

CASE STUDIES

Case #1 – A CCESS NOVA SCOTIA

1. Background

The concept of client-centricity refers to programs, services and information designed and delivered in ways that respond to client (citizen and business) needs. For example, a citizen may require access to many government services to change his or her name or address or to deal with the death of a loved one. A business owner may require access to many government licences or permits to open or expand a business. Clients want to be able to access all or most of the services they require from one place. Access Nova Scotia aims to satisfy this desire.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) was created in 2000. In 2004, this department combined its service delivery, registry and information management services, registrars of motor vehicles and joint stocks, and its alternate program delivery divisions to form Access Nova Scotia. At this time, Access Nova Scotia was offering many services on behalf of the provincial government, but service silos existed between the main areas of land services, vital statistics and services offered traditionally as motor vehicle, thereby making it difficult to maximize resources and share data and technology. As well, more and more departments were asking Access Nova Scotia to deliver their programs and services without the full funding and resourcing coming along with these requests. This realignment to Access Nova Scotia came with a mandate to develop and implement a more integrated approach to operations and service delivery.

Access Nova Scotia had a new management team with a new mandate. Particularly, they were tasked with leading staff to a new service delivery model that looked at service improvements across programs and getting at the cumulative impact for clients. To that date, programs had a fair bit of autonomy in delivery – for example land programs and motor vehicle programs did not use the same delivery model or share strategic direction in technology and business planning.

As a first step, the executive of Access Nova Scotia initiated a process in February 2005 to:

- Establish clarity with respect to the focus and scope of Access Nova Scotia's mandate/role; and
- Develop a strategic plan/framework to guide the development and integration of Access Nova Scotia and its service delivery model(s).

A research and consultation process conducted over the course of February and March 2005 included the development of:

- A high-level profile of Access Nova Scotia's clients, services, functions, assets and infrastructure;
- A high-level profile of current and emerging practice in integrated service; and

- A high-level profile of current perceptions with respect to Access Nova Scotia's government-wide mandate and key opportunities and issues for consideration.

The results of the research were presented to the Executive in early April in preparation for planning sessions with Access Nova Scotia management. Strategic planning sessions were then conducted to develop a draft Access Nova Scotia mission, (organizational) vision, guiding principles, critical success factors and strategic directions. The results of those sessions are recorded in Access Nova Scotia's vision document *One Client One Vision*. The contents of this document were communicated to managers and shared with staff, and for the next year it was used to direct decisions made within Access Nova Scotia as the reorganization - including the integration of the registries (land, vital statistics and business) - was completed.

As management and staff became more familiar with the new direction, it became clear that more definition of what integrated service delivery looks and feels like in Access Nova Scotia was required. Over the spring and summer of 2007, a five-year strategic plan was developed to bring to life the vision of Access Nova Scotia outlined in *One Client One Vision*. This strategic plan is directly aligned with the six strategic directions adopted by Access Nova Scotia and the larger framework provided by the Nova Scotia Government's *Corporate Path* for providing accessible services to Nova Scotia citizens.

Access Nova Scotia currently delivers some integrated services. However, integration and client centricity are not inherent in its processes, practices and infrastructure. It has an annual planning process that feeds into the Departmental yearly plan as required by central government. It also prepares yearly divisional operational plans that the organization is currently working to align with the vision of integrated services. The five-year Integrated Service Delivery Plan was not intended to replace either of these. Instead it was required to set a direction for future yearly business and operational plans and ensure processes, practices and infrastructures were in place to support integrated service delivery.

The five-year Strategic Plan is intended to provide management with the initiatives and scope required to guide the organization into becoming the client-centred organization described in the *One Client One Vision* document. The process of developing the Plan involved a team of eight Directors (two from each of the four divisions of Access Nova Scotia) over a period of four months. A framework with seven key areas was utilized (adopted from "A Framework for Client – Centred Service Delivery In British Columbia") to help develop the strategic plan and help maintain the integrated service delivery focus. The seven areas Access Nova Scotia used were:

- Client Engagement and Marketing
- Service Integration
- Channel Integration
- Business Process
- Technology and Information Management
- Organization and People
- Financial Sustainability

The approach was a simple one – defining the as-is and the to be, and identifying any gaps. Then, key initiatives to close these gaps were defined and a reasonable and

effective five-year road map for implementation was defined. Several steps were required to determine the impact that each project would have on moving the organization towards the desired state of *One Client One Vision*:

1. Aligning the identified “To Be” states and gaps with the 6 strategic directions (as part of the Gap Analysis)
2. Determining the relative importance (or weight) of each of the 6 strategic directions based on stakeholder feedback
3. Determining which gaps each strategic initiative addressed
4. “Scoring” strategic initiatives based on both how many gaps they addressed and the average relative importance of the gaps addressed.

The strategic plan was accepted by the Steering Committee (Access Nova Scotia's Executive Team) and presented to the Deputy Minister in the late summer of 2007. A two day off-site meeting for all Access Nova Scotia management (48) introduced them to the plan and provided an opportunity for discussion on priorities and resources. A governance structure is underway and project implementation has already begun.

Access Nova Scotia continues to move toward becoming an organization that delivers true integrated service delivery. The sheer breadth of the change that is required is a significant challenge, yet having the support of the Nova Scotia government as a whole makes a difference.

Access Nova Scotia is part of a broad government-wide move towards service improvement. The Nova Scotia Government leadership document “The Corporate Path”, includes the priority of improving the quality and accessibility of services for citizens. Also, the government-wide Better Regulations Initiative (BRI) to reduce red tape and bureaucracy for businesses has many of its success measures within the programs and services of Access Nova Scotia. Access Nova Scotia is increasingly seen as the service delivery arm of the provincial government. Currently, it covers only the non-social services; however, this may change as government requires more efficiency and Access Nova Scotia gains capacity.

2. Organizational Design and Governance Arrangements

Access Nova Scotia is one of four units within SNSMR and is led by an assistant deputy minister. The other three units are Municipal Services, Assessment Services, and Program Management and Corporate Services. SNSMR is mandated, through the Public Service Act, to provide “access to government services and programs... through integrated service delivery (ISD) programs and services...” The Corporate Registries Division of Access Nova Scotia ensures that compliance with legislation / regulation pertaining to delivery of all services and programs is met, and protects public interest and safety.

Access Nova Scotia is striving to position itself as “the service delivery arm of government” – marketing itself as a service provider for other departments and seeking to consolidate its front and/or back office functions as a means of improving service across government and creating economies of scale. As it moves forward, it will only

pursue opportunities to take on the service delivery function on behalf of other departments when it make sense as a means of advancing its core mandate or improving its core programs/services *and* it reflects the most appropriate role for it within the context of the partnership involved.

3. Business Model

Access Nova Scotia's overriding principle is "making it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with government." More specifically, its focus is on actively demonstrating and facilitating excellence in client-centric¹ government service delivery, information management, and decision support by

- Providing access to government information and services where and when citizens and businesses want them
- Ensuring that access channels and venues are designed to meet the evolving needs/preferences of citizens and businesses
- Facilitating citizens' and business' interaction with other departments and levels of government, and
- Reducing red tape through integration and streamlining of business and application processes.

3(a) Activities, Channels and Migration

Access Nova Scotia provides a multi-channel service delivery network that delivers over 123 programs and services and handles over 13,000 client interactions each day through more than 37 physical locations and the province's call centre. Moreover, citizens also obtain information and services through the Access Nova Scotia website to which an increasing number of citizens are migrating for government service. Access Nova Scotia office locations provide hands-on information, forms, applications, and the following services:

- Transactions - Registry of Motor Vehicles, Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Vital Statistics, and Land Registry
- Information - Regarding federal, provincial, and municipal programs and services, public access computer terminals, and job search information
- Counseling and Mediation - Debtor assistance, residential tenancies, driver testing, and driver counseling.

Access Nova Scotia is currently developing its Channel Strategy. Its strategic plan envisages movement towards such achievements as modular system components for delivering services across channels, capturing data once and using it many times, and putting in place a standard technical authentication solution, enabling the client to choose the channel – so that whether the client walks in to a physical location, calls the call centre, or accesses information and services on the web – the infrastructure used is the same.

3(b) Funding

The table below shows the appropriations from government, net of some recoveries that are retained in the department. Typically, revenues gained go to “general revenue” for the province and do not form part of the operating budget. In addition, each year, Access Nova Scotia can apply for funding under the province’s Tangible Capital Asset program, for initiatives that are more than \$250k. Finally, Access Nova Scotia has a strong partnership/relationship with Unisys Canada, which is a non-financial asset against which some development and ongoing operational support development work is conducted. (Personal Property Registry, Atlantic Canada On-Line (ACOL) etc.)

Access Nova Scotia 07/08 Budget					
(in 000's)	Corporate Registries	Service Delivery	Info Mgmt	Strategy & Innovation	Total
Salaries	5,310	21,706	6,789	552	34,357
Travel Expenses	142	384	184	13	723
Professional Services	98	1,841	6,739	25	8,703
Supplies	656	6,238	3,364	23	10,281
Other (Software, data centre, etc.)	872	939	3,719	73	5,603
Grants	3	70	0	0	73
Expenditures	7,081	31,178	20,795	686	59,740
Total Recoveries	(526)	(3,761)	(4,358)	0	(8,645)
Net Expenses	6,555	27,417	16,437	686	51,095

3(c) Human Resources Issues

In April and May of 2007, meetings were held with all SNSMR managers as part of the department’s HR Renewal Initiative. The purpose of the meetings was to identify key management issues and seek feedback on how human resources (HR) can best serve managers for optimal performance. This information has been shared with senior management and the management of HR Corporate Services Unit (CSU) and will be used to help streamline and improve HR processes and build a CSU infrastructure that best serves and supports the needs of the Department.

Issues covered in the report include the following:

- Corporate/department HR policies and processes need to be reviewed and amended to ensure managers' ability to hire the best qualified candidate for vacant positions and/or manage assigned resources effectively.
- Improvements are needed in work processes to reflect and address current-day operational issues, including more flexibility to hire part time, hiring approval, timely client support and service, and more effective communications and follow through relating to strategic initiatives.
- The current system is not responsive to organizational change or the constant evolution of skills required for a given position.
- Managers require a formal orientation to the department in addition to tools to support employees with training and development and career planning.
- A customer service orientation, which includes an accountability mechanism, should be adopted and consistently demonstrated by all staff.

Yearly performance appraisals are done on all employees of Access Nova Scotia. As well, pay increments are attached to performance for Management. Access Nova Scotia also has an employee recognition program and a premier's award program for delivery of outstanding service.

Although there are no specific additional training initiatives underway separate from on-the-job training and coaching and monitoring, improvements on customer relationship and knowledge management tools are being considered.

3(d) Performance Measurement

As part of its five-year plan, Access Nova Scotia is in the process of determining Key Performance Indicators. A project is underway, in partnership with St. Mary's University, for some preliminary research and examination of the best approach. Our Strategic Direction (as indicated in *One Client One Vision*) speaks about improving services to businesses, services to citizens, technology and data, service culture, partnerships and internal capacity, so these areas will be examined for potential performance measures. Also included in Nova Scotia's mandate is the role of protecting public interest and safety which brings much of the challenge but the importance of which merits measuring.

3(e) Use of Information Technology/Web 2.0

Access Nova Scotia depends on technology for almost everything it does. Common shared IT systems across departments include SAP (HR), and ERP (Financial). As well, its business registry (NSBR) shares services across government and with Canada Revenue Agency and Workers Compensation. The Point of Sale system also is used across the department. Internally, technologies to share client information (client management and knowledge management) are being considered. RSS is used on the Nova Scotia Government web page.

3(f) Partnerships

Access Nova Scotia has partnerships with many organizations for many purposes. Illustrative partnerships are shown in several categories below.

Research: Halifax is rich in academic opportunities through its five universities plus community colleges. Access Nova Scotia has built partnerships with universities to get valuable research and projects done at a reduced cost while helping students fulfill their academic requirements. Working with students also profiles the Nova Scotia Government as a place to build a career.

Client engagement: Access Nova Scotia has strong partnerships with many Chambers of Commerce organizations and consults them often on feedback on service changes. Other business organizations are consulted on many matters, including legislation and regulation changes.

Businesses: In addition to a Better Regulation Initiative aimed at making it easier to do business in the province, Access Nova Scotia recently partnered with the federal and municipal governments to launch BizPaL in Nova Scotia. BizPaL is an online service that simplifies the business permit, licence and other compliance regulation process for entrepreneurs, governments, and third party business service providers.

Inter-jurisdictional collaboration: SNSMR partners in various ways with its federal counterpart, Service Canada, including collaboration on the sharing of vital events information. Access Nova Scotia is also active in both the Public Sector Service Delivery Council (PSSDC) and the Institute for Citizen Centred Service (ICCS).

4. Community Engagement

Some of Access Nova Scotia's partnerships help to engage the community in improving service delivery to citizens. The key advantages of establishing relationships with stakeholders in the community representing various client segments are providing "one government" for citizens, ensuring a bricks and mortar community presence, cost and resource savings, streamlined processes, improved communication between government jurisdictions, innovative problem solving and cost sharing.

5. Issues Encountered/Challenges

The major challenges facing Access Nova Scotia include:

Understanding and communicating the meaning of integrated service delivery and its benefits:

- Limited common understanding of integrated service delivery (ISD) within the department/staff and therefore no real engagement or "buy in".

- Risk of staff not seeing the need for the ISD Plan and therefore unable to get the “buy-in” within the organization for a service delivery culture change (we already give great service – why change a good thing?)
- Taking the time to highlight and profile successful cases of ISD, some of these may be smaller, like cross training of staff and/or managers, and some may be larger systems integration and data sharing to enable improved service delivery.

Creating a service delivery culture from the inside out:

- Changing the culture along with systems, processes and infrastructures (and vice versa)
- Keeping a long-term vision in a demanding and fast paced delivery environment.
- Keeping management focused on long-term ISD results.
 - Building ISD targets into management performance targets and the performance appraisal system

Busting Silos:

- Lack of resources (human and financial) to get the foundations required to support ISD in a timely manner. This can include getting the supporting technology in place or finding time and resources to cross train on services.
- Risk of too much change without proper change management to bring staff along.
- Aligning the budget with ISD priorities, so that gains can be made across programs. The greatest gain is made when improvements are made across programs getting at the cumulative impact for clients while preserving and enhancing public interest and safety
- Creating flexibility in human resource practices, e.g. the ability to move resources around.

Creating and maintaining service channels:

- Costs of increasing self-serve channels through technology.
- Affecting the channel of choice without decreasing service.

Client Engagement

- Taking the time and resources to continually benchmark service levels and get feedback on service improvement opportunities.

6. Critical Success Factors

Among the learning points that can be drawn from Access Nova Scotia’s experience to date are the following:

- Measure progress on Key Performance Indicators
- Make ISD part of the Business Planning Cycle (ISD measured within)
- Include ISD as part of all meeting agendas (Executive, Director, and Management meetings)
- Realize that ISD requires communications and change management effort
- Continue with strategic planning. The organization will get better at it as time goes by.
- Ensure that ISD is seen as supported and driven by senior management.

- Recognize that everyone needs to understand what the service agency is trying to do and where it is going.
- Realize that ISD needs to become part of the internal culture before it becomes believable to clients.

7. Next Steps

The next stages in Access Nova Scotia's development are spelled out in its Five Year Strategic Plan. They include decisions on management of the Plan (e.g. governance, processes, integration of current planning processes and projects). The next project phase includes

- Implementation of management structure and processes such as reporting frequency, impact analysis, capacity planning, decision requests, change requests
- Detailed project scoping
- Confirming the desired road map (confirm resource availability, measures, timing, etc.)
- Project selection/kickoff
- Continual monitoring.

A web site redesign that is planned for 2008/2009 will impact significantly the ease and accessibility to information required to service clients.

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