

PERCEPTIONS OF THE FOREST SERVICE'S RADIO PROGRAM

A McIntire-Stennis supported project



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

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& Natural Resources

Due to the remote nature of their work, many Forest Service (FS) employees rely on handheld radios to communicate in the field. Hence, employee perceptions of the functionality of radios are imperative to safely executing many jobs within the FS. Therefore, this project used Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) to gauge 6,530 FS employees' perceptions of twelve salient handheld radio attributes. IPA takes each radio attribute and graphs it into one of four managerially relevant categories (1) Concentrate Here, 2) Keep Up the Good Work, 3) Low Priority, and 4) Possible Overkill). Results revealed that among fire ($n = 1615$) and non-fire respondents ($n = 4915$) there was consensus that reception and signal needed improvement. Differences in quadrant placement emerged for reliability, clarity of calls, and battery life between fire and non-fire respondents. The project provides the Land Mobile Radio program with clear recommendations for how to improve the radio program.



About McIntire-Stennis

The McIntire-Stennis program, a unique federal-state partnership, cultivates and delivers forestry and natural resource innovations for a better future. By advancing research and education that increases the understanding of emerging challenges and fosters the development of relevant solutions, the McIntire-Stennis program has ensured healthy resilient forests and communities and an exceptional natural resources workforce since 1962.



COLLABORATION



Doug King and managers within the USDA Forest Services Land Mobile Radio (LMR) program collaborated with professors at the University of Georgia to design the study to best suit the LMR program's needs.

3 conference presentations,
1 technical report and 1
academic article produced
from collaboration

IMPACT

Importance Performance Analysis helped to identify areas where the Land Mobile Radio (LMR) program is doing well and areas where it can improve.



79% of FS employees use handheld radios and see them as important for communicating during emergencies (87%) and ensuring safety (86%).



Differences found between fire and non-fire employees in their satisfaction with reliability, clarity of calls, and battery life.



Reception and signal identified as the two main areas to improve