

Metrowater: XSOL helps drive improvements to Customer Service

Improving service for its 142,000 business and residential customers is a key driver at Auckland water utility company, Metrowater.

By enhancing visibility and helping standardize and improve business processes, XSOL is playing a key role in developing a 'customer-centric' culture at the utility.

"The underlying attributes of XSOL helped us align with company values," says Process Improvement Analyst Buharie Amath.

"We work in an environment where service levels can be very demanding, and these require first-class business processes to be in place". Buharie adds

Metrowater began using XSOL in March 2005, as part of the company's eAtlas project which aimed to provide a core platform of operational and process information to users.

Buharie and a small team led Metrowater's process review project and reported in at the corporate level.

"The processes that were already documented were transferred straight into XSOL" says Buharie, "while others needed to be workshopped."

Workshops involved getting process owners and subject matter experts together to 'discover' and document business operations. During these sessions, if improvements were identified that could be made quickly and easily, they were included.

The initial focus was on reducing the loss of water in the Metrowater system – the difference between what the utility bought in and what it charged for. After this, the process team moved on to review retail operations, field engineering & faults, new connections and the front office.

Buharie says this first phase of the project culminated in seminars where all staff were introduced to the new body of knowledge now accessible via the intranet. This initiative had high levels of visibility throughout Metrowater.

Organisation

Metrowater is a water and wastewater utility company serving 142,000 business and residences over 153 square kilometres in Auckland.

The company supplies approximately 49 million m³ of water to its customers annually, as well as meeting all of the City's wastewater requirements.

Application

Business process discovery, documentation and improvement. Processes related to Customer Billing, New Connections and Retail Operations.

Business benefits

- Improved understanding of processes throughout the organisation
- Improved Customer Service levels
- Better alignment to company values

Because of the investment of time at the discovery stage, Buharie says “people don’t have to ask a million questions – they can understand it for themselves”. Since processes can be easily updated and re-published on the intranet, there should also be a corresponding reduction in the amount of paper used for printing staff manuals. “We are particularly happy with the publishing functionality,” Buharie adds, “This is what the company needed.”

“XSOL has provided a platform for process management within Metrowater,” says Buharie, “ease of use and a ‘real-life’ business focus has meant XSOL has been rapidly accepted throughout the organization.”