

Improving operational efficiencies and customer service

SA Public Transport Services Division



Customer

- SA Public Transport Services Division

Industry

- Government

Challenges

- Multiple customer interaction channels and storage silos
- Manual and recurring business processes
- Contractual obligations to bus service providers to centralise customer databases
- Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities
- Reporting inconsistent, limited and time consuming

Solution

- Scalable and flexible to meet PTSD strategic deliverables
- Value for money
- Strict security and data sovereignty compliance

Results

- Access to centralised, single source of truth
- Reliable, consistent customer responses
- Automated workflows
- Reporting, KPI and trend capabilities

Services

- NEC Managed Services

Applications

- Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- Microsoft Azure

The Customer

The Public Transport Services Division (PTSD) within the Government of South Australia's Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure is responsible for Adelaide's extensive public transport system. Adelaide Metro services include bus, trains and trams throughout the greater metropolitan area for 200,000 travellers per day and 66 million trips per year.

The Division's Customer Experience & Innovation Directorate manages customer interactions, feedback and experience for all public transport, which also extends to taxis and access cabs.

Challenges

The feedback network includes not only the communications between PTSD customer service officers and the travelling public, but the division's tram and train operations and three private bus service providers that service more than 1,000 routes across Adelaide. PTSD has contractual obligations to provide feedback and lost property processes for these companies.

“Reports that once took two days to turn around are now generated within five minutes”

Challenges

The division manages up to 12,000 customer interactions a day, via a number of channels including: the Adelaide Metro 1300 InfoLine and InfoCentres; the recently revamped website, service operators and various databases and services.

The Customer Experience & Innovation Directorate commissioned an independent review of its customer relationships and information flows. Its findings highlighted that each entry channel had separate email-based processes to manage feedback. All were stored in different formats and locations.

As a result, PTSD could not guarantee that customers would receive responses in an appropriate, consistent or timely manner. Reports, KPIs and customer data trends were problematic to extract and disseminate, and the accuracy of the data could not be trusted.

Roles and responsibilities regarding customer engagement were not always clear.

Melissa Martin, Project Analyst, Public Transport Services, said: “The feedback loop was rarely closed as customers, staff and management had little visibility into the status and end-point of any particular contact.

Solution

A cloud-based Microsoft Dynamics CRM and Microsoft Azure platform, and NEC Australia's managed services solutions was selected following a robust evaluation process conducted by members of PTSD, DPTI ICT, eGovernment and SA Crown Solicitors.

Importantly, the platform has the ability to grow and integrate with other PTSD and departmental systems. And its scalable licensing – per user, per month – provides complete, cost efficient flexibility. NEC's data centre assurances comply with the SA Government's information security management framework which dictates the standards, guidelines and control mechanisms public sector agencies must use.

Integration between Dynamics CRM and the InfoLine telephony system was made more complex due to the issues of combining the new CRM technologies with the ageing QPC call centre system.

The CRM was designed as a customer service ‘one-stop-shop’ to enhance the customer contact experience and streamline the management of customer interactions and associated business processes.

It was to provide external and internal accessibility for more effective communication; transparency of roles and responsibilities; and unprecedented levels of business critical reporting.

Internal and external stakeholders were brought onto the system in a two-month phased approach. The CRM's universal Microsoft look and feel means it is intuitive to use and ensures its rapid adoption by operational and executive levels, as well as external stakeholders.

For the first time, all government and non-government stakeholders are linked via a single view system. It is a core input to help PTSD understand the voice of its customers.

Results

The shift from an inefficient email-based system to automated workflows from a central repository means that data is entered once and is accurate and accessible to all in a timely manner.

“The project has already been a real success. NEC has done a really good job and all achieved on the shifting sands of a divisional restructure,” said Simon Heaselgrave, Project Manager, Customer Experience & Innovation, Public Transport Services.

Whether the Adelaide Metro customer contact is via phone, email, the website or in person, there is now a consistent approach to enquiry resolution. Individual issues can be tracked, with details captured of the customer's ongoing relationship with PTSD.

Pete McKenna, Strategic Engagement Manager, Public Transport Services, said: “Instead of thousands of emails flying around the building or sitting unattended in an inbox, we now have an automated queuing system to manage feedback and complaints.”

Understanding the Voice of the Customer for quality public transport service

Up to 1200 calls per day are taken on the InfoLine and categorised by the CRM. Customer Service Officers receive 'warm' calls already identified as being, for example, a journey plan or Metrocard enquiry. The operator can see the history of any customer dealings with the Department as the customer history is automatically triggered by the incoming phone number. A brief description of the call and required follow-up is entered, rather than having to select a generic wrap up code in the QPC system.

"Often people contact us for the same, repeated reasons. We are now able to anticipate the style of questions and the type of conversation we're going to have. We are building the 'Voice of the Customer' for future service development and staff training," Pete McKenna said.

The CRM also automates the workflow for enquiries and feedback relating to Adelaide's taxis and access cabs. It identifies the contact as a taxi-related issue and then refers it to compliance and then on through the appropriate external channels for effective intervention and resolution.

The management bugbear of lost property provides an excellent opportunity for positive customer relations. PTSD can log a loss; track where an item is handed in; notify the owner as to which depot to collect it from and at what times; and record that it has been collected.

Dashboards have been built for all key stakeholders. Reporting is now personalised, dynamic and up to date. Executives no longer need to send requests to staff for information or rely on anecdotal feedback. "For the first time, they are able to see trends that are affecting customers – the dashboard will show the top 5 under-performing routes by complaint," Melissa Martin said.

Management has direct visibility into all activities. "Compliance and contractual obligation reporting, which involves external parties such as the bus operators, that once took two days to turn around are now generated within five minutes," Melissa Martin said.

Supervisors and management were limited in their capacity to monitor staff performance and levels of effectiveness. The CRM tracks Customer Service Officer workloads, throughput, and achievements. Importantly, it measures the percentage of first call resolution and the number of calls each staff member is able to close without escalation.

"The project's aim was to use our resources better, build efficiencies and improve customer experiences, not reduce FTE costs," Pete McKenna said. "As we release further CRM functionality we'll be able to reduce the current customer-to-staff ratio and reallocate resources to build capacity in other service areas. We now have the ability to manage information and manage it well."

Moving to the cloud has reduced PTSD's availability/accessibility risk levels. "There is no longer any issue with 'I can't get access to your network' or 'I can't find the information I need'. It has opened our organisation up to more flexible and responsive work practices. Staff who are out of the office or working from home can more easily manage their roles," Melissa Martin said.

The CRM now touches 140 staff within the department and Pete McKenna says he has received an "overwhelmingly positive response from everybody".

Future

In upcoming phases of the project, PTSD will have access to vastly improved customer intelligence. Customer surveys and social media developments will enable it to continue building information sets for phone, shopfront and web teams, and create more self-service options.

It will also have access to on-time running reports, enabling rapid responses to customers and the media with actual, real time statistics.

“The sophistication of our customer experience services is significantly further down the track than we’ve ever been.

There is still work to be done because there’s so much more we can do with our CRM. Its potential is enormous and achievable,” Pete McKenna said.

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