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case study : EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

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Discover how East Riding of Yorkshire Council transformed its IT Services from under-performing to award-winning

Council riding high as IT campaign leaves its mark

An IT Service Management Improvement Program has made its mark on East Riding of Yorkshire Council, helping it to achieve a prestigious Government Award.

The Council's IT Service Desk has become one of the first internal services of its kind in the UK to be granted the Charter Mark, the Government seal of approval for top customer service in the public sector.

At the heart of the IT Service Improvement Program is assyst – the award winning IT Service Management solution from Axios Systems. assyst has been developed from inception according to the guidelines of the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL), thus providing organizations with proven Best Practice IT Service Management.

assyst gave East Riding of Yorkshire Council the framework to dramatically improve its IT Service delivery, which paved the way to its successful Charter Mark accreditation.

The Background

East Riding of Yorkshire Council's IT Service Desk supports 13,500 staff of the Beverley-based authority as well as the IT department's Development and Infrastructure sections, Customer Service Network, Libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and other locations where the public can access computers and the Internet.

Its facilities include Citizenlinks, operational in many rural areas, which enable residents to walk into a kiosk and speak face-to-face to the Authority's Call Centre staff via a video link.

The Service Desk team supporting this large infrastructure was suffering from low morale – the unfortunate result of this was high staff turnover. This necessitated regular employment of outside contractors which made maintaining Service Levels very difficult.

In April 2000 some 10,400 calls were being presented to the IT Service Desk each month. Only 12% of them were being answered, which meant a high call abandonment rate and a large number of customers being left extremely dissatisfied with the IT Services being offered.

Service Desk Manager, Brenda Seage, realized improvements had to be made. It was therefore decided to implement an IT Service Management Project alongside the Authority's "Striding Ahead" Service Improvement Program, with the aim of turning East Riding of Yorkshire Council into one of the top 10% performing councils in the UK by 2006.

Customer Service Centre Network

▶ *industry sector*

Local Government

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"It would have been impossible to achieve the Charter Mark Award without assyst"

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John Humphreys
Principal IT Officer

The Solution

The fundamental first step in initiating the Service Improvement Program was to select the right IT Service Management software solution for the Council.

Principal IT Officer John Humphreys said: "We were looking for something that would initially support the Service Desk function but with the possibility that we could do something more in the Service Management area". He recalled: "We chose assyst with the knowledge in mind that it was so much more than a help desk tool and it was out-of-the-box. We also knew we could implement the tool quickly which would mean faster time to value for us".
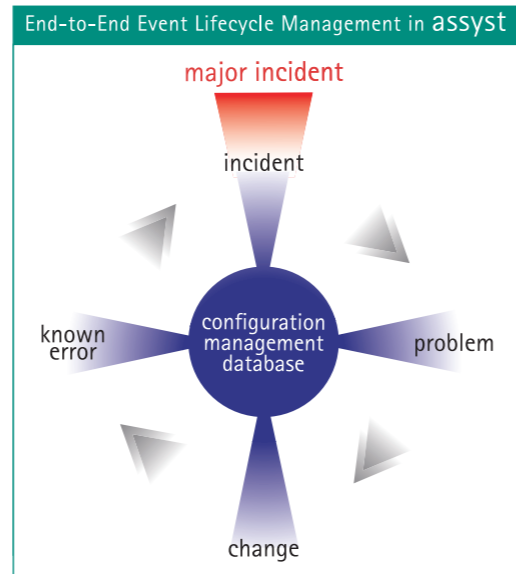
The Axios Systems consultants worked hand in hand with East Riding of Yorkshire Council to ensure the solution was implemented rapidly and within defined timescales to meet user requirements.

The market leading functionality of assyst helped the IT Service Desk quickly realize the benefits of the tool – Model Incidents capability helped automate and handle repetitive calls, whilst assyst Knowledge Management automatically offered solutions to more complex problems, increasing the likelihood of first time fixes. In addition to this, assyst provided support for the Service Level Agreements in place within the Council.

Thanks to the success of the assyst implementation for the IT Service Desk, the decision was made to extend its reach and exploit the additional functionality available within this out-of-the-box solution.

assyst now also provides East Riding of Yorkshire Council with Change Management functionality in order to standardize service delivery and automate processing of IT scheme proposals.

The Council is also investigating the additional functionality available within assyst for Asset and Configuration Management. This would help to manage the 3,500 desktop PCs and 1,400 printers in use across the Authority.

End-to-End Event Lifecycle Management in assyst

major incident

incident

known error

configuration management database

problem

change

The Benefits

By implementing assyst the IT Service Desk was able to dramatically improve its call answer rate – impressively rising from 12% to 92%! assyst was also able to demonstrate how well the backlog of work had been tackled. A total of some 700 outstanding jobs had been slashed to well under 100, thanks to the defined processes available. First time fixes had also been improved: the proportion is currently 33% of all calls. 85% of all calls are resolved within the agreed priorities.

The Service Improvement Program has led not only to huge improvements in performance but transformed the culture of the IT division, according to Service Desk Manager Brenda Seage.

"One of the great things about assyst is that it has been a unifying factor and helped us change the culture here," Brenda commented.

John Humphreys agrees: "There was very little interaction between the IT division's three sections. The Development area, for example, was a long way from us, physically and culturally. Change Management within assyst brought all staff to the same way of thinking. We're a lot closer now."

The Reward

Gaining the Charter Mark accreditation was another landmark for the forward-thinking East Riding of Yorkshire Council. Until last year the Charter Mark was given only to public services dealing directly with the public but was then extended to internal support services.

In order to achieve the accreditation, the IT Service Team prepared a response on the ten sets of criteria required by the Cabinet Office which administers the Charter Mark scheme. The information required for this came predominantly from assyst. Shortly after the submission of the application, an assessor came to appraise the Service Desk. All criteria were successfully met and the Charter Mark was awarded.

"I knew we had improved a lot. More importantly, we were able to prove this because we had all the information at hand in assyst and in our Ericsson telephony system." Brenda Seage said. "We were able to provide written proof that we had done what we had said we had done."

"My team got a real buzz from winning the Charter Mark," Brenda went on. "The mood on some Service Desks can be bad. Service Desk work can be extremely difficult due to the tight deadlines and demands imposed by customers. Most of our customers were amazed to find out there were only a dozen of us - they thought we were a far larger unit because of the volume of work we got through."

"We were able to turn around and say: "Yes, we ARE good!" It has demonstrated to our customers that we are a team of dedicated professionals committed to providing the best possible service with the resources available."

But if the team knew they were good, why bother about the Charter Mark at all? "Now everyone else knows it too!" says Brenda. "Team morale is considerably improved and the profile of the Service has been raised within the Authority."

Would the Council have achieved the Charter Mark without an effective IT Service Management tool?

"It would have been impossible to achieve the Charter Mark Award without assyst ," John Humphreys replied.

Benefits:

- Improved IT Service Management performance
- Improved user satisfaction
- Improved staff morale and retention
- Successful anticipation and management of Change
- Adoption of Best Practice
- Tightened control of IT Infrastructure

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Forestry Commission

"One of the main benefits of assyst is that it allows us to prove to our customers that we are actually providing the service they are paying for in our internal market."

Dundee City Council
www.dundeecity.gov.uk

"The over-riding factor in choosing assyst was the ease of maintenance of the information and its functionality."

East Sussex County Council

"Having a corporate Service Management system like assyst is a point in our favour."

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assyst by Axios Systems

The world's most advanced ITIL - Help Desk & IT Service Management Solution

1 Consolidated solution supporting all ITIL disciplines

1 Truly out-of-the-box, yet configurable user interface

1 Fixed Cost for the solution, implementation & future upgrades

1 Central hub for your entire IT Service Organization

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