

CASE STUDY NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

FUJITSU SOLUTION ENHANCES CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR WELSH AUTHORITY

» THE COST-EFFECTIVE FUJITSU SOLUTION HAD MORE TECHNICAL CREDIBILITY AND, TO FUJITSU'S ADVANTAGE, HAS HAD GREAT SUCCESS WITH SEVERAL OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. «

PHIL COX, PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL



CHALLENGE

Newport City Council, the eighth largest unitary authority in Wales, is responsible for administering all areas of local government within the region. With a yearly budget of £228 million, the council's 7,000 employees provide education, highways, strategic housing, leisure, planning and social services to a population of approximately 137,000 residents.

Several years ago Newport City Council opened a dedicated contact centre containing about 50 seats to deal with enquires from members of the public. By calling just one number, local citizens can obtain information about any of the council's 150 different services.

To perform their duties, the centre's agents relied heavily on the council's IT infrastructure and systems. At the heart of the architecture was a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system running the Oracle CRM LG45 application. However, this outdated CRM system lacked the new facilities that were available through later releases

Recently, the Council's IT department invested in new infrastructure hardware to boost system performance. This upgrade provided the ideal opportunity to replace the CRM system and take advantage of the additional system performance. Moreover, the Council could introduce several new services that the existing CRM system could not handle.

Phil Cox, Principal Consultant, Newport City Council, explains: *"Our existing CRM was under powered, obsolete and lacked the functionality the contact centre required to perform its duties effectively. We needed a modern, fully supported application to act as our CRM platform."*

SOLUTION

To warrant the expenditure, Newport City Council produced an in-depth business case highlighting the benefits of moving from a traditional location-centric CRM to a contemporary CRM employing a citizen-centric approach. The objectives were to simplify and speed up processes, lower call handling times, improve visibility and service delivery, and seamlessly integrate the new CRM system with other back-office systems and processes.

Newport City Council engaged the services of iTrain, an independent Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) change management and integration services company. The Council regards the analyst as a 'critical friend' due to its in-depth knowledge of Oracle applications.

iTrain consultants and the Council's CRM team worked together to analyse and evaluate the existing business processes and then compiled a list of functional changes, which vendors would have to address during the tender process. The Council also conducted an extensive

THE CUSTOMER

- Newport City Council is a large Welsh unitary authority responsible for local government administration
- The authority delivers education, highways, strategic housing, leisure, planning and social services to 137,000 residents



THE CHALLENGE

- Newport City Council needed to upgrade its contact centre's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and adopt a citizen-centric approach to deal with customers more efficiently

THE SOLUTION

- Fujitsu deployed Oracle TeleService Release 12 as the new CRM solution
- Fujitsu worked in partnership with iTrain, an independent change management and integration services organisation

THE BENEFITS

- **CALL HANDLING** – average call handling times have decreased, boosting efficiency
- **SERVICE DELIVERY** – reducing the number of service request types from 140 to 80 has shortened the call handling process, speeding service delivery
- **SIMPLER PROCESSES** – lowering the number of steps in the address change process from 49 to 12 simplifies the procedure, further accelerating service delivery
- **AUTOMATION** – increased process automation releases staff for other tasks, enhancing productivity
- **VISIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY** – seamless integration of the CRM and other back-office systems improves visibility and efficiency

benchmarking exercise, which measured the time of each contact centre activity, allowing the council to compare the performance of the existing CRM system with any new solution.

“We chose to work with Fujitsu as they took the time and effort to really understand what we were trying to achieve. Importantly, Fujitsu also had a great deal of confidence in, and knowledge of, the product. They were also convinced that we could achieve a smooth transition,” continues Phil Cox.

The Fujitsu solution involved deploying Oracle TeleService Release 12 which integrates all the Council’s CRM applications by fully automating the entire request process. The contact centre currently receives enquiries by telephone, e-mail and the web, and routes them accordingly to agents who have instant access to a comprehensive knowledge database of services.

During the project lifecycle Fujitsu made extensive use of special workshops to generate a consultative atmosphere between the Council, iTrain and Fujitsu teams: *“The City Contact Centre has an honest and open culture and Fujitsu integrated very well with that. Fujitsu got to know the agents quickly, which meant that they were comfortable giving honest feedback as and when necessary,”* says Ceri Foot, Contact Centre Manager, Newport City Council.

To help streamline the implementation process, the Council had stipulated in the tender document that the new system should have minimal customisation. Fujitsu deployed the solution without any customisation and consolidated the number of service request types from 140 to 80.

IMPACT

After the new CRM system went live, Newport City Council conducted a second benchmarking exercise to demonstrate how the citizen-centric approach of the Fujitsu solution had radically transformed the way the contact centre works. This revealed that average call handling times had decreased and the solution now only involves 12 steps when agents have to change a citizen’s address. The earlier CRM system used 49 steps. In addition, a pop-up menu automatically checks for any duplicate information, lowering the risk of manual errors.

“Since implementing Oracle TeleService Release 12, the system is a lot faster and more efficient. By moving across to a citizen-centric approach, the process for dealing with customers is much simpler, cleaner and quicker than before. It’s a huge improvement,” states Ceri Foot.

Today, when a customer makes a telephone enquiry, the system logs the call as a service request regardless of whether the request requires any action or the caller simply needs information. This standardised procedure, together with the reduced number of service request types, has simplified the way agents work, accelerating the entire process.

“Before, if someone wanted information about leisure services, for example, each leisure centre was listed separately on the system and the agent had to choose each one in turn. Now, our system lists leisure centres together with a drop-down menu, resulting in rapid information retrieval,” comments Ceri Foot.

The simpler CRM system has also reduced the time taken to train new staff and the Council forecasts that process automation will increase efficiency further: *“We can now automate many more processes through the contact centre. The process for job applications within the council, for example, currently involves a significant amount of manual processing. However, the functionality of our new system means that we are able to automate more and more of this process especially through web self service, generating significant efficiency savings,”* states Ceri Foot.

Looking to the future, Newport City Council plans to use the additional functionality of its new CRM system to open a new face-to-face multi-agency contact centre.

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. Moreover, its management services reduce costs, improve productivity, enhance customer service and deliver a compelling return on investment.

“The move to Oracle TeleService Release 12 with Fujitsu is the biggest thing that the contact centre has undertaken since its launch. But, despite turning everything on its head and completely changing the way that we do things, everything went very smoothly,” concludes Phil Cox.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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