

CASE STUDY BOLTON COUNCIL

FUJITSU OUTSOURCING SERVICES SUPPORTS COUNCIL'S FUTURE VISION

»IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO US THAT THE COMPANY WE CHOSE HAD A GREAT DEAL OF EXPERIENCE IN OUR SECTOR, UNDERSTOOD THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND PARTICULARLY UNDERSTOOD LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND FUJITSU HAS THAT EXPERIENCE.«

STEVE ARNFIELD, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES, BOLTON COUNCIL



CHALLENGE

Bolton is located 10 miles from the city of Manchester in North West England. Bolton Council provides a wide range of services to 260,000 citizens and over 8,800 businesses in the town and surrounding area. Services delivered by the Council's 12,000 employees include education and learning, environment and planning, health and social care, housing, leisure and transport and roads.

The Council has big plans for the future of the town including an ambitious 10 year vision to increase the quality of life, improve the population's skills and qualifications, create more jobs, reduce crime, provide cleaner streets and better parks, and build stronger relations within the community.

Like all publically funded organisations, Bolton Council has to simultaneously improve service delivery and offer good value-for-money. Consequently, the role of IT has become increasingly important in its drive to increase productivity and control expenditure.

Steve Arnfield, Director of Corporate Resources, Bolton Council, explains: *"Over recent years, we have primarily focussed on delivering better quality services to residents and businesses. We had three main priorities. Firstly, to help people who are in most need, especially those living in deprived areas. Secondly, creating jobs to support the economy; and finally, transforming our business to increase efficiency. Although IT is important for delivering all these priorities, it is especially critical for business transformation."*

A few years ago, the Council conducted a stringent comparison between providing IT services using in-house resources and an outsourcing partner. The study concluded that outsourcing would generate a 10 to 15% cost saving. Moreover, the council needed to invest in new systems, seek more innovative ways of using IT and create a more flexible infrastructure to support new working methods such as home-working. Bolton Council also recognised that it was struggling to keep the staff IT expertise and knowledge up-to-date.

"Buying in the skills of a larger organisation through outsourcing seemed the best approach. Not only was it more cost effective, but we knew a good partner would bring innovation from its previous experiences with other local authorities. Our infrastructure would then become more agile and personnel could access IT, regardless of location," reflects Steve Arnfield.

Several IT service providers responded to the Council's tender process, which placed a strong emphasis on value for money, innovation, agility and service delivery.

THE CUSTOMER

- Bolton Council employs 12,000 people and provides a wide range of services to 260,000 citizens and 8,800 businesses



THE CHALLENGE

- Bolton Council required an outsourcing partner that could bring innovation and expertise from previous experiences with local authorities
- The Council was looking for an innovative approach that would deliver agility and flexibility to its IT infrastructure

THE SOLUTION

- Fujitsu provides IT support services including desktop, server and network management, and systems development and implementation
- After working with Fujitsu for several years, the Council has recently renewed its outsourcing contract for a further three years

THE BENEFITS

- VALUE-FOR-MONEY** – compared to using in-house resources, outsourcing IT services generates a 10 to 15% cost saving
- INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY** – the customer contact centre handles more calls with fewer staff
- EXPERTISE** – an experienced partner brings IT knowledge and innovation
- AGILE AND FLEXIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE** – aids the introduction of more efficient working practices. Home-working is 33% more productive
- IMPROVED BUSINESS APPLICATIONS** – automating back-office processes has reduced staff numbers by 30%, further boosting efficiency
- HIGH AVAILABILITY** – safeguards service delivery and business continuity
- BETTER PROCUREMENT PROCESS** – delivers more cost-effective goods and services

“When we spoke to Fujitsu, we were confident that we had identified the correct partner to help deliver our vision for the future,” continues Steve Arnfield. *“We were very impressed with Fujitsu’s range of expertise and its skills matched our requirements precisely. Earlier work had clearly demonstrated that its innovative approach delivered agility and flexibility to our infrastructure.”*

SOLUTION

Under the outsourcing contract, Fujitsu provides IT support, maintenance and management services across the Council’s infrastructure. The deal also involved migrating 60 of the Council’s IT staff to Fujitsu. Services include desktop, help desk and service desk support, server and network management, and systems development and implementation.

Fujitsu also manages the Council’s Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. *“Fujitsu was key to providing our Oracle environment, which has transformed our back-office services,”* says Mario Devargas, IT Director, Bolton Council.

On behalf of Bolton Council, Fujitsu manages an infrastructure that comprises approximately 200 servers, 6,000 desktop computers and various storage devices whilst 1,500 miles of cabling links roughly 850 remote locations. Although the network connects around 150 buildings in and around the town, the 6,000 IT users primarily work from 10 key sites including a contact centre in the town hall. However, home-working is becoming increasingly popular for certain types of work.

Twelve major applications form the core of the Council’s system, which is heavily dependent on Oracle EPR for back-office activities such as business intelligence, financial services, human resources, payroll and procurement. The Oracle platform also supports the Council’s care management, customer relationship management, data processing, debt management and email systems.

“Whether we are dealing with customer enquiries, employee correspondence or supporting mobile workers, communications is the life blood of our organisation. We currently handle about one million emails per day,” adds Mario Devargas.

Like all public sector organisations, within the current economic climate, Bolton Council will have to make some huge savings over the coming years.

“We estimate expenditure will have to fall by approximately 40%. IT will therefore become more important as we deliver more and more efficiencies,” reveals Steve Arnfield.

To help the Council achieve this massive challenge, it recently re-negotiated and extended a seven year managed services contract with Fujitsu for a further three years.

IMPACT

During the lifetime of the outsourcing deal with Fujitsu, Bolton Council has seen its IT infrastructure evolve into a more efficient and agile environment through a process of continuous improvement. High system availability ensures excellent service delivery and business continuity and automated processes have increased productivity.

“Our end-users are delighted because system availability is well above 99%,” declares Steve Arnfield.

From an efficiency perspective, deploying a new system to deal with users has proved very successful. Fujitsu are now handling on average 3500 calls per month and fix 84% of user problems first time on the service desk, with considerably fewer staff.

Home-working is another good example of how Bolton Council has increased productivity. Early studies show that staff processing benefit claims and council tax enquiries at home are 33% more productive because their time is flexible, there are fewer distractions and they do not have to waste time travelling.

The Fujitsu-led Oracle implementation has also brought some fundamental changes to the Council’s back-office services and procurement system.

“By automating processes, we have consolidated our back-office team by 30%, boosting efficiencies further,” confirms Steve Arnfield. *“Moreover, with Fujitsu on board, we now have an integrated procurement system, which provides better control on expenditure whilst automation speeds the administration process. This system will undoubtedly generate further on-going cost benefits.”*

“We have always had a good working relationship with Fujitsu. Our teams work well together and I think they work hard to deliver what we need even though we set them demanding challenges at times. However, Fujitsu responds well and gets us to where we need to go. This is a pleasing partnership.”

EXPERTISE

With over 40 years’ experience of supporting the needs of the public sector and businesses around the world, Fujitsu has a proven track record in complex systems integration and application development.

Mario Devargas agrees: *“Without the people you cannot deliver. The technology may be fantastic but it’s the people that make it work and Fujitsu has, since the beginning of the relationship, brought in some very good people, locally, to help us do that.”*

Moreover, Fujitsu’s IT services effectively enable Bolton Council to reduce costs, improve productivity, enhance customer service and deliver a compelling return on investment.

“Fujitsu has a key role in helping Bolton Council to respond to today’s cost saving challenge. We rely on them to continue to bring us new ideas and help us deliver new ways of working to meet the needs of the citizen’s of Bolton whilst enabling us to reduce overall operational expenditure,” concludes Steve Arnfield.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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