

Centralised Information Portal Creates Efficiency Gains



How New Zealand's largest local authority made access to information sources more timely and efficient

Customer Overview

Auckland City Council is New Zealand's largest local authority, servicing approximately 426,000 people in the central Auckland area and the Hauraki Gulf islands.

Auckland City's information management requirements are complicated by the accountability arising from its status as a public organisation. As a local authority, Auckland City is subject to local government laws that govern the way specific operations are run. For this reason, it carefully controls the timing requirements for political and executive meeting agendas and reports, and the various approval stages these documents must pass through. Before it implemented its Olympic Software solution, some of Auckland City Council's processes required manual processing using spreadsheets. Information delays were increasingly becoming an issue.

The Challenge

Auckland City identified that these reporting systems needed improvement – particularly in the areas of tracking – and approving meeting reports, and also in the recording of media coverage relating to the Council.

Auckland City recognised that staff needed tools to help them manage and update meetings and associated reports quickly, efficiently and in a way that enabled all concerned to track the 'approval status' of the numerous reports. They also identified issues with their media monitoring system, in which a contract employee would hand reports to an administrator for collation into a spreadsheet. This was time consuming and often entailed double handling of information.

Auckland City Council's IT team recognised that a centralised system was needed to enable greater visibility of report status against meetings among the multiple users accessing the information. Real-time reporting and tracking mechanisms would remove the ongoing issues of information delays.

The Solution

Auckland City selected an Olympic Software i-builder information management solution to provide a centralised information portal that enables timely changes and updates from staff in a range of different departments. Its two initial projects – Report Tracking and Media Monitoring – addressed two of Auckland City's most pressing information management challenges.

The solutions incorporated the following key i-builder components:

- webfront – The new Report Tracking System was developed from i-builder's web portal offering and included Events, Forms and Power Reports. Little customisation was required.
- webfront – The Media Monitoring System incorporated Forms and Power Reports. The required graphic reporting was handled with a combination of Microsoft SQL Reporting Services, and the i-builder webfront reporting services module. By giving the contractor access to the portal, media information could be entered directly into the system, removing unnecessary double handling.

As Auckland City already had i-builder webfront in place as used for the Report Tracking System, they were able to build the Media Monitoring System as a separate internal web site without additional software cost.

Implementation

Olympic Software provided support to Auckland City's IT team, who managed the implementation internally.

Auckland City's Manager, Business Systems, Peter Blackwell says Olympic managed the solution development and delivery to a tight deadline. A well-defined and phased implementation process followed a design, development, testing, implementation and support process.

"Olympic provided very close support in all aspects of the process from design and development through to testing, training and support."

During the project, Olympic included key users in the system design, resulting in a smoother process for managing reports through approval and delivery.

The Results

Since the implementation of the Report Tracking and Media Monitoring systems, Auckland City has noticed a marked improvement in the efficiency of operational processes that rely on shared information across the various business units.

"We now have better reporting capabilities for the various business units, ensuring that there is a single authoritative source of data, fewer mistakes and less delays," says Peter Blackwell.

The new Report Tracking System now provides real time knowledge sharing that was not possible previously. Political reports can be added to meetings, tracked through required approval processes and status'.

A contract employee working off-site can now record media analysis directly into the new Media Monitoring System. Staff in the communications and marketing department are freed up from the double entry of data, and now need only to conduct quality checks on entered media information and report on the overall media coverage.

Auckland City is now implementing i-builder's weblog/forum & classifieds sites and is considering a number of initiatives that would extend the application of Olympic's i-builder technology.

Highlights

- Auckland City Council was using inefficient, risk-prone manual spreadsheets to manage key reporting information.
- Olympic created Report Tracking and Media Monitoring systems using a combination of i-builder applications.
- Benefits have included reduced double-handling of information, and more accurate centralised information; but most importantly the Council can now meet its compliance requirements.

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