

MANITOBA

Service Manitoba

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Overview

In 1993, the government of Manitoba launched *Service First Initiatives*, which is now an agency called Service Manitoba. The purpose of this initiative is to search for better ways to meet the needs of the citizens of the province. The concept of Service Manitoba is simple: to find cost-effective ways to meet responsibilities, and to enhance the quality of, and access to, government services in Manitoba.

Service Manitoba offers support and co-ordination offers a variety of services and products through education, communication and recognition of successes. These include:

- free individual consulting services to departments wanting to improve their quality of customer service or manage workflow adjustments;
- workshops aimed at staff development;
- sharing of interjurisdictional best practices and common issues through participation in organisations such PSSDC; and
- management of a fund created to encourage and assist in innovations that could improve service or reduce costs.

Service Manitoba has initiated changes to government business processes that reduce paperwork and streamline delivery to the public by linking government systems together to provide services when, where and how people want them. In the years ahead, Service Manitoba will continue to encourage innovation and put the citizen first.

Initially, much of the focus of Service Manitoba and its predecessor was on technology and improving service delivery through a wider range of on-line services. This single-channel approach was largely directed at services to business. It is

interesting to note that this approach (i.e. deep first, wide later) was opposite to how most jurisdictions addressed integrated service delivery. It was some time later that the government decided that it was important to target individuals as well as businesses. At the same time it was acknowledged that more was needed than just integrated back ends and technology infrastructure; and the focus shifted to education and social services, and bridging the digital divide.

Currently, Service Manitoba is working on integrating across the three channels (i.e. Internet, telephone and counter) as well as across the ministries. In particular, the At Your Service Manitoba In-Person Service Delivery Strategy project is developing a counter network that offers customers single-window access to a wide range of basic transactions from different ministries. Rather than the deep and narrow approach of earlier initiatives, these counters will be broad and not very deep. Many ministries and services will be represented, but there will be few, if any, specialist or escalated activities offered.

It is expected that a pilot counter location will be launched in Brandon in early 2004. It will offer referral and information, all government forms, permits and basic payments.

There are currently 15 counters that are integrated in some way, and long term vision proposes approximately 30 counter locations to provide services to as many communities as possible.

A key deliverable of the At Your Service Manitoba In-Person Service Delivery Strategy is to leverage the existing single-window service offerings and brand them into a single counter network. Currently, initiatives such as the Manitoba Business Centres and the Single Window for Aboriginal Services have no relationship to each other in the public's mind. The goal is for an affiliation to a common brand called At Your Service Manitoba.

Project Catalysts/Drivers

There was a sense at the political level that though there was a lot of money spent on integration, and there were many examples of successes, the activities were not really co-ordinated. Furthermore, surveys showed that citizens sometimes found it difficult to figure out how to access government services.

At the same time, there was a desire to maximise the large investment in technology, and from these discussions came the recognition that all three channels needed to be integrated in order for service levels to really increase. Service Manitoba was seen as an opportunity to brand the province, make citizens more aware of the services that were offered and improve service delivery by leveraging mature models of integrated service delivery in other Canadian jurisdictions.

Partnerships

For the Brandon pilot, 9 ministries collaborated with information, staff and marginal amounts of money. Two ministries are leading the initiative: Family Services and Housing, and Training and Advanced Education.

Achievements

The project is still in its early days. The pilot has been approved and there has been some funding secured.

Challenges

Culture and Identity

Bringing all the different identities (e.g. staff culture, service branding) together in a single physical location can require considerable negotiation and may include a period of co-branding as a transition phase.

Silos

No significant headway has been made in breaking down the hierarchy of organisational silos.

Physical Infrastructure

It is important not to underestimate the challenges of getting people to move and create space for others. Service Manitoba's strategy is to develop the franchise model (exact physical specifications included) and when lease renewals come up they will be able to require that Service Manitoba counters meet this standard. Existing locations will not be forced to adhere to the model, and the model will allow for variation according to availability of space and the size of the community. However, the core base of services will be consistent across offices.

Critical Success Factors

Ongoing Operational Support

Ministries need to continue to support the integrated channels beyond implementation or service levels will suffer.

Flexibility

The project team needs to be sensitive to the unique needs of each community and be able to “adjust the model on the fly” as appropriate.

Support for Staff

The quality of the service to customers is largely dependent on the front-line staff. In order to attract motivated, capable, service-oriented individuals, the government has to be prepared to keep up with the technology to keep them connected to the customer and each other. Examples include: on-line training modules, and web-enabled workstations so staff can swivel the monitor and help customers access on-line services; build a virtual network to keep them connected.

Vision for ISD

While ISD appears to be well-recognised as a concept with a lot of benefits, and different departments are moving in the direction of clustering services, it is not clearly articulated for the government as a whole. Part of the difficulty is that ISD can be challenging to work out for a number of reasons:

- Logistics
- Culture
- Policy differences and conflicting objectives
- Different rewards
- Staff committed to a particular area of government (i.e. advocates in a particular policy area who don't feel passion for government services in general)
- Branding
- Turf

Addressing these challenges is what it will take to achieve true integration. It is important to consider that ISD will never be complete because the environment and circumstances are always changing.

Winnipeg Integrated Service Delivery Initiative

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Overview – Department of Family Services and Housing Integrated Service Delivery Initiative

Vision and Goals for Integrated Service Delivery

Family Services and Housing will work together through an integrated, holistic approach to ensure Manitobans have better access to the services they require. The goals of the Department are to make it easier for Manitobans to access the services they require, and to better address the needs of Manitobans requiring services.

Background

In March 2001, a process was initiated to integrate service delivery systems for program areas related to housing and family services. The Department of Family Services and Housing began the service transformation through several workshops with staff in the summer of 2001, which resulted in the formation of a number of workgroups. These meetings were held to discuss new organisation structures and strategies to improve services to the citizens.

The outcome was a major reorganisation of the Department and consolidation of service delivery as a single division. The reorganised Department consists of three program divisions: policy and program development, central administration, finance and information technology supports and service delivery.

It was recognised that many recipients of social services had multiple, diverse issues and that it was difficult for many to contend with the fragmented service points. Furthermore, with limited resources and caseload pressures in many programs, it was becoming more difficult to address the needs of the citizens. The Department chose to address the needs of the citizens and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery through a more streamlined, co-ordinated, citizen-centred approach. The integration plan had to address alignment of front-end (public facing) with back-end (office)

operations and include policy and program areas as well as field delivery systems.

The Department of Family Services and Housing is “committed to social, economic and labour market inclusion for all citizens.” It aims to provide financial support, to provide support for persons with disabilities, and to protect children and individuals and promote a healthy environment for them to live in.

Steps to Integration

As part of the integrated service delivery initiative, the Department approached integration as a process and identified the following five stages:

- Fragmented Services: separate case management and limited information sharing;
- Co-operation: separate case management and informal information sharing;
- Co-ordination: some joint case-planning and formalised information sharing;
- Collaboration: co-management of shared cases and information sharing protocols; and
- Integrated Services: seamless service delivery and interdisciplinary teams.

The Department realised that different areas might be at different stages in the integration continuum.

Overview – Winnipeg Integrated Service Delivery Initiative

The goal of the Winnipeg Integrated Service Delivery Initiative (WISI) is to deliver a combination of health and services in an integrated fashion on a geographical basis in the City of Winnipeg. The partners, Manitoba Family Services and Housing, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and Manitoba Health, are committed to this approach. In some cases, service delivery will be through Community Access Centres (three currently in various stages of development) and through existing service points networking to provide a ‘virtual’ access centre. The locations and networked offices will offer one-stop shopping for a broad range of health and social services and bring services “back to the community.” For the citizen, this will mean less time and travel, ability to access multiple services through one convenient community location, improved service response

times, and improved co-ordination between services. For the government, this will mean less duplication and fragmentation, and increased support and stimulus for community activity and development.

Partners

- Manitoba Family Services and Housing (services include Child and Family Services, Child Day Care, Children's Special Services, Employment and Income Assistance, Housing, Employment Supports for Adults with Disabilities)
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (services include Community Mental Health, Home Care, Long Term Care, Primary Care Public Health, Services to Seniors)
- Manitoba Health

Prior to WISI, each organisation had separate program mandates, delivery systems and boundaries. There were multiple locations for accessing services, and many offices were located outside the community they served. The vision of integrated community-based health and social services is the provision of efficient, effective and holistic services which are person/family focused and seamless, and which recognise the principles of population health and primary health care.

The guiding principles of this integrated service delivery initiative are:

- commitment to involving the community in decisions that affect their lives;
- programs and services that are person and family centred, and community based;
- service delivery that is accessible, coherent, responsive, flexible, seamless and comprehensive;
- a service system that is output-based and accountable;
- commitment to a shared vision and culture;
- commitment to decentralised and streamlined decision making;
- commitment to continuous quality improvement and evaluation;
- commitment to open two-way communication and reciprocal responsibility; and
- commitment to value staff.

Challenges

Developing a Common Culture

Programs can bring very different philosophies and cultures to an integration initiative, and this can lead to clashes. Furthermore, some staff have specific passions and areas of expertise and are concerned that a more 'generic' approach to service may hurt the quality of service under the current delivery structure. However, staff feel that service to citizens is their highest priority (based on a survey of staff conducted fall 2002). As such, support for integrated service delivery is based on service improvement. Building pride in a bundle of programs rather than an individual program is the current focus. Time and effort will be required to provide training and information support to ensure that staff are comfortable in a multi-program environment. Bringing together disparate groups so that service delivery is consistent yet respects differences involves:

- Considering the needs of staff and managers in different regions;
- Identifying and rationalising the core business;
- Establishing a plan for training staff and ensuring continuous career opportunities;
- Co-ordinating policy development and identify significant differences that would affect policy development; and
- Ensuring a smooth transition and the management of change.

Creating a Sense of Ownership

Currently, WISI is in the co-location phase. Staff have not yet changed physical location, but planning for co-location and aspects of integration is underway. The first joint ACCESS centre is scheduled to open in the fall of 2003. Managers are currently meeting with staff to involve them in developing plans for integration. The goal is to create sustainable integration by creating a sense of ownership amongst the staff.

Allowing for Difference

It is important to recognise that citizens in different parts of the province may have different needs, and that different solutions for service delivery are acceptable within the boundary of established service standards. Decisions about the "what" will be made centrally, but decisions about "how" are devolved to the regions to the greatest extent possible.

Managing the Project Effectively

Planning for ISD and WISI has been going on for a little more than two years. Timelines could have been shortened and scope creep avoided if task groups had been asked to do less and focus more. The fact that the individuals assigned to the task groups also had “day jobs” did not make this easier to address. Dedicated project groups might help move timelines along more quickly, but there can be drawbacks to this approach as well. A team that is buried on a specific project can lose grounding in how programs/services and citizens needs are changing. Whichever approach is chosen – a special project team or team members that take on a project in addition to their regular duties – there has to be enough co-ordination between the work groups to cross the boundaries between them and make sure the pieces fit together.

Agreeing to a high-level end state vision is an important part of negotiating the partnership. However, perfecting it can be to the detriment of actually achieving substantive change for the citizen. Time may be better spent setting checkpoints along the way and concentrating on short and medium term deliverables. Transformation is never as precise over the long term as people want it to be, and inertia often results from trying to control what cannot be controlled.

Integrated service delivery can be difficult to negotiate logistically, culturally and politically, and while each challenge is unique, overcoming any one independently is insufficient for realising sustainable change.

Critical Success Factors

Leadership

In choosing the team to lead a change initiative, it is important to choose individuals with both a high-level of commitment and a track record of success in integrating service delivery. This instills confidence that the group will stay the course and see the initiative through to implementation.

Managed expectations

When seeking input from citizens about service delivery, questions should only be asked if you are able to address the concerns or wishes raised in the answer.

Citizen Focus

Integrated service delivery will improve access to government services and programs. By focusing on the citizen and knowing that the initiative being worked on is fundamentally a good thing for the public, it is easier to continue when the work gets frustrating.