



British Transport Police

Public Servants Delivering Better Public Services –
Applying Originality in Strategic IT Delivery

Industry

Consulting

Customer



In these times of financial austerity public servants must apply originality in how they deliver public services to meet the challenges they face. Yet, it is also wrong to assume the public sector has not been prudent with the public purse over the past decade either.

Releasing Resources to Front Line Services

Initiatives such as Gershon and CIPFA have subjected the public sector to greater accountability, focusing them on providing sound financial management and good governance by releasing resources to front line services. In some instances this has already resulted in raising productivity, accountability and giving value for money to the public through efficiency savings.

That said the public sector now faces different and tough spending choices, as Mervyn King, the Governor of The Bank of England, warned 'The UK faces a sober decade ahead'. Previous spending and efficiency drives must now start to mature and come to fruition. Information Technology was a key deliverable in these efficiency choices and, arguably, will now assist those decisions makers in making the hard-hitting choices they once again face. But what is important is that choices made must be the right ones, in the right areas, in the right order and the public sector must continue to deliver high quality and cost effective public services.

Long Term Strategic Investment Decisions

As the national police force for the railways, British Transport Police is not immune from the looming spending cuts. One of the challenges Cliff Cunningham, Chief Technology Officer at The British Transport Police, has faced is how to ensure strategic investment decisions in IT infrastructure will deliver optimum efficiencies in this new austere climate.

Today the Force is reaping the rewards of shrewd technology investment having replaced its legacy IT Service Desk with the ITIL-ready OpenText Assure, provided by OpenText and its partner ICCM Solutions.

They made a clear and long term strategic technology commitment to introduce a Business Process Management (BPM) based service management tool which they identified as having applications beyond its use within a pure Service Management environment, such as considering inventive applications ranging from improving personnel productivity processes for timesheet management and expenses, through to any manual form where a workflow is associated with it.

Learn, Modify & Model

British Transport Police handle in excess of 2,000 Service Desk calls per month, supporting 7 geographical regions, 145 individual sites and 5,000 employees via its central IT base in North London. One of the ways OpenText Assure has helped to improve efficiency, productivity and communication is through enhancing cooperation and collaboration across locations. British Transport Police were previously using an Access database as a method of managing their Service Desk and the new IT Service Management tool allows them to edit a process module and change the workflow of the system to suit the Forces unique requirements.

Cunningham goes on to explain, “We tackled our uniqueness head on and undertook an ‘adopt and adapt’ approach, only achievable due to the flexibility of the business process nature of the OpenText solution. This allowed us to learn, modify and model as we educated ourselves and the rest of the organization. We took the initial decision to implement a relatively straight forward business process project that would have high impact results on the business as our first project. Once we were successful at this, we added more complex activities that addressed our pain points and took ‘head on’ the complexity of Incident Service Management.”

Other improvements the Force has witnessed include personnel ‘Case Management’ records within HR, CCTV officer request for footage retrieval, management and delivery, through to compliance with legislation relating to data stored on criminal records called ‘Review, Retain or Delete.’

Streamlining Business Processes

These applications have produced cost and efficiency. Cunningham goes on to assert, “While we’ve yet to achieve everything we set out to establish since we set ourselves on an ITIL service management course, we’ve still achieved a great deal. An organization like ours is an ‘oil tanker’ and does not turn very fast, therefore it’s critically important to educate and bring people with us.

“So our approach of adopt and adapt suits us extremely well. We’ve made significant inroads in changing our service management culture and introduced a number of corporate initiatives such as an IT asset class service level agreement strategy, built a knowledge base repository and provided a Configuration Management Database to the organization.

“Ironically an interesting challenge I face as an IT manager is not that we’re limited by the technology we use, but often constrained by the delays in establishing an agreed business process first.”

See, Think, Do & Improve

Cunningham concludes, “Every organization has its own political challenges and these have to be understood by both IT and the business. People in my situation have to really understand this. By investing in an ITSM model based on a BPM architecture you really have to believe that what you’re doing is right for your organization, and have the ability to see the bigger picture if you want to reap the rewards.

“It’s an iterative process so the team, and by that I do mean IT and the business, must identify the joint issues together, understand how to overcome these, and plan what we jointly know to be right. It’s simple, we need to see, think, do and improve – everything a service management solution is about.”

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