

CASE STUDY CORNWALL COUNCIL

»WITH FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, FUJITSU'S ANALYSIS PROVIDES THE STRONG EVIDENCE BASE WE NEED TO ASK DIFFICULT QUESTIONS, AND TO ENGAGE WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY ABOUT THE CHOICES THAT NEED TO BE MADE.«

Gill Steward, Corporate Director for Communities, Cornwall Council



CHALLENGE

Cornwall Council, like any local authority or other public sector organisation, faces increasing challenges to improve services, to respond to budget cuts by reducing costs, and to ensure its services are meeting the changing needs of its residents.

In response, Cornwall has developed a four-year business plan that sets out how it will deliver its services in new ways, become more streamlined, and work more closely with partners. This plan highlights the need for better information on how people use the council's facilities and how changes in service provision might affect future usage.

In one example, as in many areas of the public sector, the Libraries team is examining the services they provide, how services are delivered, and how customers actually use them. They need to ensure that the services they provide in the future respond to changes in social behaviour and technological shifts, and provide the best value for money.

Cornwall needed to be able to make decisions underpinned by an evidence-based understanding of which people used its library services, and what factors determined the likely usage rates amongst different groups of residents. *“Previously, we had used performance reporting to measure our library service users, covering aspects such as how many books were borrowed and from which libraries, but that did not give us much insight,”* says Abi Messenger, policy officer in the Community Intelligence team at Cornwall Council. *“We wanted to understand our customers rather than just counting people coming through the door.”*

SOLUTION

To improve its understanding of how customers used its libraries, Cornwall turned to Fujitsu for help. While the Council already had a large amount of customer data, Fujitsu was able to combine this with external demographic data to provide new insights and to identify underlying factors in library usage. It was also able to make recommendations to Cornwall on how to improve uptake of libraries, and how new services might be received.

Fujitsu's approach focussed first on the required outcome, then the actions that could be taken to achieve it. For libraries, the outcome was increased usage, so Fujitsu analysed the available data to investigate how uptake could be improved. For example, this might be by increasing the number of libraries, by encouraging existing library users to make more visits, or by developing new channels. Fujitsu used regression analysis to derive actionable, evidence-based recommendations.

“While we had library usage data and MOSAIC demographic data from Experian, we had not been able to put it together and look at how customers use our libraries, and possible service issues in the future,” says Gill Steward, Corporate Director for Communities at Cornwall Council, who has overall responsibility for libraries in Cornwall.

THE CUSTOMER

- Unitary authority responsible for providing a wide range of services to Cornwall's 530,000 people
- Cornwall's biggest employer
- Annual budget of more than £1 billion



THE CHALLENGE

- Like other public sector organisations, Cornwall must improve performance, reduce costs, and reach out more effectively to its residents
- To reach those goals, the Cornwall Libraries team needed to understand its customers better
- Cornwall wanted to discover who was using its libraries, what factors affected library usage, and what the demand might be for new library services

THE SOLUTION

- Fujitsu analysed Cornwall's existing library usage data together with MOSAIC demographic data
- Fujitsu's analysis and consulting approach provided new insights into customer service usage
- Fujitsu gave Cornwall the actionable evidence it had needed to make outcome-based decisions

THE BENEFITS

- **REDUCED COSTS** – 10% cost savings identified
- **IMPROVED SERVICES** – by understanding how residents use them, Cornwall can ensure that services better meet their needs
- **INCREASED CUSTOMER UPTAKE** – identified opportunities to increase customer uptake of services by 20%

Fujitsu's team worked with the Community Intelligence Team to refine its findings, thus ensuring they could be most useful to the libraries' senior management. The data was presented with specific recommendations on possible actions.

"Fujitsu completed the work rapidly, and presented their analysis in a way that was very useful – rather than just provide the data, they took it to the stage of saying 'here are the questions you should ask yourself';" says Steward.

"The project has been really effective in the sense that the libraries team didn't really know where to start, but now we've given them an insight into what they could achieve, they want to find out more.

"Once the libraries service saw the results, it got them thinking about other areas where this kind of research would be useful," comments Messenger. "Even though they now have more knowledge of people borrowing books, they now want to look at other areas, such as who is using their online systems.

EVIDENCE-BASED DECISIONS

Fujitsu was able to present opportunities to Cornwall to change its services, which could increase library uptake by up to 20% while reducing costs by up to 10%.

"In a time of budget cuts, decisions need to be taken with a very strong evidence base," says Messenger. "The libraries team see this project as an opportunity to really understand their customers and help them make the most of the service."

For example, Fujitsu established that there was a strong link between usage and a person's distance from their nearest library – once this was more than 2.9km, there was a substantial drop in library usage.

"In the regression analysis done by Fujitsu, distance came up as a key factor in library usage," comments Steward. "Fujitsu were able to show us what the real predictive factors were, and to give us a challenging set of questions to review how we provide the service."

One of the key elements of the data analysis was to look at channel preference, and make recommendations for potential additional migration to self-service and the Internet. Fujitsu discovered from its analysis that there may be opportunities in providing more online services. Adding new ways for libraries to serve their users by phone or over the web could benefit the low-usage group living further away from libraries.

Similarly, Fujitsu were able to show, backed up by statistical evidence, that a number of existing libraries may not be offering the best value for money.

SOHISTICATED DATA ANALYSIS

According to Messenger, Fujitsu delivered the project on time and provided all of the information requested: *"They were very competent and helpful, especially on the statistical analysis side - I was always completely confident in the methodology they were using. The data provided helped us to identify the best services to start attracting new customers.*

"The regression analysis on the customer data against Experian's MOSAIC data was a key benefit to Fujitsu's work, which identified which variables within Experian's data set were the key drivers for library usage," says Messenger. "This gave us actionable evidence, and provided focus for future insight projects.

"We find that teams often have lots of staff who have a performance management role, but very few whose job it is to look at services from a customer perspective. This might be because local government metrics tend to be about asking 'how much' rather than 'why'."

Fujitsu's analysis gave the Council a new perspective on how its citizens were using library services, and enabled it to quantitatively confirm trends that it had suspected but had been unable to substantiate previously.

This type of analysis is critical to local authority service improvements and efficiency improvements, providing specific, actionable recommendations based on actual data from a council's own area. With evidence to back up proposed actions, it becomes easier for all stakeholders to understand the issues fully, and to make decisions based on facts rather than emotional or political preconceptions.

"Rather than using traditional performance indicators such as how many people borrow books, Fujitsu's analysis is a different way of looking at how people actually use services, and would be an invaluable way of analysing any kind of community service provision," says Steward.

As Messenger comments: *"A lot of the knowledge about people who use our services is held by a experienced professionals and not always available to the wider organisation. –Fujitsu's report demonstrated that they could use customer insight data in a usable, actionable form that councils can then combine with their professional knowledge."*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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