

Commission Audit

Efficiency in customer service centres

Document history

Personnel	Action	Date Modified	Version
██████████	Author	21 st November 2013	0.00
██████████	Revision	22 nd November 2013	0.00
██████████	Reviewer	23 November 2103	0.00
██████████	Approved		0.00

Contents

Document history	1
Contents	2
Introduction	3
Efficiencies	4
Estimate of savings	5
Appendix 1	6
Services NSW Case Study	6
Process Overview	8
About NEXA	9
Contact for this Document:	10

Introduction

In order to fulfil its aim of improved effectiveness of all Commonwealth expenditure, the Commission of Audit ('the Commission') should consider the immediate efficiencies that can be made within current Government service centres through the effective 'sharing' of the retail delivery of service provision to the public.

Our submission outlines the potential improvements that can be made to productivity, service quality, customer satisfaction, value for money and overall effectiveness, through the rationalisation of the number of different federal agency services and the direct consolidation of the retail services under a single or very few brands / locations. Technologies are available that can support the effective service delivery of the multiplicity of requirements and processes, stemming from the many varied departments. Examples of such consolidations (such as Service NSW) have proved to substantially reduce customer interaction times, boost productivity and delivers obvious operational savings and greater client satisfaction.

Whilst we acknowledge some consolidations have already begun (Medicare and Centrelink) we believe that the use of technology will allow further improved efficiencies in current consolidations and allow additional government service agencies to be bundled. NEXA commends the Commission to review the 'Services NSW' formation as a model to follow.

Efficiencies

There are a number of efficiencies that will be gained through the formation of a single shop front for all federal agency services including;

- The reduction of rent costs of multiple retail outlets.
- The substantial reduction of duplicated staffing costs across multiple retail outlets.
- The reduction of web development upkeep costs of multiple service websites.
- The reduction of fixed and variable costs by consolidating and streamlining multiple call centres.
- The reduction of costs involved with multiple data centres.
- Improved service provision.
- Greater case coordination between services.
- Better workflow for greater staff efficiency and job satisfaction.
- Process simplification for customers.
- The reduction of costs involved with auditing multiple retail outlets.

There are further a number of efficiencies that can be made through the implementation of queue management or customer flow technologies to existing Government Service Centres including;

- The reduction of costs involved with large waiting rooms.
- Information on demand to assist staff efficiency.
- Less administrative tasks as scheduling is done electronically.
- Notices are sent electronically to mobiles to remind customers of pre-requisites such as what paperwork to bring.
- The reduction of costs involved with call centres as on glass technology allows service centre information to be open 24/7.
- Worksheets for planning staffing and service levels.
- Improved efficiencies as customers are sent to the service agent who holds the relevant capabilities to help them.
- Continuous service improvements can be made through customer satisfaction feedback.
- Quick service desks for self-transactions.

Estimate of savings

A high level view on the “If you can’t measure, you can’t manage” adage:-

Room Utilisation Reports

Provides accurate data on room utilisation – hence efficiencies can be made by adapting rooms in a different way. E.g. you may find that room utilisation is sub 100% hence better utilisation of rooms could lead to substantial savings.

Staff Activity Reports

Provides accurate data on Staff Activities – hence reviews can be undertaken to better understand how long it takes people to do different and the same tasks – and hence better practises and training can result.

Online Dashboards

Management can see now, in real time – which rooms/desks/staff are In Service and which Staff or Rooms are free – across the country. Management can see real live wait times. All these (and more) allow you to direct and manage customers more efficiently.

Reduces No Shows

Reminder texts/emails can be sent to customers – ensuring they do actually turn up to appointments – and these can be set to send customised reminders such as “Don’t forget to bring your Forms completed”.

Customer Tracker

Understand where you customers are at all times – understand how long they spend with whom – provides accurate and auditable customer visitation reports.

Digital Media

LCD screens can now run targeted adverts from local providers – interspersed with relevant government information – a revenue stream.

Statistics have shown that if customers are able to complete transactions by themselves, this will lead to a customer satisfaction rating of between 95 – 100%. This is pretty good as average customer satisfaction rates are usually between 45 – 80%.

This is evidenced by the efficiencies gained by the NSW Government through the creations of Services NSW. See case study – Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Services NSW Case Study

The Government services of NSW were conducted at over three hundred and eighty shop fronts and offered customers access to 'siloed' teams that never interacted. Add to this the fact that as a customer of Government services within NSW you had over thirty different telephone numbers (dependant on the service you required) and over eight hundred different web sites. It was no wonder that customers were confused and felt frustrated.

On 1st July, Service NSW was created in which a range of Government services were brought together under one banner.

Service NSW is committed to making it easier for NSW residents and businesses to connect with government by providing services that are available at a time and in a way that suits their customers.

Service NSW ethos is simple - they really understand what their customers want such as easier access to government services, faster service and a single point of contact. Other key factors included the ability to simplify transactions and reduce the time required by customers and staff to complete transactions.

Service NSW provide a range of Government transactional services including motor vehicle licensing and registration, trade licences, Births, Deaths & Marriages certificates and much more. Customers can now access all of the Government services at '**one stop shop**' Service Centres as well as through a 24/7 phone service and a new web portal.

Having so many different phone numbers, web sites and service centres were proving to be expensive and operationally inadequate. Service NSW now have dedicated service centres (twenty to date with more opening), one telephone number for customers to contact and one web site acting as the 'shop window'.

Within the 'one stop shop', customers are able to choose how they wish to interact. A customer can either, discuss their issue or query with a concierge, use the self-service kiosk, or express stations to complete their transaction with minimal effort. If required (for licensing regulations) the customers have to interact with service centre staff, they are queued to a member of staff who is most suited to complete the transaction as efficiently as possible. Technology has led to Service NSW defining staff member's core competencies which in

turn, routes the customer to the right member of staff. No longer does a customer get 'passed' from one member of staff to another.

The service centres have been completely re-designed offering open plan, comfortable environments. The digital signage keeps customers informed of a range of services, relevant wait times and public announcements.

The final piece of the jigsaw is the Q-Flow 'customer feedback point'. Customers who have been served can scan their ticket and leave relevant feedback about their experience at the Service Centre. It is this feedback which provides valuable information as to how Service NSW can continually improve their business offerings.

Management within Service NSW are kept up to date with real time customer statistics which allows them to constantly monitor customer flow and customer behaviour within their centre.

As a business, Service NSW has seen customer satisfaction rates rise dramatically. The real time customer feedback states that the survey feedback is now over 97% with customers spending an average service time reduced from thirty minutes to just under eight minutes. This shows that staff have now more time to focus on other duties and continually improve the service that they provide.

Mr Barry O'Farrell NSW Premier stated *"Customers rightly expect the same quality of service from government as they receive from their favourite airline or retailer. I am determined to see an improvement in customer service delivery in the public sector and the early signs are very encouraging."*

"We have also launched a new 24/7 phone service – 13 77 88 – and a customer transaction web portal www.service.nsw.gov.au which provides access to customers day or night all year round."

Mr O'Farrell said the NSW Government handled around 40 million customer transactions a year through nearly 400 shopfronts, 30 call centres, 800 websites and more than 8,000 phone numbers. *"This is not an efficient use of taxpayers' money and critically none of these services join up, so it's no surprise customers have been crying out for change."*

"We have heard that message loud and clear and Service NSW is now building the foundations of a true one stop shop service model where a customer can complete a range of transactions in the one location."

Process Overview

For many years, customers had resided to the fact that if they wanted to interact with a Government agency, they would have to find their nearest service centre, ensure that the services on offer were the right ones for them, travel to the service centre and then, queue. There is no doubt that the customers perception of the service centre is that they will have to wait for an unknown amount of time and at the end of the process, they may not get the answers they want or worse still, have to come back to the service centre to complete the transaction.

For many Government agencies, technology has become an enabler for change however, for many, the issues remain the same.

As technology has moved on, many Government organisations have still not implemented strategies that improve efficiencies or improve the customer experience. Customer service has become one of the hot topics however, many Government agencies have either chose to ignore customer service or have decided to carry on with what they have always done as, 'it's always been that way'. This ethos of, ***'if it isn't broke, why fix it'*** has to change.

Today, technology changes have meant that the general public (customers of Government service centres) have become used to interacting with organisations in multiple ways. The use of Internet and smartphone technologies means that any organisation can now operate twenty four hours a day. Customers know this and expect it. Allowing your customers to conduct business in the way they want ultimately leads to a better service offering and high customer satisfaction rates – but what about efficiencies?

Simply having a web site does not necessarily mean that you offer a better level of customer service. In order to introduce beneficial change, organisations need to look at all areas of their business. For example, how easy is it for a customer to find the answer to their questions? How easy is it for a customer to interact with you in the minimal time possible?

Are you offering customers the ability to self-transact or the ability for customer to pre-book appointments? It may be that your customers don't actually want to see a member of staff and can complete transactions un-assisted. Just this point ensures that customers get the answers that they want (first time) which ultimately leads to a better experience and a greater customer satisfaction rate. For the Government department, it means that staff usually tied up in completing the transaction are now free to focus on other duties.

About NEXA

NEXA Group Pty Ltd (NEXA) prides itself on offering "best practice" technologies that improve operational efficiency and customer experience within Government service centres. The technologies utilise the latest and most commonly known computing principles and standards, making it compatible with other systems and support models.

Our emphasis is on providing forward intelligence and cost efficient solutions which are suitable for multi-site (enterprise) capacities or single sites (standalone systems). NEXA is committed to providing innovative and intelligent solutions that will deliver real benefits to Government service centres, aimed at the following areas:

- Customer flow management
- Online and Self Service Appointment scheduling
- Customer interaction management
- Reception or concierge based customer management
- Targeted Digital Media Signage and media distribution in branches
- Staff scheduling management
- Capacity planning
- Operations efficiency and service level monitoring
- Improvements in customer service via a multi-channel approach

From implementation of our solutions, the net effect on Government service centres will be improved processes, greater opportunities for branding, optimised customer flow and real time management reporting, all of which lays down the foundations for cost effective service delivery and an improved environment within Government service centres.

To date, NEXA works the following Government agencies

Government:

State Revenue Office – VIC	Service NSW – NSW
Office Regulatory Services – ACT	Family Courts Australia – All States
SmartService – QLD	Office State Revenue - WA

Local Government:

Albury City Council – NSW	Wollongong City Council - NSW
Burwood Council – NSW	Waverly City Council – NSW
Canada Bay Council – NSW	Tweed Shire Council – NSW
City of Sydney – NSW	Newcastle City Council – NSW
Coffs Harbour City Council – NSW	Marrickville Council – NSW
Gosford City Council – NSW	Lake Macquarie City Council – NSW
Holroyd City Council – NSW	Hume City Council – VIC

[REDACTED]

Sales & Marketing Manager

NEXA Group Pty Ltd

ABN: 63 117 799 676

Level 6
35 Spring Street
Bondi Junction
NSW 2022

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]