iGrafx®

Better Services and Increased Efficiency Realized Through Program Transformation

iGrafx works with Service Birmingham to help transform Birmingham City Council

Birmingham City Council

SERVICE BIRMINGHAM

The Story

Birmingham is perhaps best known for the part it played in the Industrial Revolution, earning it the nickname 'workshop of the world'. It is now the second city of the United Kingdom and the largest of England's core cities, with a population of over one million people.

Its local authority, Birmingham City Council, is the largest in Europe and currently employs more than 55,000 people. In recent years, the city council has embarked on the most ambitious and far reaching business transformation programme of its kind.

The programme, which began in April 2006 is designed to revolutionise the way the council delivers services to its citizens, and covers all aspects of the council's interaction with people who live, learn, work in or visit the city.

In order to deliver such transformational change, a strategic partnership between Birmingham City Council and Capita was created, known as Service Birmingham. This partnership forms part of the Council's objective to find better and more innovative ways of delivering services for the benefit of employees and citizens.

Based near the city's Jewellery Quarter, with a contact centre and its Training & Innovation Centre at Fort Dunlop, Service Birmingham employs around 500 staff and has the objective of helping the council deliver efficiency savings of more than £1 billion over ten years.

In order to achieve this, the Council has developed nine business transformation programmes, including Corporate Services Transformation (CST), Customer First and Excellence in People Management. At the heart of each of these programmes of transformation is the iGrafx Modelling and Platform.

The Challenge

Birmingham City Council wanted to make fundamental changes to the way it works so that it could deliver better services to its citizens. In order to do this it needed to review what it was actually doing and then identify areas where improvements could be made.

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-Nick Denington CHAMPS2 Method, Learning & Assurance Manager, at Service Birmingham's Centre of Excellence for Business Transformation

To ensure the business transformation programmes ran smoothly, Service Birmingham needed a single language and approach that would provide consistency across the entire council and all of its partner organisations. This would help to reduce the duplication of efforts, remove the re-invention of templates and tools, and minimise both cost and risk.

As a result, Service Birmingham developed CHAMPS2 (www.champs2.info), a common approach designed to assist the programme teams that had been requesting help with methods, tool templates, quality plans and business cases.

CHAMPS2 was trialled with the first Business Transformation programme, entitled Corporate Services Transformation (CST), which focussed on finance, procurement and management information whilst implementing tools and procedures that help staff work more effectively.

In order for the common approach to be successful, Service Birmingham needed to use a mapping tool that would allow programme teams to design, drill down into and share process information at any level and across multiple disciplines, as Nick Denington, CHAMPS2 method, learning & assurance manager, at Service Birmingham's Centre of Excellence for Business Transformation, explained:

"The key to making improvements and savings with large organisations like Birmingham City Council is understanding what is happening right across the business and how processes are interrelated". As a result, it's critical to get a process mapping tool that can be used irrespective of department and process type."

The Solution

Service Birmingham went through a rigorous selection process to ensure the software it chose at the beginning of the programme provided the functionality it needed and also the ability to grow with requirements and the needs of the teams. After examining the full range of solutions available, it chose the iGrafx Modelling and Platform.

"iGrafx just did exactly what we needed it to and a lot more," explained Denington. "It's simple to use, competitively priced, scalable and has extensive functionality that can be added to, as required. It also offers IDEF0 methodology and capabilities, which were essential for our teams looking at logical design."

The iGrafx tools have already been deployed on the programmes that have started, and have been a core element of Corporate Services Transformation (CST) and Customer First.

The individual programme teams, totalling more than 150 people, have used iGrafx for two levels of design—both logical and detailed. The initial high-level maps allow the project management teams to agree to the top-level processes before building a completely integrated model across the entire organization, as Denington explained:

"This means that all processes across the council relating to a programme can be mapped, from the very highest level down to one that will give us functional specs for

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-Nick Denington
CHAMPS2 Method, Learning & Assurance Manager, at Service Birmingham's Centre of Excellence for Business Transformations

individual processes. The 'swimlanes' created by the iGrafx platform also allow the relevant teams to quickly and easily produce training and procedure manuals."

Service Birmingham has also implemented the iGrafx platform to allow everyone across the council to view and drill down into processes, which was not previously possible.

This means that all concerned can spot areas for improvement, and if a process needs to be revised, it can be done quickly and the update is immediately viewable.

The programme teams are also able to distribute the process maps and associated information to anyone within the council in PDF or HTML format, so that they can understand the processes and how they fit together, without having to have iGrafx installed on their machine.

The Benefits

The results of the business transformation programmes that have been started are already apparent within the council improvements—both in terms of improved efficiency and cost savings.

"The Corporate Services Transformation (CST) programme has delivered savings of £9.6m in 2006/07 and £26.1m in 2007/08. This means that the team's ten-year cumulative cashable benefits target of £826m is well within reach."

"At the core of all the business transformation programmes in Birmingham is a clear understanding of what processes do, how they work and where they interrelate— without that we wouldn't be able to spot inefficiencies, duplications and where they fall down," explained Denington.

"iGrafx has given us the ability to build incredibly complex process maps that anyone on the project team can drill down into and find all of the information they need from a single source. This is allowing us to drive efficiencies and cost savings across all of the programmes—and we are already feeling the benefits," he concluded.

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