

Christchurch City Council

Service Delivery with No Surprises

Business objective:

To implement the foundation of an IT service management framework based on ITIL, which would serve as the starting point for continual improvement.

Solution:

- Service Advantage
- Polestar ITSM Simulation workshop

Christchurch City Council has always seen the potential of Service Management within the organisation and the information management and communication technology group at the Council has worked over a number of years to realise this. Late in 2006, their partnership with Delta Software shifted gear when they utilised Delta's Service Advantage programme to accelerate their goal.

Achieving your IT Service Vision

For the Council, much of the strategic work had already been done; The IM&CT department had already been restructured, and many of the new team members had been involved previously in IT Service improvement projects. Existing staff were also keen to see how things could be done better.

However, knowing where you want to go, is quite different to knowing how to get there. Christchurch City Council knew they wanted to have foundation of an IT service management framework based on ITIL. This would serve as the starting point for continual improvement. They knew they wanted to become more process based and to improve cross-departmental efficiencies. They also realised they needed to improve the consistency of their service to the business to be a valuable, credible part of the wider council organisation. Their existing partnership with Delta Software led them to the solution which would enable them to achieve this goal - Service Advantage.

At its core, Service Advantage is about achieving your IT Service Vision. The first step

was to translate the Council's strategic goal into a vision.

Defining the vision

The IT service improvement goals that are needed to give the business a strategic IT outcome is the basis for the IT service vision, and prepares the team for ITIL & tools implementation work.

The vision must be clear, succinct, easy to understand, able to be explained in 30 seconds or less and mean something real to the people who are going to fulfill it.

The internationally successful Polestar business service simulation was used to run an interactive and engaging workshop, led by Christchurch City Council CIO Gavin Till, and facilitated by Delta Software programme manager, Dave Hayes. The one-day Polestar



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event was followed by an IT service visioning workshop. Over these two-days the Council were able to define their vision as well as key IT service improvement objectives.

Gavin explains, "We used the Polestar event as a fun way of getting everyone to understand the importance of service delivery and the need for improvement. During the day we went from utter chaos, with very little process, to more mature processes and improved communication supported by robust infrastructure. We could see and feel the difference between service delivery failure and success, so it really highlighted the need to improve, while showing that the task of meeting service delivery expectations is not impossible."

Participants experienced the use of a balanced scorecard approach to tracking IT service measurables, such as mean time to resolve incidents, successful IT change tasks, and service availability. From this, they saw process maturity working to improve results, and how to ensure a culture change for collaboration across all of IT.

The workshop on day two helped the group reflect on lessons learnt from the Polestar event, identify customer needs and define an IT service

improvement roadmap.

The IT Service Vision

"With the help of Delta Software we had, within two hours, identified the key need of 'no surprises' from one of our main customer groups. Later this was found to be applicable to a number of other customer groups so our IT vision of service delivery with no surprises was born", says Gavin.

To deliver IT services with no surprises implies a number of people, process and technology changes. Key to this is having the whole team buying-in to the reason for change.

Gavin explains further, "No surprises implies that many things within IT and between

us and the business and all the implications are correct! We do not want to have surprises between our teams, and our customers do not want surprises during the working day. All the things we learnt during Polestar come into play, such as communication, importance of process, knowledge sharing and planning. We took these lessons and applied them to our situation and if they passed the 'no surprises test' we acted upon them."

A Committed Team

Often when change and restructure occurs within an organisation it is hard for those involved to see the benefits, and a culture of skepticism is present. IM&CT group could see the potential of what IT



The IM&CT group at Christchurch City Council work on delivering services with no surprises during the Polestar simulation event.

with No Surprises



There are 4 quadrant that make up the Service Advantage programme. For the Christchurch City Council the process initially began in the **Business Outcomes** quadrant and then moved through **Process Enablement** to **Implementation**.

service improvements they could offer the business, but given the changes the IM&CT group had been through, there was a sense of reservation about more change. "The team knew there was a better way of doing things, but it was really important that they understood why we were making the change and their role in it. Polestar ITSM simulation gave us that level of engagement that had previously eluded us."

Implementation

With their IT service vision clear, aligned to business objectives and the IM&CT team engaged, the Council was ready to move onto the

next phase – implementation. This focused on the key components of People, Process and Technology with Delta Software supporting the Council through the scoping, planning and design of the implementation phase.

As facilitators and trainers Delta ensured all the staff were up to speed and onboard. As Consultants, Delta provided analytical support and ran Service Advantage process design workshops. They provided proven service management process templates combining ITIL and COBIT, taking the guesswork away from these aspects. Delta also assisted with

ensuring the correct technical solutions were implemented and that the capabilities were maximised to meet the Council's objectives.

The Solution

A number of IT service processes have been re-worked, such as problem management to help reduce incidents and surprises. Improved change management was introduced using the ITIL framework as the basis. Effective communication reduced the surprise factor. ITIL was effectively the means, not the end.

Gavin also found that the Gartner IS Credibility Scale¹ provided valuable insights and combined with the IT vision, what was needed to improve the credibility of IM&CT within the Council.

Gavin notes "The credibility scale provides toolboxes to get from one level to the next. It is fair to say that we are at the level of uncertainty and skepticism but we want to be at trust and respect. The toolbox suggests that we focus on communication, consistency, reliability and performance. This maps very closely to our vision, which in turn delivers

1 Source: Gartner, Inc., "Keys to IT Leadership: Credibility, Respect and Consistency" Mark P. McDonald, John Bace, 28 June 2004

what our customers want. We are looking forward to seeing the positive impact of moving up the credibility scale."

Expectations

The implementation phase went very smoothly for the Council and Gavin believes this is due to setting realistic expectations at the beginning. "The implementation went really smoothly. This is largely because that at no point did we underestimate the need for all components of a service improvement implementation - people, process, technology."

"We set realistic expectations and we knew and (in fact) didn't want it to be perfect when phase one went live. Phase one provides the basic framework, which will be the starting point for continual improvement."

Outcome

The outcome has been extremely positive. The working relationship across the different departments within the IM&CT group has already improved. "It's great because you can see the benefits back to the customer. Everyone's focused on the vision which means they're sharing information and working together which did not happen naturally before."



Working with Delta Software

"Delta have a great understanding of what our goals and objectives are and consistently worked with us in a way that first and foremost focused on the benefits for us. At no point was there a push for the supply of further services," says Gavin. "Our partnership with Delta is so successful because it is built on trust and respect."

"Delivering services with no surprises is about delivering outcomes that meet expectations, if we do that we improve our perception enabling our credibility to move from uncertainty and scepticism to trust and respect and who would not want that?"

Service Advantage Outline

The Service Advantage ITIL-based programme is designed to ensure an IT service improvement implementation achieves a business outcome quickly and cost-effectively. Developed by Delta Software Ltd, it is based on many years' experience implementing service desk projects.

A key component of the programme is called Process Enablement. This focuses on how IT process improvement will most benefit the business, and defining the IT service roadmap to achieve that, with the Polestar simulation as a key team-enabling event. Following this, the Implementation phase goes more smoothly, with a strong team commitment to a successful outcome for the business.

**To find out more about Polestar and Service Advantage
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