

## **Brisbane City Council — Field ConX — a full mobile office which is the latest in job dispatching for field operation**

**Steve Best**

### **BACKGROUND**

Brisbane City Council along with all other local authorities faces the problems of utilising its resources for competing demands. Nearly 2 years ago the council completed a review of its operational staff and started on a restructure journey.

The change drivers for this restructure were:

- efficiency;
- customer service;
- national competition policy;
- legislative change.

The outcome that the council wanted to achieve from this restructure was:

**An efficient, accountable, customer focused council ready for the new millennium.**

In line with council's desire to have a more efficient workforce providing improved customer service it was necessary for the staff to spend more time in the field and less in the office. From this, council decided to develop technology that would fully mobilise its staff in an efficient and effective manner.

### **MOBILE OFFICE VISION**

- Increased customer service by locating staff with customers rather than in an office.
- More effective use of staff to reduce service costs.
- Use of low cost packet radio.
- Tools and information available for staff to finalise customer requests in the field.

To achieve the above vision the following enablers were necessary:

- multi-skilling of staff;
- hot desking — shared resources;
- redesign of operating procedures;
- competency based banding of positions;
- team based operations;
- integration of technology.

As well as the above enablers success of council's vision depended on the following:

- union agreements enabling flexible workforce;
- jobs designed with new focus;
- well trained and highly motivated staff;
- senior management commitment;
- consistent process;
- culture change.

## **BENEFITS OF MOBILISATION**

- More time spent with customers in the field.
- Faster response times.
- Direct access to intranet for policies and procedures.
- Greater service consistency.
- Status tracking of service requests.
- Improved allocation of resources to meet demand.

## **OUTCOMES**

- Improved customer service — officers can now provide information to customers in the field in a timely manner rather than incur delays through continually returning to the office.
- Improved management of resources — allocation of jobs by the dispatcher ensures officer's time is fully allocated.
- Increased revenue — because officers spend more time in the field there is a quicker response time to complaints and faster resolution resulting in increase in infringement notices for offences.
- Labour efficiency — because of the improved utilisation of labour resources there are options to increase services offered. Over the past 12 months there has been a 58% increase in requests for service and this increased workload has been absorbed through the introduction of Field ConX and multi skilling.
- Reduced use of office space — reduced time spent in the office by field staff has resulted in a 35% reduction in office space.

The introduction of Field ConX has provided council has facilitated the following innovations:

- call centre and intranet links;
- established via visioning and business process re-engineering;
- unique combination of technologies;
- entire office is delivered to the field via laptops, packet radio and Grid System Mapping communications;
- access to head office databases, e-mail, intranet, word processing and other software packages.

## **RECOGNITION**

- Technology has met stakeholder, user and customer requirements.
- Greater field staff empowerment.
- Management are better able to monitor, maintain and improve customer service standards.

## **POTENTIAL**

- Effective field delivery of applications as a stand alone system.
- Can be used as an add-on product to call centres to achieve fully integrated service delivery.
- Regulatory, operations and maintenance applications.
- Strong national and international interest for commercial application of change processes and technology.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

- Brisbane City Council has rolled out Field ConX to its regulatory services field staff — over 100 vehicles.
- Change practices implemented, resulting in significant efficiency.
- Cars are replacing desks.
- Staff are motivated by the changes.

## **SUMMARY**

The introduction of Field ConX has provided the Brisbane City Council with the ability to integrate customer service delivery and to shift focus from reactive to proactive customer service. The trial in the local laws section has been a resounding success with staff embracing the new technology which will allow them to better equipped in carrying out their role as local laws officers.

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Steve has managed the Local Laws Section for the Brisbane City Council for the past 7 years. During that time he has been responsible for drafting and implementing new legislation on the keeping and control of animals. Over the past 2 years Steve has been working on restructuring all of Brisbane City Council's enforcement areas into one Local Laws Section. Currently the Brisbane City Council Local Laws Section employs over 100 Local Laws Officers carrying out duties in a wide variety of areas including parking and animal management.

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