Work Smarter with Online Customer Interaction Technology

CHRIS RASMUSSEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR
Synateq

In the last edition of LGAT News, the increased demand for online Local Government documents and the need to use communication channels to increase customer satisfaction were both highlighted in studies cited in articles. However, improving your online customer interaction technology can lead to increased efficiency, cost savings and increased customer satisfaction if you stick to a few basic rules.

Look at ways to work smarter and more efficiently to address your high volume information requests.

Many organisations have taken steps to put their most commonly used forms online so that they can be downloaded for easy access. However, to get maximum value for both your community and staff, take a close look at your business processes and see where you can use technology to increase efficiency, saving time and money. For example, can you use your IT system to allow people to fill in forms online so that you can collate the data from the forms and automatically transfer it to the correct recipients? Can you use the common information fields, like name and address, gathered on one form to pre-populate another for the same customer in order to reduce manual errors?

Look for technology that transforms the way you provide services, rather than tools that simply replicate paper based systems online.

With high speed internet access through the NBN just around the corner for Tasmania, now is the time to examine how online tools can change the way you interact with your customers and community for the better. For example, smart technology is now available that dynamically changes the fields displayed in online forms according to the answers given. This personalises the form based on the requirements of the user and provides a much better customer experience, as well as improving the quality of the data collected. Easy to use tools such as online “Ask a Question” chat facilities allow customers to get an instant answer to their questions from a real person, without leaving their home, or waiting on hold on a phone line.

When it comes to more complex services, look for intuitive integrated IT tools that empower staff to increase the standard of service by providing the right information.

Look to your IT system to empower your staff to deal with enquiries by providing an intuitive user experience that guides them through service calls via automated workflows and provides accurate, up-to-date information regarding individual customer requests. Not only will you speed up your internal information flow and reduce training costs, you’ll have transparency over your business processes enabling management to guide further improvement.

Look holistically at your customer needs and aim to address as many as possible of those needs in one interaction.

Online systems with clever user prompts can reduce the number of individual calls that
customers make to councils. For example, new residents enquiring about garbage collection might be prompted to consider other services required such as registration of companion animals or childcare services. If they select these additional services, they can be given relevant information and request forms during the one online interaction. The London Borough of Southwark, UK has been reported as reducing customer contact from an average of five service calls down to one through the introduction of smart customer interaction technology a few years ago.

**Where to look for the latest online tools?**
The Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite of products can help you do just about anything you might be considering for improving online customer interaction: pre-populate forms, manage the security rights of the information, connect customers and staff in online discussions, or provide staff with a dashboard of information related to the customer enquiry they are handling. This suite of products integrates with all back end systems and you can pick and choose from a range of tools to suit your needs. If you have a Microsoft platform at your council, investigate using Microsoft Office SharePoint Server to streamline access to important information and direct the workflow of information.

For further information, visit [www.synateq.com](http://www.synateq.com).

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### Make online forms work for you to save time and money in Local Government

- Achieve new levels of customer interaction with dynamic forms
- Validate data on entry
- Automate workflows
- Integrate with current IT systems

Call Chris Rasmusen on 6230 4833 and find out how a Synateq solution puts IT to work for you in Local Government.

[www.synateq.com](http://www.synateq.com)  G86 Collins St Hobart