



**THE POWER OF CHANGE...**  
**A SERVICE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE**

This paper is presented to the 14<sup>th</sup> National Energy Services Conference and Exposition from the management team of the Long Island Power Authority on October 22, 2003 by:

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<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 A New Utility a New Era</b>	
<b>THE MARKETING CHALLENGE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.1 What Do Customers Expect Now</b>	
<b>EMPOWERING CHANGE</b>	<b>3 -7</b>
<b>3.1 Turning Feedback into Action</b>	
<b>3.2 Setting the Ground Rules...the LIPA Vision</b>	
<b>3.3 New Perspectives Create Opportunities</b>	
<b>COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<b>8-13</b>
<b>4.1 Building Relationships</b>	
<b>4.2 The Trade Ally Partnership</b>	
<b>4.3 Delivering Improved Services</b>	
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>14 -15</b>
<b>5.1 Staying on the Cutting Edge</b>	

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

<b>FIGURES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Figure 4.1a	9
Figure 4.2a, b	10
Figure 4.3a, b, c, d	11
Figure 4.4a	13
Figure 5.1a	15

<b>TABLES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Table 3.3a	4
Table 3.3b	5
Table 3.3c, d	6
Table 3.3e, f	7
Table 4.4a	12
Table 4.4b	13

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 A New Utility a New Era...

In today's competitive marketplace, service is what it's all about. And the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) has been continually enhancing – and expanding upon – its service orientation as it strives to best meet the growing needs of more than 1 million customers across its service territory.

Customer service has, in fact, been LIPA's number one priority since it became Long Island's electric company in May of 1998. This was when LIPA acquired Long Island's electric Transmission & Distribution (T&D) system. And as a new utility in a new era, LIPA took on responsibility for meeting the electric needs of residential and commercial customers across the Island – in a region where second-best has never been acceptable and the Authority's success is clearly defined by the well-being of its customers.

LIPA's customer service focus began back in 1998 with a campaign known as "A Change for the Better!" Working hand-in-hand with its energy partners, LIPA had one goal and one goal only -- to provide unparalleled service to customers on Long Island. This was a goal championed by the then new utility's Chairman, Richard M. Kessel. Three short years later, LIPA and its Chairman decided it was time for yet another change. In 2001, the Authority formalized its service orientation by introducing the "Service Improvement Initiative." Heading into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, this is LIPA's newest and most innovative approach to service excellence under its current campaign -- "The Power of Change."

With its customer service theme intact, LIPA's service improvement policies today are more effective and efficient than ever before. In an era where customer service is certainly the primary focus, LIPA spearheads "*The Power of Change*" with a dedicated Service Improvement Committee. Working in concert with its energy partners, the committee formally tackles critical customer service issues and develops new policies and procedures that benefit both the utility and its customers.

## THE MARKETING CHALLENGE

### 2.1 What Do Customers Expect Now

The challenge of the Service Improvement Committee (SIC) is to understand what customers expect now and what they will expect in the future. Service Improvement is all about communicating with each other – continuously and effectively. The goal is simple, and the approach is comprehensive –

*“Get valuable customer feedback on service and how it meets the current customer needs and then respond to that feedback with improved processes, products and services”*

Members of the Electric Sales & Marketing, Operations and Customer Relations departments have been called together forming subcommittees on important customer service issues. Using market research to gauge customer satisfaction with specific “touch points”<sup>A</sup>, the Service Improvement Committee continues today, to work toward integrating a complete set of customer solutions within LIPA to increase satisfaction levels and improve processes.

With competitive-edge customer information, LIPA’s “Service Improvement Initiative” began at the source, with focus group meetings involving business owners, homeowners, builders and electrical contractors. To date, this effort has been quite a success – with the feedback from our customers and great ideas from the subcommittees, LIPA’s Service Improvement Initiative has been challenged with over 37 recommendations for enhancing work processes as well as several marketing campaigns to support communications effectiveness and sophistication of services.

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<sup>A</sup> Touch Points are key customer contact areas within LIPA that affect customer satisfaction. E.g.; Electric Design & Construction (ED&C), Electric Service, Sales & Marketing, Customer Assistance Center, Customer Service Offices and Meter Reading.

## EMPOWERING CHANGE

### 3.1 Turning Feedback into Action

Empowering change is turning feedback into action for LIPA. With a strong focus on transitioning the organization from the previous mindset of an investor-owned utility to a not-for-profit public utility service provider, LIPA has empowered a special task force to transform the employees' perspective within the critical "touch point" areas. Participating employees in these areas included: field supervisors, planners, schedule analysts, work coordinators, clerks, meter testers and system operators.

Kicking off this effort back in the summer of 2002, the LIPA task force launched a "*Service Excellence Program*". With a focus on driving a new direction of employee perspectives and behavior to satisfy LIPA customers at a world class level, the task force launched a series of eight 'service excellence' training sessions.

With extensive impact on the business, employees of the program formally addressed LIPA's customer experience. The teams set forth to define how LIPA would like to be perceived as a Public Service Provider, the perceptions of customers and trades regarding this issue and how customers and the trades interact with the utility in the service chain. This information was critical to the success of the Service Excellence Program. And setting the ground rules earlier on in the training, defining who LIPA is and what LIPA needs to be, was important to establishing employees' understanding of the LIPA vision and brand.

### 3.2 Setting the Ground Rules...the LIPA Vision

A LIPA research study on the characteristics of a utility desired by their customers was reviewed under four major categories: Community, People and Business, Motivational Support and Tonality. It was found, that "caring" is a very important trait and driver for earning residential and commercial customer loyalty. "The customer is more likely to make a commitment to LIPA, if in fact, LIPA makes a total commitment to the future of Long Island and to meeting Long Islanders' future energy needs."<sup>B</sup> It was noted that the customer is more likely to prefer the LIPA brand as long as LIPA's product-to-price proposition is competitive.

Spearheading a new marketing platform, the LIPA team set out initiatives to brand LIPA as "Caring about and Doing more for Long Island and Long Islanders"<sup>C</sup> by promoting electro technology, environmental protection, safety to it's customers, information and education, concern and flexibility, and accountability.

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<sup>B</sup> LIPA Market Research Brand Position Study Results 1999

<sup>C</sup> LIPA Strategic Marketing Plan 2001

## EMPOWERING CHANGE

### 3.2 Setting the Ground Rules...the LIPA Vision (continued)

Being accountable means LIPA must be seen as: *'knowledgeable, cognizant of changes in the energy markets, willing to investigate and execute alternative energy solutions, committed to Long Island and always available to work with customers.'* For LIPA employees, this means working with customers such that they should turn to them if they have questions regarding energy-related issues or problems with productivity, seeking how to enhance their business process and how to reduce their energy expenses. In other terms; becoming Solution Providers.

### 3.3 New Perspectives Create Opportunities

Employees of the Service Excellence Program represented LIPA's four major operating areas<sup>D</sup>. Starting back in the summer of 2002, these employees for the first time were able to step out of their own "box" and see a new light on the implications of their role within the organization. Table 3.3a illustrates the employee perspectives prior to training and the dangers of being inside the box for too long.

<b>Table 3.3a Initial Employee Service Perspectives</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>LIPA is my customer</b> (note: operating areas are not LIPA employees they are contracted by LIPA under "Service Agreement Contracts" <sup>E</sup> )
<b>2</b>	<b>I'm not sure what the LIPA brand image is</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>I interact with customers on the phone &amp; face to face</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>It is necessary to coordinate with Electricians/Contractors</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>The term "customer" refers to LIPA and residential &amp; commercial customers</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>I know my job responsibilities</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>I do what it takes to service my customers</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>My job is to be a technical expert</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>This is a one-time meeting</b>

<sup>D</sup> Four Major Operating Areas – Electric Design & Construction (ED&C), Electric Service, Meter & Test (M&T) and Transmission, Distribution & Project Management (T&DPM)

<sup>E</sup> LIPA Service Agreements are managed by Keyspan Energy Corporation till the year 2008

## EMPOWERING CHANGE

### 3.3 New Perspectives Create Opportunities (continued)

With a new perspective by the end of the program, employees' behavior changed dramatically as illustrated in Table 3.3b below, affecting the way we do business today in a positive way.

<b>Table 3.3b Revised Employee Service Perspectives</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>I am LIPA</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>“LIPA Cares” about our customers and the trades</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Every paper/email/phone/person (external/internal) is the customer</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Trade Allies are our Partners (Especially Electricians)</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Trade Allies are also Customers</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>I see the entire service chain and the job responsibilities of others</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>I do whatever it takes to service my customers, co-workers and trade allies</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>My job is to share my technical expertise</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>This meeting is a first step in a process of sharing information and enhancing service excellence</b>

Working with these perspectives, program participants were empowered to identify opportunities and suggest improvements. Class feedback on service improvement included areas within: Communications, Computer Systems, Project Development and Training. Tables 3.3c, 3.3d and 3.3e, identify opportunities for improvement and solutions in these areas from key personnel of LIPA's critical touch point areas.

As far as external customers are concerned, the participants of the Service Excellence Program have identified the need to communicate more regularly and effectively with trade ally groups such as: electricians, HVAC installers, architects, engineers and builders. And for LIPA that means building new relations and improving its communication effectiveness.

## EMPOWERING CHANGE

### 3.3 New Perspectives Create Opportunities (continued)

**Table 3.3c Communications Opportunities**

Opportunity	Solutions
Distribution Engineering needs to notify the Planners/publish changes to the standards	DM&S Bulletins <sup>F</sup> are issued periodically and are on Distribution Performance Engineering (DPE) Web site, also a Customer Service area will be added to the Electric Design & Construction (ED&C) department Web page to house all revised Construction Standards.
Who is responsible for coordinating the 3-way appointment? If it is just a note on a work order, it can be missed. There needs to be advanced notice	Work Coordinators & Planners to review and revise Status codes in Maximo <sup>G</sup>
Meter & Test (M&T) needs to be able to communicate with Planners	All Planner cars without two-way radios will have them added
Improve communication between Meter & Test and Customer Relations	M&T/Interdepartment Team working on Fax notification system

**Table 3.3d Computer System Opportunities**

Opportunity	Solutions
Anyone in ED&C can put in a job for Electric Service using SPMS & CICS <sup>H</sup> , but they may need an updated sign on or training	Training/Sign-on
AutoCAD needs to be updated (additional symbols need to be added)	AutoCad meeting with Planners & Design Engineers to address - ED&C Staff
Update the Estimating System	Compatible Unit Estimating (CUE) <sup>I</sup> review & revision by Project Mgmt and ED&C - ED&C Staff

<sup>F</sup> DM&S Bulletins – Distribution, Materials and Standards Bulletins

<sup>G</sup> Maximo is a LIPA project management system for new and change of electric services request

<sup>H</sup> SPMS & CICS – Customer Information Computer Systems

<sup>I</sup> CUE – Estimating Database for Labor and Material

## EMPOWERING CHANGE

### 3.3 New Perspectives Create Opportunities (continued)

**Table 3.3d Project Management (Maximo) Opportunities**

Opportunity	Solutions
Planners can put comments in Maximo for CR reps, they should become more familiar with it	ED&C to provide training sessions
Who gets Meter & Test information? out of Maximo after the clerk completes the order	Meter Work Report captures info and it is sent to Customer Relations
Process to electronically transfer customer info from CICS to Maximo needs to be clarified	Project Mgmt to send out process memo
ED&C should show critical facilities the way Electric Service does-it appears in SPMS	Location Priority Code in Maximo
We should be able to change street names in Maximo & Update table	Project Mgmt does this
If information is being input in Maximo and a customer calls, you can't save the info and go to another screen-the info will be lost	Project Mgmt to investigate

**Table 3.3e Training and Development**

Opportunity	Solutions
New Planners and Design Engineers should ride out in the field with Field Supervisors as part of their training	Reinforce
There should be training for Planners who are new to positions	Training sessions are needed for new Planners
Offer short optional training sessions on job specific topics to constantly improve and expand skills (especially for Planners who may not have experience in all areas of the job-ex. Commercial Industrial Training)	Have technical review sessions at monthly yard meetings, evaluate refresher Training Courses for Planners
Need continued training for first line supervisors (their responsibilities and how they fit into the process)	Evaluate Training needed

## COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS

### 4.1 Building Relationships

Improving communications effectiveness in today's emerging market of telecommunications is driven by, meeting and exceeding customer expectations. And what LIPA has done is to meet these expectations head-on by keeping up with the depth and breadth of available emerging energy information services and the systems.

In order to deliver communications effectively, LIPA must also successfully develop its trade ally partnerships with the key groups as described earlier. The vision: *“To build strategic partnerships with key Long Island trade organizations with a focus on improving business processes which are of mutual benefit, utilizing them as advocates of LIPA and its products and services by developing trusted relationships that serve as a partner to LIPA and their sales force.”*

With a formal effort underway (see figure 4.1a), LIPA launched new marketing and communication initiatives that customers have definitely noticed!

*“It's been a partnership long past due,” says Lee Eysman, speaking about LIPA's recent communications campaign and development program targeted to architects, engineers and electricians.*

Eysman, President of the Suffolk County Electrical Contractors Association, says the increased communication and great working relationship with LIPA are benefiting everyone involved. When LIPA came out visit us to see what they could do to improve services, immediately a partnership grew. And through partnerships like these, LIPA now works closely with most professional associations, town licensing boards and building departments to continue to enhance the Trade Ally Relationship and enhance the quality of service.

### 4.2 Trade Ally Partnership

The LIPA Trade Ally Partnership is an on-going effort to deliver communications effectively. By meeting with key members of the Trade Ally Professional Associations<sup>K</sup>, quarterly roundtables were formed to obtain feedback on the needs for communications, training and development. With ongoing feedback mechanisms in place, LIPA launched a series of initiatives to build awareness under the Trade Ally Partnership.

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<sup>K</sup> Long Island Chapter Associations include: SCECA, Nassau Electric League(NEL), National Electrical Contractors Ass.(NECA), 5-Boro Electric League, American Institute of Arch(AIA), Society of Professional Engineers(SPE), Design Professionals Coalition of LI., US Green Building Council, ASHREA, and ACCA

## COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS

**Figure 4.1a Trade Ally Logo**  
*Formalizing the LIPA Partnership*



### **4.2 Trade Ally Partnership (continued)**

Building awareness with LIPA trade allies meant two things: (1) establishing an understanding of how we need to communicate to this market and (2) developing a breadth and depth of communication mechanisms that will have the most effective reach.

For our installing contractors groups, it was found that most have access to fax machines (90%) and the Internet (70%) but mail is by far the most preferred way of receiving information.<sup>L</sup> Note, for installing contractors with greater than 10 employees, access to and receptivity to receiving e-mail is greater. However, for design professionals, Internet and e-mail are a primary source for obtaining information. And for both installing contractors and design professionals, word of mouth was most effective if utility representation can “talk the talk” and build trusting relationships.

Back in 2002, LIPA launched its first trade ally newsletter communications (see figure 4.2a) to its electrical contractor group via mail. Since then, several new issues have been released targeting HVAC, Builders, Developers and Architects and Engineers. In addition to being available on the Web site an Internet version will be scheduled for 2004 via email campaign to those trade allies that prefer to be communicated to in this way.

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<sup>L</sup> 2003 Feedback Study-Red Book Training Attendees

# COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS

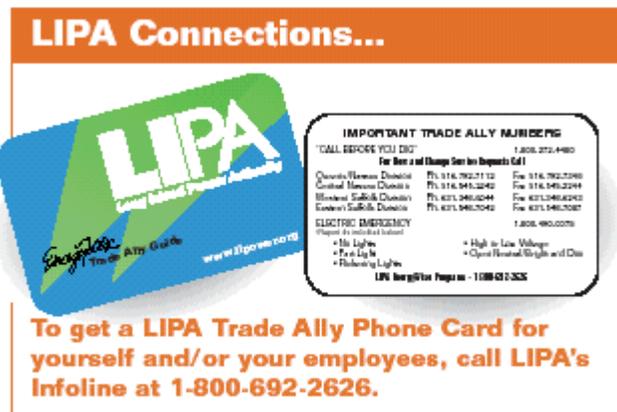
Figure 4.2a Trade Ally Newsletter



## 4.2 Trade Ally Partnership (continued)

Communication effectiveness is a two-way philosophy when improving service for LIPA. Making sure our trade allies can reach the right people at LIPA is just as important LIPA as reaching them. That’s why the Service Improvement Committee working close with marketing, made sure they had just the right tool to do so and developed LIPA’s “Trade Ally Phone Guide” (see figure 4.2b). Available in credit card size, this tool has helped our trades looking to partner with LIPA, to find the right connection by listing important service related phone numbers.

Figure 4.2b Trade Ally Phone Card



# COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS

## 4.3 Delivering Improved Services

Making it simpler to understand technical specifications as outlined in the utility's "Red Book" for Electric Design & Installation, the entire Red Book was posted on LIPA's Web site – [www.lipower/redbook.org](http://www.lipower/redbook.org) -- for easy, ready reference, 24/7 (see figure 4.3a). And whenever possible, LIPA has also included electronic services to support field development and training such as: meter and switchgear lists (figure 4.3b), construction information (figure 4.3c), and important training/seminars (figure 4.3d) which are all available on LIPA's Web site to enhance service delivery.

Figure 4.3a LIPA Red Book

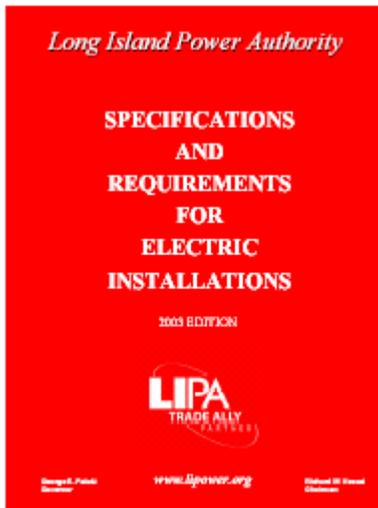


Figure 4.3b Meter Enclosure list

Electric Meter Enclosures and Accessories  
Approved for use in the LIPA service area.  
All units must bear the U.L. label.  
REVISED APRIL 2003

ENCLOSURE TYPE	MANUFACTURER	CATALOG No.	PHASES	AMPS
Horizontal	Milbank	U4144-KT-U		1 200
Horizontal	Milbank	U4143-KT-U		1 200
Horizontal	Milbank	U4142-KT-U		1 200
Lap Kit	Delta Metal	LKS-A		0
Lap Kit	Delta Metal	LKS-B		0
Lap Kit	Delta Metal	LKS-C		0
Lap Kit	Delta Metal	LKS-D		0
Lap Kit	Delta Metal	LKS-E		0
Lap Kit	Delta Metal	LKS-F		0
Lap Kit	Milbank	K4885		0
Lap Kit	Milbank	K4882		0
Lap Kit	Milbank	K4884		0
Lap Kit	Milbank	K4887		0
Lap Kit	Milbank	K4885		0
Lap Kit	Milbank	K4883		0
Meter/Breaker	Milbank	U2086-XL-200-L		1 200
Meter/Breaker	Milbank	U2086-XL-150-L		1 200
Meter/Breaker	Milbank	U2086-XL-100-L		1 200
Multi-Stack	Callen-Hammer	37MM420R12		3 200
Multi-Stack	Callen-Hammer	35MM120R12		1 200
Multi-Stack	Callen-Hammer	35MM200R12		1 200
Multi-Stack	Callen-Hammer	35MM300R12		1 200
Multi-Stack	Callen-Hammer	35MM420R12		1 200
Multi-Stack	Callen-Hammer	37MM120R12		3 200

Figure 4.3c Construction Map

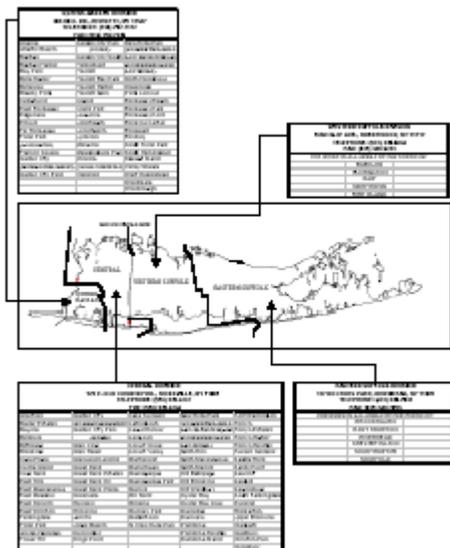


Figure 4.3d Training Tools

**Trade News Flash**

**October 23, 30**  
**November 6, 13, 20**  
O & AIA Learning Units Total  
Fundamentals & Applications of  
Lighting (LEGA)  
Eight sessions of programmed  
instruction hosted at the LIPA facility  
at 175 E. Old Country Road,  
Hicksville, NY, Room 106  
6:30pm – 8:30pm, LIPA will rebate  
\$100 to the first 25 attendees.  
Complete workshop \$200. Non-EEG  
members: \$50 per session.  
Contact: F. J. Perruccio  
714-424-6327

**October 30 and November 6**  
Long Island Business News Small  
Business Survival Series  
9:00am – 10:00am  
Quarterly Breakfast Programs  
Sponsored by LIPA  
Huntington Station, Melville, NY  
Call: 631-342-1000

**November 7**  
O & CEED  
PV Awareness Seminar for Electrical  
and Building Inspectors  
9:00am – 4:00pm  
Farmingdale State University  
<http://www.farmstate.edu/depts/real/soar/taught/m/or/contact>  
Professor Halie Chaberski, Farmingdale  
University at 631-430-3450

**November 11 & 10 2003**  
ACCA Mutual Fund Calculations  
and System Charging Methods  
J.W. Day Training Center Hauppauge  
For details and registration call  
1-800-850-3526

**January 12 – 15, 2004**  
**March 28 – April 1, 2004**  
O & CEED  
Real Estate Photovoltaic Systems  
Installation & Maintenance  
8:30am – 5:00pm  
Farmingdale State University  
For SEM info about

**February 28-29, 2004**  
O & CEED  
Successful Solar Business  
Conference, Farmingdale  
State University  
For details and registration,  
[www.lipower.com/education/SEM.cfm](http://www.lipower.com/education/SEM.cfm)

**Building Operators Certification**  
54 Hours CEEDs applied  
In partnership with the Northeast  
Energy Efficiency Partnership  
(NEEPP), LIPA is offering a 5-day  
program, engineers and other trade  
professionals the opportunity to  
learn how to manage their facilities  
more energy efficiently and cost  
effectively as possible. This eight-  
course Building Operator  
Certificate (BOC) will focus on  
HVAC systems, Lighting, Energy  
Conservation and Indoor Air Quality.  
Contact LIPA's Energy Wire Infoline  
at 1-800-482-3436, or log on to  
[www.lipower.org](http://www.lipower.org) for information and  
class schedules and availability.

## COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS

### 4.4 Delivering Improved Services (continued)

Improved services means adding value; and LIPA trade ally partnerships have paid-off in a very big way. Through this partnership, LIPA has teamed up with Nassau County's Tri Town Electrical Education Board, and obtained unanimous approval for four hours of continued education credits that could be applied to LIPA's existing Red Book workshops toward the renewal of electrical licenses. Attended by more than 500 electricians each year, "Red Book" Workshops have now been extended to contractor employees, as well as architects and engineers.

*"It's been a win-win for the customer, the Town Licensing Board and electrical contractors," says Sam Iandiorio, Chairman of the North Hempstead Licensing Board."*

When LIPA met with the Board, the town indicated that it was the town's duty to incorporate this as part of our program in the interest of public safety, reliability and professional development for newly licensed electrical contractors. As indicated in figure 4.3d, the LIPA partnership has grown. Since then, LIPA has been working closely with the American Institute of Architects to include many of its seminars on 'Energy Efficiency and Technology' (see figure 4.3d) as part of the New York State Continued Education Program (CEUs). And in the future, the "Redbook Workshops" will also be credited by NYS as well as recognized by the county licensing boards.

Keeping a close watch on newly developed services, LIPA continuously monitors its progress on improving service. Since the committee was formed, LIPA began surveying its trade allies on the way they are delivering services. And we are keeping a close eye on how well we're accomplishing this (see Table 4.4a).

Since last year, we've been keeping track of our "Trade Ally Partnership Initiatives". And we are proud to share the results of our service and training initiatives in more details on Table 4.4b and in Figure 4.4a. Overall we are improving on the way we do business today and continue to monitor our progress as we strive to succeed higher levels of achievement each year.

**Table 4.4a Overall Results on Improved Services**

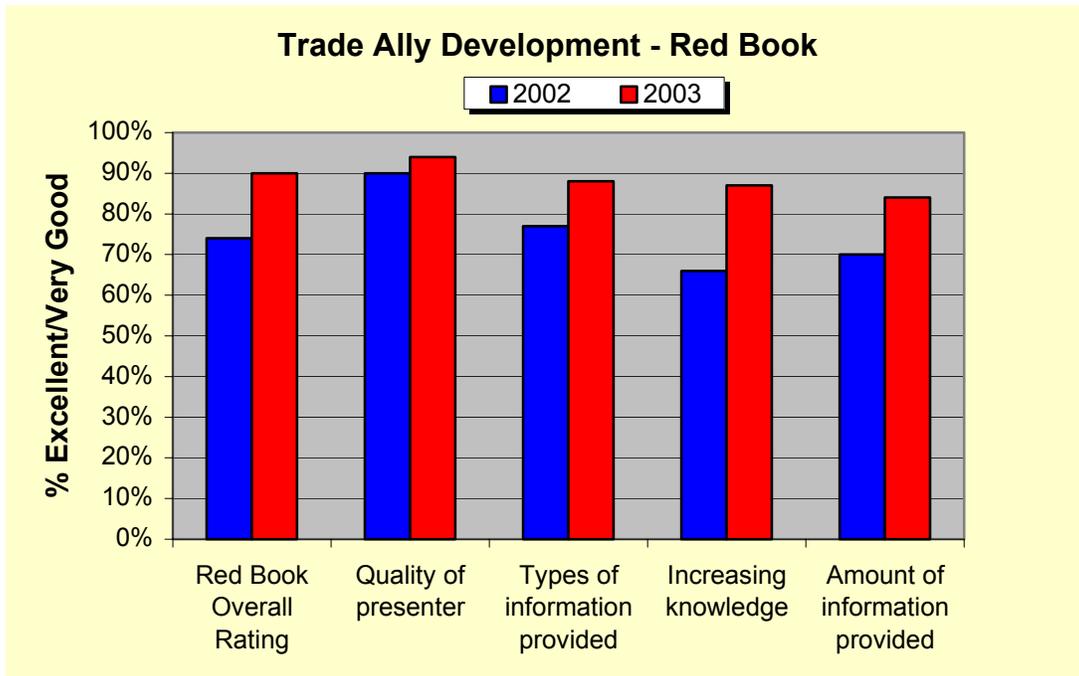
<b>Trade Ally Partnership</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Red Book Overall Rating</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Overall Interaction w/LIPA</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>60%</b>

## COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS

**Table 4.4b Detail Result on Improved Services**

Trade Ally Partnership	2002	2003	% Change
Overall Interaction	48%	60%	25%
<b>Service/Relationship</b>			
Keeping Appointments	56%	60%	7%
Meter Unlock Program	39%	56%	44%
Response Consistency	47%	52%	11%
Interactions with M&T	37%	48%	30%
Accessibility of Planners	43%	47%	9%

**Figure 4.4a Detail Results on Training and Development**



## CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Staying on the Cutting Edge

Service Improvement is not a “one-shot” deal when looking to provide it at a world class level. For LIPA, it’s a continuous process of monitoring and improving the way the Authority serves its customers. Identifying new opportunities to improve current business practices and putting internal enhancements in place are both a financial and people commitment. And today these commitments have resulted in several enhancements that include:

*Updating LIPA’s computerized AutoCAD system; training customer service clerks on engineering computer systems; improving electronic transfer of customer information between systems; offering reinforcement field training; sophisticated computer networking (computers on each truck), designated database to tracking multiple violations and the list goes on!*

Finding new and innovative ways to provide the fastest, most responsive customer service using cutting-edge applications has made a significant difference in the way we do business. But what have made the most difference are the people and the way we think today. LIPA is truly taking a “customer-centric” approach. “We’re asking customers what we do well and what we need to do better,” says Bruce Germano, LIPA’s Vice President, Retail Services. Most importantly...

*“We’re using these customer perceptions, feedback from our work force and our own experience to accentuate the positives ... and make improvements, wherever possible, to be more responsive to customers and their needs.”*

Perhaps the bottom line to all of this is that LIPA has formalized its customer service efforts at the top by launching a “Customer Loyalty Committee” chaired by LIPA’s executive management to address: Service Improvement, Customer Satisfaction, Trade Ally and Interdepartmental Issues (see figure 5.1a). The committee sets the overall customer loyalty strategy and oversee its implementation. Their mission, to motivate organizational behavior to positively influence consumer expectation in a cost-effective manner.

Steering the LIPA Service Improvement Committee to stay on the cutting-edge, the Chairpersons of the Loyalty Committee make sure all the initiatives stay on target through the efforts of ongoing market research to determine the effectiveness of the program, identify any gaps, and ensure improve processes are meeting customer expectations.

# CONCLUSION

**Figure 5.1a LIPA Customer Committees**

