those seeking or giving service to understand that we may not be able to change the reason why a person is required to come to Court but we can present an efficient, professional, service-oriented environment. Changing the image of the Court will help improve the interaction between Staff and other parties and therefore, reduce the adversarial atmosphere. The Staff can be educated through scheduled training sessions. The Public and Attorneys could be educated through pamphlets, Bar Association Liaison meetings and by information disseminated by the Service Delivery Committee.

Improvement of service through training, implementation of tasks and standards and education of who the Court's Customers are will help tear down some of the pre-conceived notions of what service could and should be.

Perceptions continued to prove my theories when expectations of the Staff, the Public and the Attorneys indicated that both training and resources were needed. Again, Court Staff can make a difference in helping the Public even though they may not have the exact information needed. A smile, curtailing personal conversations in view of the Public and quickly answering a ringing telephone can go a long way towards making a tenuous situation positive.

In rating the service specifically in the Atlantic City Municipal Court, the survey groups identified the need for resources and training to improve services. My fourth recommendation based upon the responses is to analyze the telephone records to determine whether the current telephone system could be improved to enhance service and whether additional telephone lines are needed within an individual section.

While it would be enlightening to follow up on those attorneys who indicated they had problems with the receipt of Court notices, this would not be possible since the surveys were anonymous.

My fifth recommendation based upon the ratings would be the creation and distribution of information pamphlets to explain the Court process and our individual Court procedures to those seeking service at the Court. These pamphlets could simplify what otherwise could appear as a complicated and overwhelming system.

My sixth recommendation is the analysis of the general comments provided by the survey groups. Some of their comments, staggering Court scheduled, a mail drop slot by the Payment Windows, use of an employee orientation package and implementation of a criminal computer system are already incorporated into our future Court plans.

In the analysis of the surveys, there was an unusual trend of low Staff service ratings by the Staff themselves. This could be an indication that the Staff requires more positive reinforcement for their performance. Additionally, the implementation of tasks and standards and followup performance evaluations will be another opportunity to tell the staff what they are doing right.

Service dedicated to the Customer can present an opening to change the way we view government services. This project provided the chance for the Staff, the public and the Attorneys to prove that identification of Customer Service issues require a genuine commitment to address service in all aspects of the Court. Simply, you cannot just tell someone, "Say, 'May I help you?'" and that's service training. I am excited to be involved with the commitment made by the Administrative Office of the Courts to address these service issues on all levels.

Within this project, I was given the chance to examine each groups' feelings and comments to improve service. As stated, the one that touched me the most was the one that pleaded that we continue to try to make it better. It is that spirit of expectation and change and the continued efforts and spirit of the Court employees that will enable us to truly reinvent a government of service.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government*, (Massachusetts: Addison- Wesley Publishing Company), p. 166.
- ² "The Supreme Court Task Force on the Improvement of the Municipal Courts," State of New Jersey, 1985, Introduction, p. iv.
- ³ "Atlantic City," *Academic American Encyclopedia*, 1994.
- ⁴ Atlantic City Municipal Court Statistics.
- ⁵ "Atlantic City Space Program and Master Plan, Stage VI, Final Report." Atlantic County Improvement Authority and the City Of Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1992, p. 160.
- ⁶ Several conversations with Howard H. Berchtold Jr., Assistant Trial Court Administrator for the Vicinage.
- ⁷ *The Docket* is a newsletter published bi-monthly by the Atlantic County Bar Association.
- ⁸ "Court-Community Relations Survey Summary (Working Draft)," Information Center of the National Center for State Courts.
- ⁹ "Service Industries," *Academic American Encyclopedia*, 1994.
- ¹⁰ Telephone conversation with Dennis L. Bliss, Assistant Director, Municipal Court Services, New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts, January 11, 1994.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*

¹²
New Jersey Administrative Office of the Court's Statistics.

¹³
National Crime Investigation Center (NCIC)

¹⁴
Vicinage: a term used to describe an Assignment Judge's territory of jurisdiction.

¹⁵
"Court-Community Relations Survey Summary (Working Draft)," Information Center of the National Center for State Courts.

¹⁶
ibid.

¹⁷
ibid.

¹⁸
"Courting Customer Service with Multimedia," *IBM Multimedia Training Multimedia Solutions*, p. 8.

¹⁹
Anne O'Reilly, *On Call Translator: AT&T's Language Line*.

²⁰
David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government*, (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company), p. 167.

²¹
ibid.

²²
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Staff Survey
12-04-93

APPENDIX A

This survey will identify areas in Customer Service that you feel may or may not be a part of this Court. You do not have to identify yourself unless you choose to. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please place a checkmark in the space provided for each question.

1. Length of employment at this or another court in N.J.

 1 0- 6 months 2 7 months to 1 1/2 years
 8 1 1/2 years to 3 years 19 over 3 years

2. Do you know if this Court has a mission statement?

 7 Yes 21 No 2 N/A

3. If so, have you read it?

 7 Yes 18 No 5 N/A

4. Do you think Customer Service should be a part of the Court's mission statement?

16 Yes 2 No 12 N/A

5. Who do you think are the Court's customers?

Defendants	<u>29 </u> Yes	<u> 1 </u> No	3 N/A
Attorneys	<u>25 </u> Yes	<u> 2 </u> No	1 N/A
Complainants	<u>28 </u> Yes	<u> 1 </u> No	2 N/A
Agencies	<u>26 </u> Yes	<u> 2 </u> No	2 N/A
Police	<u>25 </u> Yes	<u> 3 </u> No	2 N/A
Interested Public	<u>26 </u> Yes	<u> 1 </u> No	3 N/A

6. Which group would you rate as the most important customer? DEF-18 POLICE-1 PUBLIC-1 COMPLAINANT ATTORNEYS-0 ALL-7 NONE-1 N/A-1

Why? _____

7. Please prioritize the following areas as 1-most important to 3-least important areas that you would like additional training in to do your job.

	AS1	AS2	AS3	N/A
<u> </u> Telephone Skills	4	4	16	6
<u> </u> Dispute Resolution Skills	5	14	5	6
<u> </u> Court Information	18	6	3	3

Please rate each of the following statements as More often true, Occasionally or More often false. Please circle your responses.

8. Court staff in general are helpful and courteous to the public.

10	17	3
More often true	Occasionally	More often false
9. Attorneys generally feel that Court staff are helpful and courteous.

7	13	9	N/A 1
More often true	Occasionally	More often false	
10. Requests for information court dates, postponements, dispositions) are answered promptly.

7	15	7	N/A 1
More often true	Occasionally	More often false	
11. Agencies collecting disposition information view Court staff as professional.

8	14	5	N/A 3
More often true	Occasionally	More often false	
12. Public observers of the court window operations will view Court staff as professional.

5	11	14
More often true	Occasionally	More often false
13. Defendants are unreasonable in their expectations of the Court staff.

13	14	3
More often true	Occasionally	More often false
14. Attorneys are unreasonable in their expectations of the Court staff.

12	13	3	N/A 2
More often true	Occasionally	More often false	
15. There are adequate signs to indicate to the public where the courtrooms and specific offices are in the building.

10	3	17
More often true	Occasionally	More often false

16. An information pamphlet should be available to the public to explain the Court process. N/A 2
24 2 2
More often true Occasionally More often false
17. Attorneys should be better prepared when contacting the Court. N/A 1
25 3 1
More often true Occasionally More often false
18. I can make a difference in helping a person even if I can't give them the information they want. N/A 1
20 6 3
More often true Occasionally More often false
19. Customer Service issues can only be resolved through more staff and additional equipment. N/A 3
13 3 11
More often true Occasionally More often false
20. Any other comments or suggestions in how to improve services.
_____ COMMENTS 17 NO COMMENTS 13

Public Survey

APPENDIX B

12/04/93

This survey has been designed to assist the Atlantic City Municipal Court in determining how best to serve it's customers, you the public. Your cooperation is appreciated.

1. Does the Court have a mission statement? N/A 3
21_ Yes 76_ No
2. If yes, have you read it? N/A 2
19_ Yes 79_ No
3. Do you think Customer Service should be a part of the Court's mission statement? N/A 2
88_ Yes 10_ No
4. Who do you think the Court staff should view as the Court's customers?

Defendants	91_ Yes	3_ No	N/A 6
Attorneys	47_ Yes	31_ No	N/A 22
Complainants	86_ Yes	10_ No	N/A 4
Agencies	38_ Yes	31_ No	N/A 31
Police	41_ Yes	38_ No	N/A 21
Interested Public	79_ Yes	11_ No	N/A 10
5. Which group would you rate as the most important customer? DEF 31 ATTORNEYS 10 COMPLAINANTS 21 AGENCIES 0 POLICE 1 PUBLIC 10 WITNESSES 3 ALL 22 N/A 2
 Why? _____

6. How many times in the past six months have you telephoned the Court?

31_ 0-2 times	28_ 6-10 times
28_ 3-5 times	13_ more than 10 times
7. When you telephoned, how long did you wait to be served by phone?

15_ 0-2 minutes	17_ 6-10 minutes
6_ 3-5 minutes	41_ 11-15 minutes
21_ more than 15 minutes	

8. How many times in the past six months have you been in this Court?

38_ 0-2 times

23_ 6-10 times

14_ 3-5 times

25_ more than 10 times

9. When you came into the Court for service, how long did you wait to be served by Court staff?

11_ 0-2 minutes

26_ 6-10 minutes

9 3-5 minutes

13_ 11-15 minutes

41_ more than 15 minutes

Please prioritize the following examples as 1-most important to 3-least important areas that you would like to see the Court staff trained in as it relates to Customer Service.

	AS1	AS2	AS3	N/A
10. ___ Telephone Skills	31	26	27	16
___ Dispute Resolution Skills	3	39	41	17
___ Court Information	38	26	15	21

Please rate each of the following statements as More often true, Occasionally, or More often false. Please circle your response.

11. Court staff generally are helpful and courteous to the public. N/A 11
 22 39 28
 More often true Occasionally More often false

12. There are adequate signs to indicate where the courtrooms and specific offices are in the building. N/A 24
 41 22 13
 More often true Occasionally More often false

13. Requests for information are answered promptly. N/A 9
 18 27 46
 More often true Occasionally More often false

14. Court staff take for granted what the public knows about the court process. N/A 11
 47 8 34
 More often true Occasionally More often false

15. It is difficult to contact the Court by phone. N/A 12
 53 28 7
 More often true Occasionally More often false

16. An information pamphlet should be available to the public to explain the court process. N/A 8
63 11 18
More often true Occasionally More often false
17. Court staff can make a difference in helping the public even if they can't give you the information you want. N/A 6
58 23 13
More often true Occasionally More often false
18. Customer Service issues can only be resolved through more staff and additional equipment, for example, a computer system. N/A 28
31 26 15
More often true Occasionally More often false
19. Attorneys I know always complain about the Court and it's staff. N/A 19
22 18 41
More often true Occasionally More often false
20. Any other comments or suggestions in how to improve services between you and the Court?

____ COMMENTS 37 NO COMMENTS 63

APPENDIX C

1. Do you know if the Court has a mission statement?

2. If yes, have you read it?

3. Do you think Customer Service should be a part of the Court's mission statement?

4. Who do you think the Court staff should view as the Court's customers?

5. Which group would you rate as the most important customer? DEF 21 ATTORNEYS 20 COMPLAINANTS 12 AGENCIES 0 POLICE 3 PUBLIC 5 WITNESSES 2 ALL 17 N/A 6

6. How many times in the past six months have you telephoned the Court? N/A 2

7. When you telephoned, how long did you wait to be served?

68

8. How many times in the past six months have you had business at this Court? N/A 1
- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 23_ 0-2 times | 15_ 6-10 times |
| 24_ 3-5 times | 23_ more than 10 times |

9. When you came into the Court for service, how long did you wait to be served by Court staff? N/A 16
- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| _8_ 0-2 minutes | 16_ 6-10 minutes |
| 17_ 3-5 minutes | _5_ 11-15 minutes |
| 24_ more than 15 minutes | |

Please prioritize the following examples as 1-most important to 3-least important areas that you would like to see the Court staff trained in as it related to Customer Service.

- | | AS1 | AS2 | AS3 | N/A |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10. ___ Telephone Skills | 43 | 30 | 6 | 7 |
| ___ Dispute Resolution Skills | 6 | 16 | 52 | 12 |
| ___ Court Information | 34 | 29 | 16 | 7 |

Please rate each of the following statements as More often true, Occasionally or More often false. Please circle your response.

11. Court staff generally are helpful and courteous. N/A 3
- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|
| 36 | 23 | 24 |
| More often true | Occasionally | More often false |
12. There are adequate signs to indicate where the courtrooms and specific offices are in the building.
- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|-------|
| 42 | 17 | 22 | N/A 5 |
| More often true | Occasionally | More often false | |
13. Court staff do not make enough of an effort to help me.
- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|-------|
| 26 | 32 | 24 | N/A 4 |
| More often true | Occasionally | More often false | |
14. Requests for information about court dates, postponements and dispositions are answered promptly.
- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|-------|
| 25 | 22 | 34 | N/A 5 |
| More often true | Occasionally | More often false | |
15. Court staff are unreasonable in what they expect the public or defendants to know about the court process.
- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|--------|
| 23 | 33 | 18 | N/A 12 |
| More often true | Occasionally | More often false | |

16. Notification is generally received by attorneys for
scheduled court dates. N/A 3
51 21 11
More often true Occasionally More often false
17. An information pamphlet should be available to the
public to explain the court process. N/A 12
55 15 4
More often true Occasionally More often false
18. It is difficult to contact the Court by telephone. N/A 4
36 34 12
More often true Occasionally More often false
19. Customer service issues can only be resolved through
more staff and additional equipment. N/A 12
13 25 36
More often true Occasionally More often false
20. Any other comments or suggestions in how to improve
services between you and the Court?

___COMMENTS 44

NO COMMENTS 42
