



Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration

THE STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT THEMES IN THE TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE BLUEPRINT PHASE I REPORT APPEAR TO BE SOUND; HOWEVER, THERE WERE SOME INACCURATE DATA IN THE REPORT

Issued on May 18, 2007

Highlights

Highlights of Report Number: 2007-40-078 to the
Internal Revenue Service Commissioner

IMPACT ON TAXPAYERS

In July 2005, Congress issued a report requesting that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) develop a 5-year plan including an outline of which services the IRS should provide and how it will improve services for taxpayers. In response, the IRS developed the Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint (TAB). The TAB represents an integrated strategy for providing taxpayer service over multiple channels and should provide the foundation for the next stage in the evolution of taxpayer services. The conclusions and strategic improvement themes outlined in the TAB Phase I report were valid; however, not all information included in the Phase I report was accurate and/or consistent. As the IRS moves forward with its 5-year service delivery plan, inaccuracies and/or inconsistencies will put the plan at risk of improperly aligning service content, delivery, and resources with taxpayer and partner expectations.

WHY TIGTA DID THE AUDIT

This audit was initiated to assess the accuracy and reliability of the data used to develop the Phase I report. The focus of the TAB initiative is on services that support the needs of individual filers who file or should file Form 1040 series tax returns [for example, U.S. Individual Income Tax Return (Form 1040) and Income Tax Return for Single and Joint Filers With No Dependents (Form 1040EZ)]. The IRS indicates the initiative will address the challenges of effectively and efficiently aligning service content, delivery, and resources with taxpayer and partner expectations.

To satisfy the report submission date of April 14, 2006, the IRS designed the TAB as a two-phased process. The TAB Phase I report identified strategic improvement themes by researching IRS service relative to taxpayers' needs and preferences. The TAB Phase II report will validate the strategic improvement themes through

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further research of taxpayers' service preferences and develop the 5-year plan for service delivery.

WHAT TIGTA FOUND

The majority of the information in the Phase I report was accurate. However, some inaccuracies were found in the report related to changes in Taxpayer Assistance Center visits and the number of telephone calls answered. In addition, the IRS did not ensure consistency between income and generational analyses and conclusions. The types of problems found with the compilation of some of the data could adversely affect IRS management decisions; however, they did not affect the IRS' strategic improvement themes. The five strategic improvement themes in the Phase I report are common to organizations that aspire to deliver successful customer service.

The inaccuracies and inconsistencies resulted primarily from the IRS not having an effective process to ensure all statements in the TAB Phase I report correctly reflected the results of its research and data analyses.

WHAT TIGTA RECOMMENDED

TIGTA did not make any recommendations but will include testing of the quality review process in our review of the TAB Phase II report.

In their response to the report, IRS management indicated that prior to the completion of this report, a thorough quality review process was developed and implemented for the TAB Phase II. Experienced analysts validated information in the TAB Phase II report, including all citations, reference documents, and data presented in the report. This process was thoroughly documented, and the IRS believes the result is an accurate and well-documented TAB Phase II report.

READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full IRS response go to:

<http://www.treas.gov/tigta/auditreports/2007reports/200740078fr.pdf>.

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