

Channel Shift Case Study

Guidance Area #9	Tracking & Measure Channel Shift
Provided By:	Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)
Sector:	Local Government
Service:	Library Renewals

Since May 2001, HCC has offered an online or automated telephony service for library renewals. The online and automated telephony services - seen as a single 'digital' service because neither requires any intervention by staff - were introduced to free capacity within the contact centre for other services. In May 2013 the digital service handled 85,364 transactions, 96% online and 4% via the automated telephony service.

Library renewals made at local libraries are not included - because these transactions do not involve the contact centre.

From the outset it was recognised that overall call volumes would not fall - the intention was to shift them from the main contact centre to an automated services. However, customer services had to demonstrate that the investment in digital service is delivering efficiencies.

This case study - based actions taken before the development of the Government Service Design Manual and the guidance on Increasing digital take-up - illustrates the importance of *tracking and measuring channel shift*.

What They Did:

Capturing call data was the easy part of monitoring channel shift - the drop in the number of renewals being handled by contact centre staff roughly matches the renewals handled by the digital services - demonstrated by *measuring the number of calls relating to the relevant service issues*. The real challenges *setting the right metrics* to capture data in a way that makes sense to different business units and provides sensible analysis of the data for strategic decision making.

They built a channel shift monitor, using XCelsius, which takes agreed data feeds (some of it manually) from different business units - thereby *ensuring access to the right usage data*. They then use this data to create a monthly dashboard, which is published on their intranet for all to see. The dashboard is also sent by e-mail to selected managers and to members of the programme steering board.

The channel shift monitor puts in *place a process for monitoring channel shift and savings*. It identifies trends and changes in the usage of digital services - with any known reasons for changes (media campaigns, technical issues, seasonal variations, etc). In this way both corporate and service managers can see what is happening, have an understanding why changes are occurring, and then make more informed decisions about what actions to take.

Lessons Learnt:

It is difficult for any county council, with so many services, to agree definitions and priorities between directorates. Therefore, data has to be carefully presented and HCC had to avoid having multiple data-sets or different views of the same data. There is also a need to allow for some flexibility in the analysis of the data to accommodate the vagaries of each service and any external factors that may impact on the service(s).

The in-house creation of the monitor and dashboard allows new services, metrics, and other variables to be added or amended. As the Council moves more services to digital delivery, the monitor has added more data and the dashboard becomes a key reporting tool.