



Comspective

Communications and Contact Centre Strategy

Case Study

Westminster City Council

Situation and Challenges

The City of Westminster, at the heart of a world and capital city, with its unrivalled historic environment and strong economic base, results in demands on its services unequalled amongst its peers. Unsurprisingly, Westminster City Council is one of the busiest local authorities in the country, dealing with some of the most complex developments, policies, social, economic, conservation and public realm and city management issues.

The Council is committed to providing world class city management in order to deliver strong communities and provide excellent services to achieve the Council's vision of "Better City, Better Lives". The aim is to make everyone in Westminster feel more involved in their local community. The Council wants to make it easier for people to make connections with one another, and to feel more connected to vital services and information.

The Council provides a wide range of services to meet the diverse needs of residents, businesses and visitors to Westminster. For example:

- The Council is responsible for 1,000 kilometres of roads and footpaths, making it one of the biggest in the country.
- Over 12,000 planning applications are received each year.
- On average, the Council receives 8,000 licensing applications per year and has 2,964 licensed premises - almost three times the London average.
- The Council conducts the third highest number of civil ceremonies in England and Wales from 130 licensed venues.



The Council was billing Business Rates to just over 35,000 companies and Customers were accessing these services via a number of channels including online, through interactive voice recognition (“IVR”), via telephone and face-to-face (through the Post Office). Phone and email channels were being delivered by an outsourced Contact Centre partner.

Compspective consultants were brought in by the Council to provide advice on all elements of the Contact Centre Service Provider procurement and the subsequent transition of services.

Research showed that customers wanted the convenience of being able to discover and do things online and expected high-quality, ‘anytime, anywhere’ access from a range of devices.

To meet this customer demand and as part of its commitment to the ‘Better City, Better Lives’ programme, the Council’s vision was to enable and empower its customers to transact with its services quickly and easily at any time and through any channel. Part of this vision was delivered through the transition of Council Contact Centre services to a new Service Provider and in a new operating model that embodied Channel Shift signposting to new online functionality via the Council’s new website.



Approach

Consultant Peter Venn was selected for this role due to his wealth of experience and skills in four key areas:

- Setting up and managing Contact Centres.
- Developing and implementing targeted learning and development strategies.
- Service partner management.
- Self-serve channel switch programmes.

Due to his in depth understanding of how outsourced Service Providers operate, he contributed to a clear, concise and well-defined Service Specification, guaranteeing that responders could be evaluated effectively and consistently.

Additionally, using the commercial expertise around how service providers' charging mechanisms, a pricing model was recommended within the Invitation to Tender (ITT) that ensured any contract could be managed effectively, with KPIs that provided early warning against any behaviours that could drive cost up.

However, the essence of the approach with Westminster was around people. The consultants understood that, in a period of great change, it is people, not processes or technology, which will create success or risk failure. By engaging with internal colleagues in the public service departments, Procurement, Legal, Finance and Contracts Management, Comspective were able to ensure Council contribution and buy-in throughout the programme.

Comspective's involvement spanned several phases:

Invitation to Tender

- Working with the Services to document a robust requirement that service providers could understand and quote against.
- Recommending a suite of KPIs that would drive the right behaviours and provide an early warning of bad habits.
- Recommending a set of pricing models that would encourage channel shift.



Tender Evaluation

- Including design of evaluation matrix in 3 levels across multiple method statements.

Transition Planning

- Reducing transition risks through creating and managing a multi-level project plan that allowed for a managed transition of services over a 4-month period.

Service Readiness

- Ensuring that all channel shift opportunities were captured and embedded in the Service Specifications and system scripts, so that the new operating model could be assured.

Training

- Developing a multi-faceted induction programme that could bring Westminster to the remote Contact Centre and create a true affinity to the Brand Values and essential behaviours of the Council.

Results

- The ability for customers to complete end-to-end transactions using self-service, thus enabling channel shift away from telephone and face-to-face channels towards self-service, while delivering improved customer experience.
- Empowered Service Partner staff, with a true affinity and appreciation of the Brand, Values and Culture of Westminster City Council.
- Efficient and effective assisted self-service where pure self-service is not possible.
- Improvements in the back office thus reducing process failure and removing inefficiency.
- Customer intelligence to help shape future service delivery.
- Cost savings of around £6 Million per annum against the previous Contact Centre contractual arrangement.