

Case Study – Customer-oriented Restructure

Business Challenge

The centralised Communications Unit within this large State Government Department had been operating with single resources aligned to specific business areas. The Unit had not adjusted in any way to meet the growing needs of the expanding Department. Issues included:

- A significant level of activity at the portfolio level, swamping any attempts to deliver ‘whole of Department’ strategic level messages and critical projects
- The ‘portfolio focus’ had also restricting any prioritising across the Department and the ability to transfer resources in response to peaks and troughs
- Significant staff turnover was evidence that workload was heavy and inequitable

Approach

The project approach was oriented around two primary considerations – the need to respond to the needs of Departmental customers (the business) and the need to take an objective process-oriented perspective

- A significant number of grouped or individual sessions were held with Departmental Communications Users – covering 9 Ministers’ Offices and 14 Portfolios
- A process model was developed in conjunction with the Communications Managers and used to map the activities and associated volumes
- In several priority areas, a more detailed redesign of processes was made, including work-generating sources, triage approaches, the activities and steps involved, and methods of approving and releasing work outputs
- A set of organisational design principles were constructed and agreed with stakeholders
- A proposed new structure was designed, detailed descriptions documented for new or changed roles, and the financial implications of the changes determined

Benefits

The process examinations themselves unearthed many instances where standard protocols had been abandoned or ignored – these were reinstated.

The new structure, which was similar to that of a consulting business than a traditional hierarchical organisation, was rolled out. Some departmental users, who had previously enjoyed immediate access and response from dedicated but under-utilised Communications Officers, were initially hesitant about the change. Overall, however, the change was well-accepted.