

**VA National
CIO Conference
October 28-31, 2002**

***Framing IT Success –
Get in the Picture***

**Report on the
Conference Feedback Questionnaire**

**The Center for the Study of Work Teams
The University of North Texas**

**This report was prepared for the Information Systems Research Center
at the University of North Texas, Leon A. Kappelman, Director.**

Executive Summary

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) held a CIO Conference in October, 2001 to involve field personnel in the roll-out of VA's Information Technology (IT) Initiative. This initiative includes five programs: Enterprise Architecture, Telecommunications, Cyber Security, Program Management, and Performance Measurement. Key goals of the conference were achieved through the leadership of Dr. Gauss and the subject matter experts for each of the programs, assisted by a team of twelve facilitators. Introducing the concepts of each program to the field was important and obtaining the buy-in of participants was critical. By establishing an environment of open communications and constructive dialogue, the conference process enabled the effective presentation of complex information about the IT Initiative while getting the CIO's 'on-board' with the key concepts.

The results of the Conference Feedback Questionnaire give high marks to the value of the conference and its open communications. Participants left the conference informed, energized, and interested in more information about the IT Initiative. They saw the benefits of the IT Initiative for VA as a whole although they were less sure about its value for their local sites and staffs. These respondents said they want more information and specific details of the plan VA will use to implement the IT Initiative.

Participants responded positively to Dr. Gauss's accessibility and the opportunity to communicate openly and constructively with colleagues and the leadership team. For the first time, attendees were able to participate with other individuals from various business units, organizations, and geographic regions.

The following non-VA individuals facilitated the conference, helped plan the facilitation, and/or contributed to this report.

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VA CIO Conference Feedback Questionnaire Results

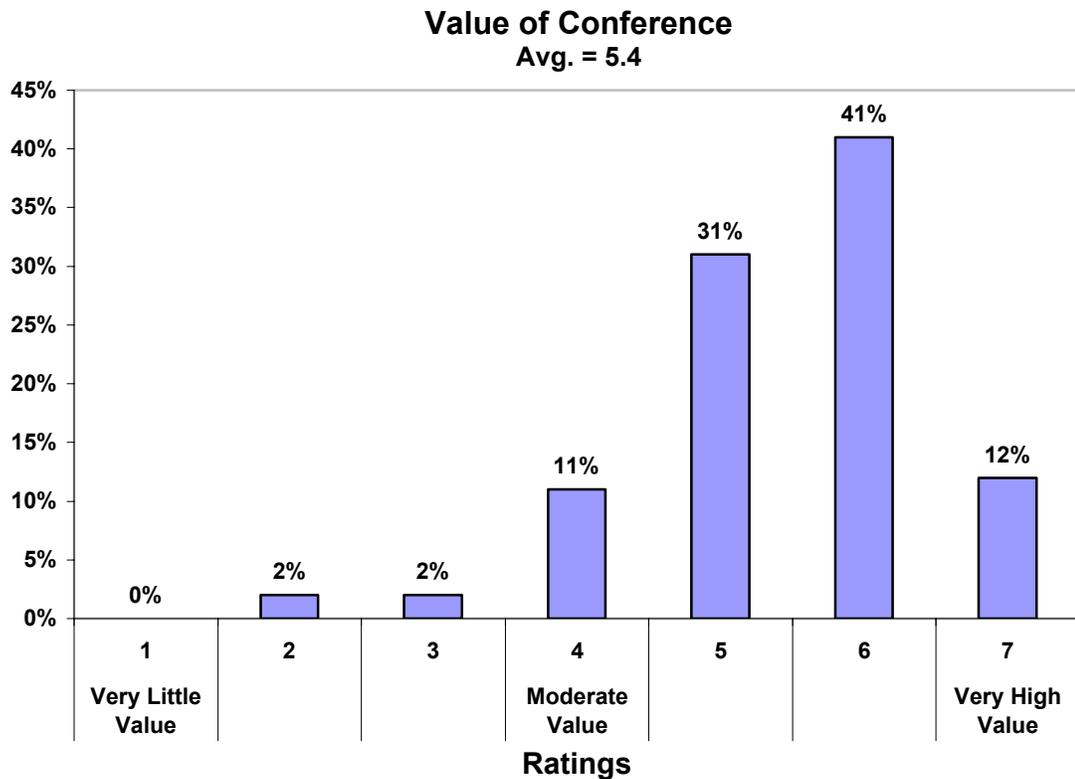
Introduction

The facilitation team developed a conference feedback questionnaire that was distributed to all conference participants.¹ The questionnaire included both quantitative and qualitative questions to help provide an understanding of the participants' appraisal of the conference. The participant response rate as well as the time people spent providing detailed answers is impressive and most helpful. Common themes emerged from the questionnaire data that will provide guidance for subsequent conferences.

Quantitative Results

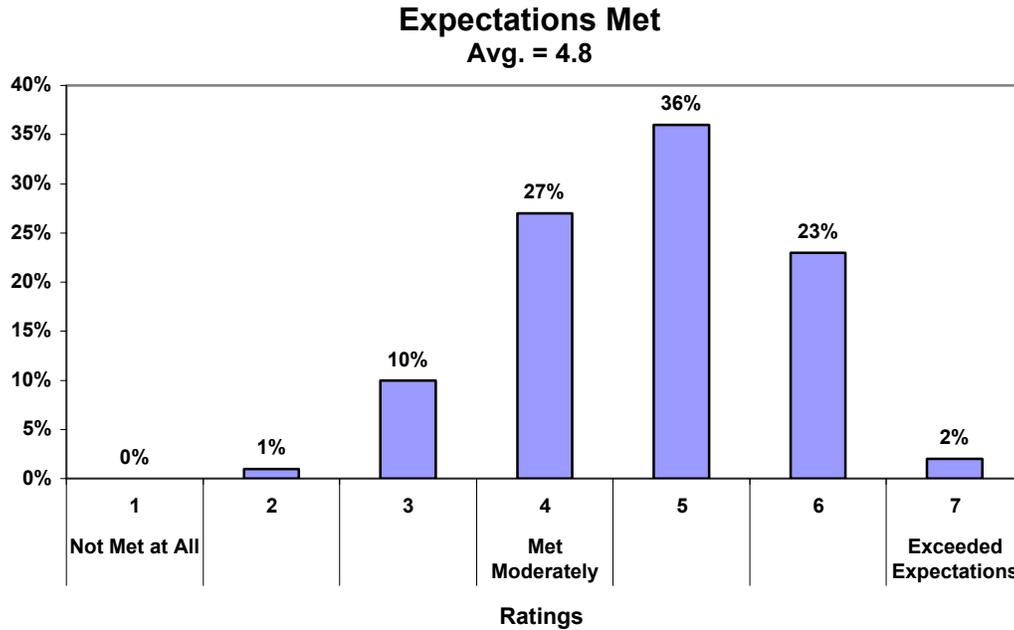
The first seven questions on the evaluation form provided quantitative information. The results were based on 131 responses out of approximately 240 participants, which equates to a 55% response rate of conference participants.

Question 1: 84% of respondents rated the value of this conference as high.

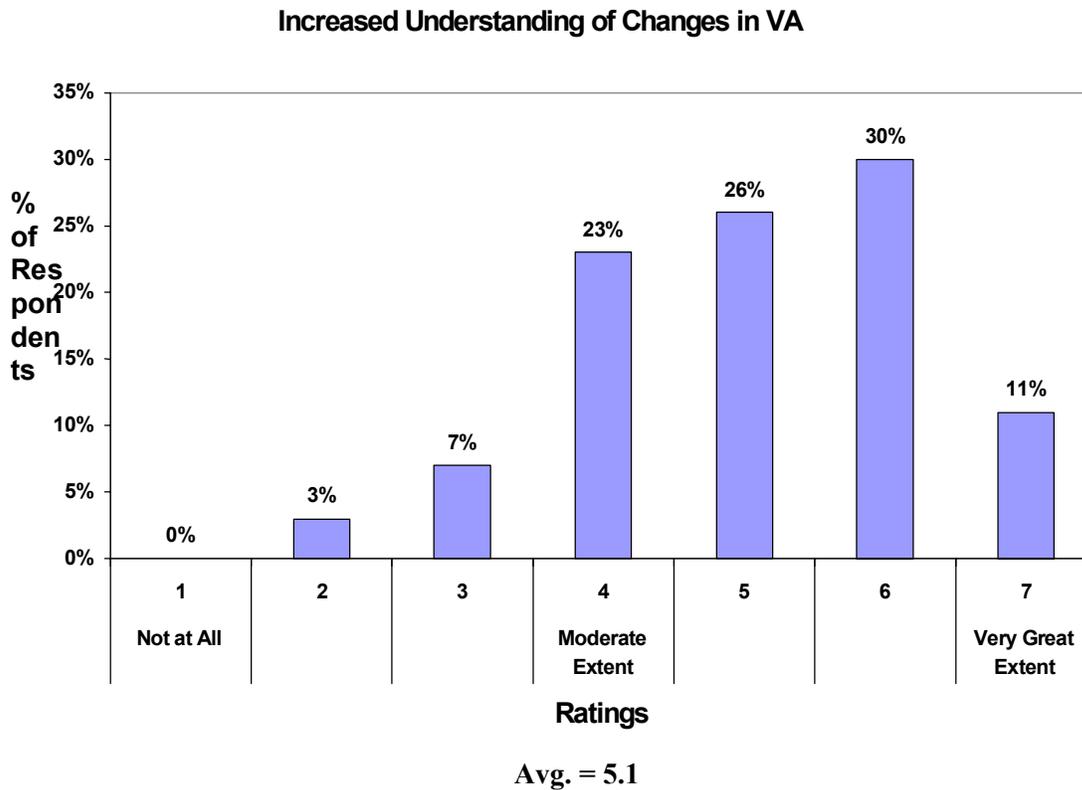


¹ This questionnaire is shown on pages 14-15.

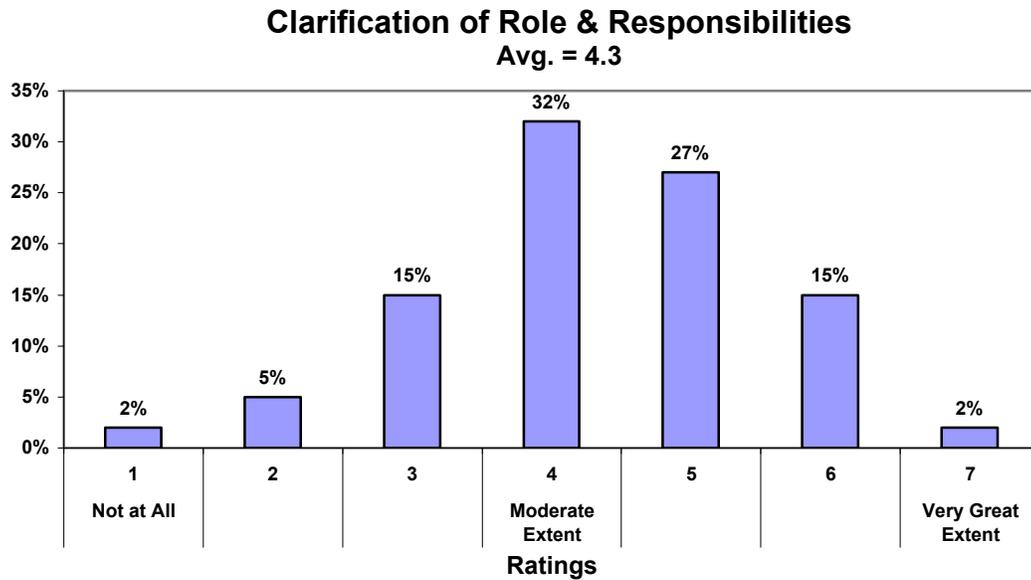
Question 2: 61% of respondents stated that their expectations of the conference were well met.



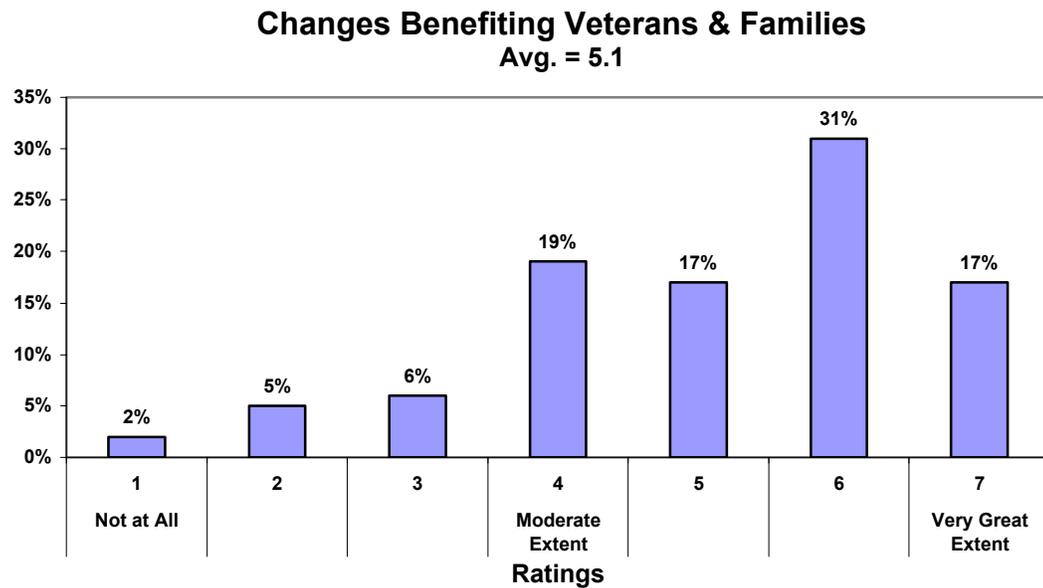
Question 3: 67% of respondents felt that the conference substantially increased their understanding of the changes that will be made within the various parts of VA.



Question 4: 44% of respondents agreed that the conference helped considerably to clarify their role and responsibilities in implementing the planned changes.

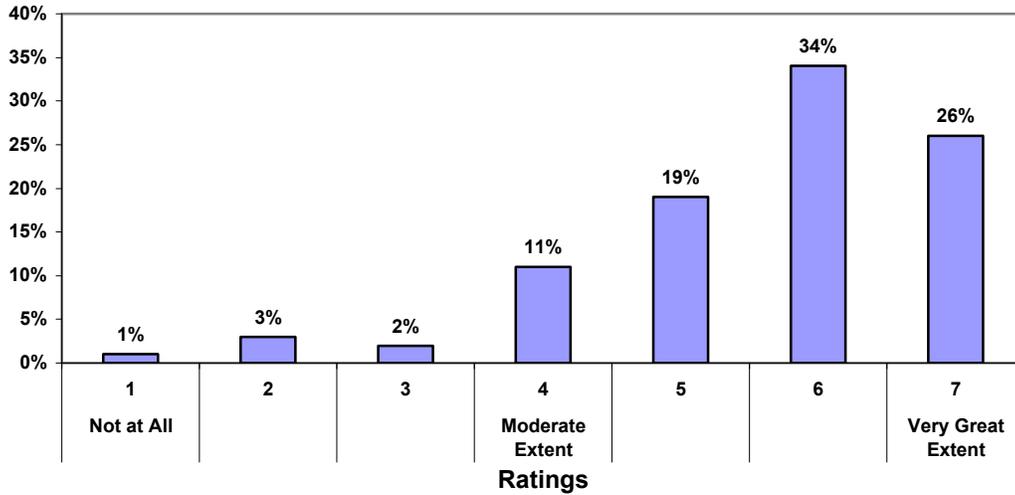


Question 5a: 65% of respondents agreed that the planned changes will significantly benefit the veterans and their families.



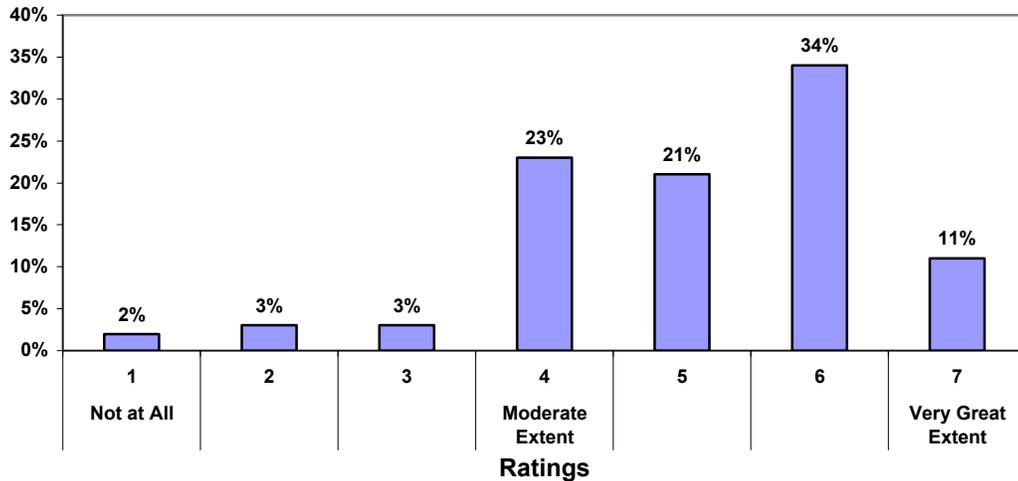
Question 5b: 79% of respondents agreed that the planned changes will significantly benefit VA as a whole.

Changes Benefiting VA as a Whole
Avg. = 5.6

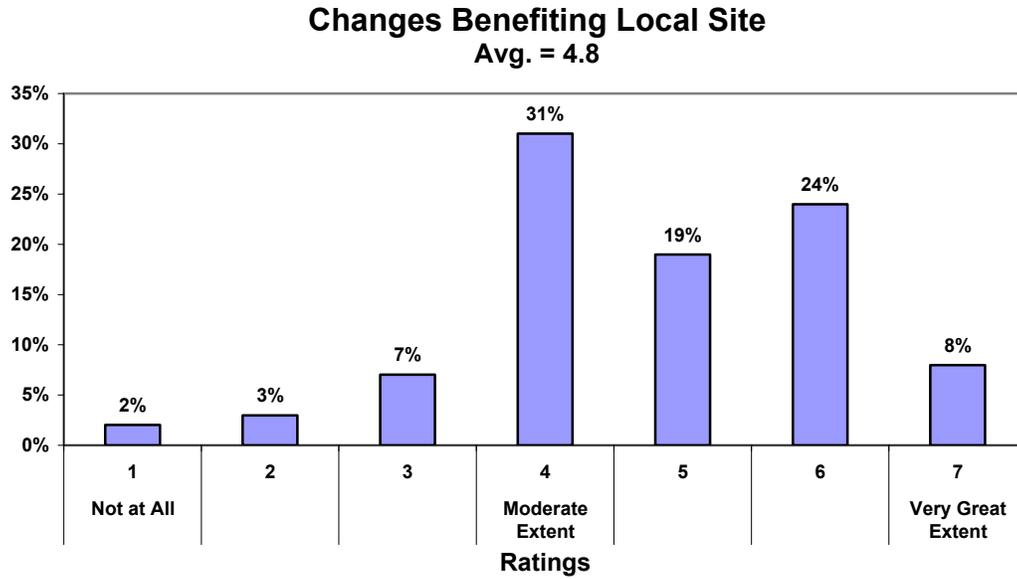


Question 5c: 66% of respondents agreed that the planned changes will substantially benefit their administrative group (VBA, VHA, NCA, and VACO).

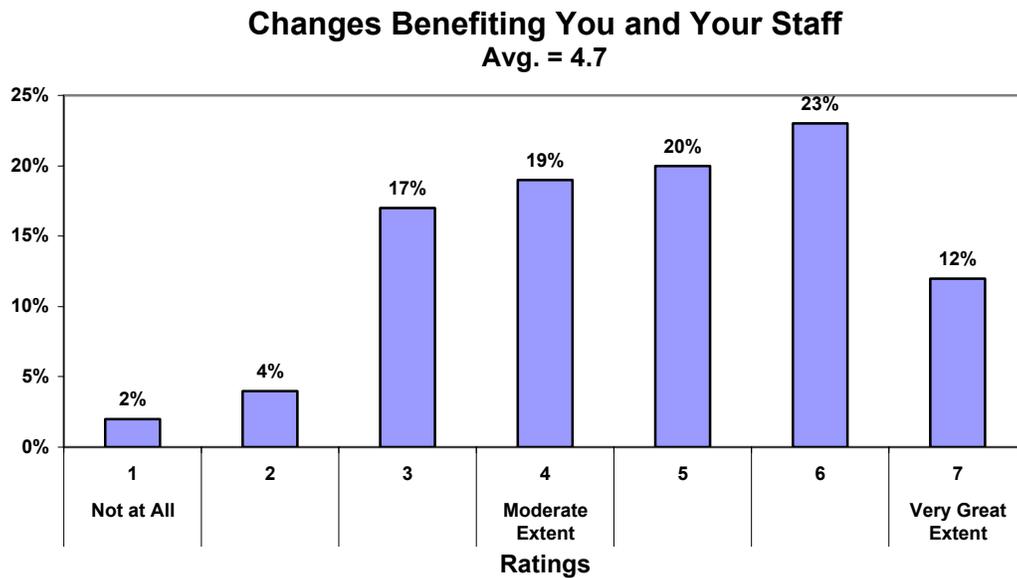
Changes Benefiting Administrative Group (VBA, VHA, NCA, VACO) Avg. = 5.1



Question 5d: 51% of respondents stated that the planned changes will benefit their local site in some way.



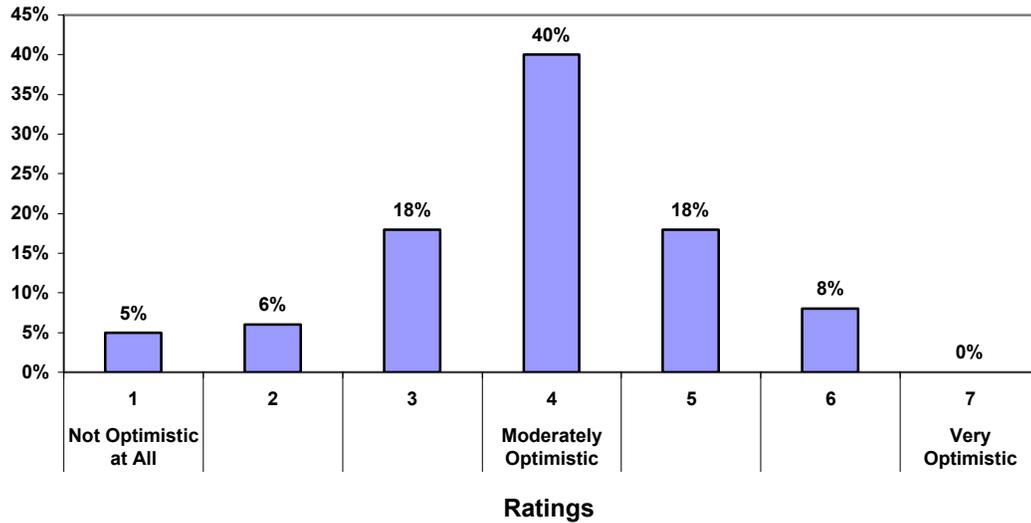
Question 5e: 55% of respondents said that the planned changes will benefit them and their staff.



Question 6: 40% of respondents said they were moderately optimistic that the planned changes would be implemented successfully within the time specified; 26% were more optimistic and 29% were less optimistic.

Implementation of Changes Successfully and on Time

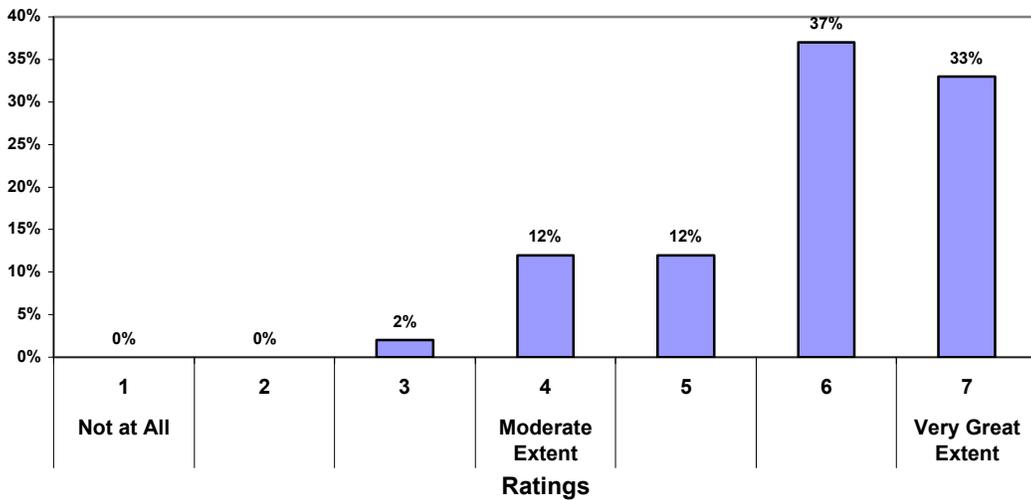
Avg. = 3.9



Question 7: 82% of the respondents said that in the conference they were able to ask questions, communicate their own ideas and opinions, and challenge the views of others to a significant extent.

Able to Ask Questions, Communicate Ideas, Challenge Views

Avg. = 5.9



Questionnaire Results: Number of Responses *

Rating Scale	1. Value Of Conference	2. Expectations Met	3. Increased Understanding Of Changes In VA	4. Clarification Of Role & Responsibilities	5. Changes Benefiting: a. Veterans & Families	5b. VA As A Whole	5c. Administrative Group	5d. Local Site	5e. You & Your Staff	6. Implementation Of Changes Successfully And On Time	7. Able To Ask Questions, Communicate Ideas, Challenge Views
7	16	3	14	3	22	34	14	11	16	0	43
6	54	30	39	19	41	45	44	31	30	11	48
5	41	47	34	36	22	25	28	25	26	24	16
4	14	35	30	42	25	14	30	40	25	53	16
3	2	13	9	20	8	3	4	9	22	24	3
2	2	1	4	6	6	4	4	4	5	8	0
1	0	0	0	3	2	1	2	3	3	6	0

* Based on 131 Respondents

Quantitative Summary

Of the 131 respondents, 84% felt the conference was of high value. Most (67%) felt that the conference increased their understanding of the planned IT changes with 44% saying it helped clarify their role and responsibilities in implementing these changes. 79% agreed that these changes will significantly benefit VA as a whole, but there was less agreement that it will benefit the veterans and their families, the administrative groups, the local sites, and themselves and their staffs to the same degree. Over half (61%) felt their expectations of the conference were well met; however, since we don't know their initial expectations, it's difficult to interpret this response. A large majority (82%) felt that in the conference they could ask questions, communicate their own ideas and opinions, and challenge the views of others.

Qualitative Results

The data below present the broad themes that are derived from the answers respondents wrote to the open-ended questions on the feedback questionnaire. Each question is stated below and is followed by several numbered themes. The number to the right of each theme shows how many respondents answered the question with a comment within this theme. Then, below each theme, there is one or more illustrative, anonymous quotations taken from the survey. For example, when asked about issues that should have been discussed in the conference but weren't (Question 8), 31 people wrote comments that fit the theme "Expectations and details concerning local implementation planning." And one participant wrote "More detailed info on just what is planned and the time frame." Themes may contain both positive and negative comments, and some quotes may be placed in more than one category.

Question 8: The issues we should have discussed in this conference but didn't are...

1. Expectations and details concerning local implementation planning 31
 - *More detailed info on just what is planned and the time frame*
2. More information on the current EA Initiative 13
 - *More detail on the enterprise architecture plans. Perhaps a briefing from the meeting this past summer*
3. Plans for future follow-up and communication 9
 - *Communication has been defined as an issue. What mechanism is in place to resolve this?*
4. Processes for involving other stakeholders 8
 - *How local leadership buy-in will be achieved (Directors, Assoc. Directors, Network Directors, etc.)*
 - *Site-level implementation – what will be done to disseminate information to them?*
5. Intentions towards legacy systems 7
 - *What national projects are currently underway? Exchange server replacement SMS, Vista system replacement testing, any others?*
6. Funding for local implementation 7
 - *Timelines and money – funding in more detail*
7. Technical integration issues across divisions 7
 - *Standardization of IT across VBA and VHA field stations*
8. Role clarification and spheres of responsibility 6
 - *How this effort will be workflowed/phased; how it will be managed; what is expected of owners, shareholders, players*
9. Dealing with cultural and historical inhibitors 1

Question 9: At this point my greatest concerns about the planned changes are...

1. Communication, support and involvement 33
 - *Of the operational levels/other stakeholders*
 - *Organizing and planning individual initiatives, and communicating plans back to individuals*
 - *Coordinating communication throughout all levels and across all administrations within VA and the department*
2. Funding, staff, and resource limitations 30
 - *Getting the necessary resources at the Medical Center level to implement all the planned changes*
3. Historical and cultural impediments 21
 - *The impact on organizational culture and the ability to overcome historical records that say this will not meet expectations and do nothing but create more chaos*
4. Lack of a detailed tactical plan or how to create one 21
 - *Lack of operational plan to accomplish goals and unrealistic timelines/funding plans*
 - *Clear plan and path to goals so the field can follow and support – if this isn't in place, the field will feel abused and bullied – when we WANT the same goals met AND to help you all get there!*
5. Impact of change on the organization/stakeholders 18
 - *Impact on clinicians. Any decrease in performance or decline in reliability is not*

acceptable

6. Time frames 17
 - *The time frame of when changes need to take place. It is definitely a great thing to have all systems on the same wave link instead of our present system of “many” different systems*
7. Technical difficulties of implementation and use of a standardized IT 14
 - *Can’t be done; can vendors deliver? Will (or do we know if) the end product will be an improvement? Will the end product cost more?*

Question 10: As follow-up to this conference, I would like to see...

1. Communication with and involvement of CIO’s and stakeholders 44
 - *Bi-directional communication. The field needs to get info from the top, but the top needs to also hear from the field*
2. Provide implementation details 37
 - *An implementation plan with dates so the field can plan accordingly*
3. Another conference; more preparation and info for participants before the next conference 19
 - *That better guidance is issued prior to the conference to ensure that I understand the objectives and can be better prepared to participate*
4. Workgroups to forge details/implementation plan 12
 - *Specific work groups to detail/develop prelim plans for each area discussed in breakout groups*
5. Conferences for stakeholders 6
 - *That additional meetings are planned and field staff allowed to attend*
 - *Conferences with admin leaders present to show their commitment and buy-in*
6. A printed follow-up summary document with next steps; summary slides & PowerPoint 3
 - *A published document with highlights of the meeting, next steps at a follow-up meeting*
7. Cyber forum for dialogue, info, advice 2
8. Pilot successes and failures 2
9. Conference calls 2
10. Site visits and information gathering by leadership 1
11. Surveys of operational staff/field offices 1
12. A contact list for info and dialogue 1

Question 11: The thing I’ll remember most about this conference is...

1. Participation and access to senior staff; upper management support 39
 - *Frank discussions with VA CIO staff*
 - *Sustained, continuous presence/involvement of Dr. Gauss*
2. Sharing with colleagues; cross-departments; One VA 30
 - *The fact that this was the first joint VA-wide conference I have attended in 13 years*
 - *I’m not alone with problems I’m facing. There needs to be more done to solve these problems because they are very common*
3. Dr. Gauss’ commitment, knowledge, and leadership 25

- *Dr. Gauss talking to VBA folks as a group – I was very impressed that he took the time and was very sincere. Nice to know we count/matter*
 - *Full participation and availability of senior management*
4. Information overload; proposed changes and vision 19
 - *Massive change without any early input from local sites and all seems to be based on a “hunch”*
 5. The energy and hope generated 16
 - *The way VBA and VHA worked together in the different sessions. I believe that this is the way that VA should be headed. “Unification”*
 6. Leon’s antics (usually negative) 10
 - *How bad a facilitator Dr. Kappelman (but not the staff) was. He was in many (?) condescending to us*
 7. Great food 6
 - *The food*
 8. The location (usually negative) 5
 - *Very claustrophobic rooms. Very poor location and activities available. Felt very isolated from the city*
 9. Knowledgeable and informative presenters 5
 - *Very impressed with Dr. Gauss – excellent hosts – really enjoyed the two moderators*
 10. Helpful facilitation staff 4
 - *The good facilitation. However, sometimes it was a little too “silly.” Liked breakouts. Facilitators were very good. Very appreciative that Dr. Gauss was here for the whole conference*

Question 12: The greatest benefit of this conference for me personally has been...

1. Talking to colleagues; cross-department communication; networking 53
 - *Once again, after many years linking with my peers (VHA and VISN’s have thwarted this in past 5 years)*
2. Getting more information on EA Initiative & vision 29
 - *Greater understanding of what Enterprise Architecture is and what are goals*
3. Participating and contributing 27
 - *Opportunities to exchange with CO types who before have been just a signature on a memo – networking with peers*
 - *Interchange of ideas and problems by field staff from all three administrations*
4. Talking to senior leadership 26
 - *Peer contacts, access to HQ top level staff, access to successful national motivational staff*
5. Desire to work on next steps 7
 - *Assistance in clarifying my place in the plan and how I can structure my IT shop to support the EA’s goals*
6. The facility 2
7. Interacting with facilitators 1

Question 13: When people ask me what went on in this conference, I’ll tell them that...

1. Relate information on the EA Initiative and vision 53

- *Dr. Gauss is implementing IT strategic goals that will truly integrate the three administrations into a centric organization to ensure accountable and quality service to our veterans and their beneficiaries*
- *We're embarking on major evolutionary change in the way IT is aligned with VA business needs and developing a new process to provide the IT infrastructure for ONE-VA*

2.	Discuss proposed changes to department	32
	➤ <i>We have started a process of moving towards one VA. The organization is committed to making this happen and will be looking to the field to be involved in its formulation</i>	
	➤ <i>A lot of discussion on how to implement the needed changes in the future</i>	
3.	New emphasis on collaboration and involvement	30
	➤ <i>It was an honest effort to re-establish the collaborative team VA once was</i>	
4.	Senior leadership commitment	15
	➤ <i>We have senior dept. management who know what they're doing, know what they want to do, and dedication to change for the better</i>	
5.	Facility	2

Qualitative Summary

The major missing piece for many of the participants at the CIO Conference was the level of detail of the programs themselves, plans and timelines, communication follow-up, legacy system plans, etc. Concerns focused on communication processes, funding, cultural impediments, impact on stakeholders, and how the standardization of IT can occur. People want more communication, more detailed implementation plans, the freedom to develop work group implementation plans, and another conference. Most memorable for many was the open participation and the access to the senior staff and Dr. Gauss. They enjoyed interacting with colleagues and feeling a part of VA. Many appreciated Dr. Gauss' commitment, knowledge and leadership.

VA CIO Conference Feedback Questionnaire

For each scaled question below, please circle the number that best describes your answer. Write in your response to the open-ended questions. Use the other side of this page if you wish to make additional comments. Please turn in this questionnaire before you leave.

1. On the whole, how would you rate the value of this conference?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very little value value			Moderate value			Very high

2. To what extent were your expectations of this conference met?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not met at all			Met to a moderate extent			Exceeded my expectations

3. To what extent did this conference increase your understanding of the changes that will be made within the various parts of VA?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all			Moderate extent			Very great extent

4. To what extent did this conference clarify your understanding of your role and responsibilities in implementing the planned changes?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all			Moderate extent			Very great extent

5. To what extent do you think the planned changes will benefit each of the following? (place the number that best describes your answer on the line following each item)

- a. veterans and their families _____
- b. VA as a whole _____
- c. your administrative group (VBA, VHA, NCA, VACO) _____
- d. your local site (e.g., hospital, field office) _____
- e. you and your staff _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all			Moderate extent			Very great extent

6. How optimistic are you that the changes that are planned will be implemented successfully within the time specified?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not optimistic Moderately Very
at all optimistic optimistic

7. In this conference, to what extent were you able to ask questions, communicate your own ideas and opinions, and challenge the views of others?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at Moderate Very great
all extent extent

8. The issues we should have discussed in this conference but didn't are _____

9. At this point my greatest concerns about the planned changes are _____

10. As follow-up to this conference, I would like to see _____

11. The thing I'll remember most about this conference is _____

12. The greatest benefit of this conference for me personally has been _____

13. When people ask me what went on in this conference, I'll tell them that _____

Which administrative group are you a part of: VBA, VHA, NCA, VACO? _____

**PLEASE COMPLETE WHEN YOU LEAVE CONFERENCE
PLACE IN BOX PROVIDED.**