

Performance

Most stakeholders recognize the value of the conceptual, organizational, strategic, and technological developments that OBC undertook. Their scope, complexity, or delays are not always well understood, but because trust has developed, OBC is allowed to move forward.

6.1. Performance and Collaboration

Private partners are very disappointed by the slow implementation of new functions and transactions for the client. However, they are satisfied with the collaboration although there have been several conflicts, one of which led to the threat of a lawsuit. Those who are financially secure are still waiting.

OBC believes it understands the expectations of workstation-hosting organizations hosting the workstations and is able to meet them. However, these organizations feel that they are little consulted and are being imposed ways of doing things as if they were any ministry. For the manager of Enterprise Toronto, a local organization that acts as a workstation host and a retailer for a wholesaler, it is clear that the OBC system simplifies procedures required of entrepreneurs. In addition, since they became authorized depositories, these organizations can offer their assistance services to entrepreneurs (free and for a fee) which provides them with an incredible visibility. After initial problems of speed, the workstations and Web site are working well and provide the expected services. However, an interface which is more user-friendly is envisioned.

OBC's originality in terms of partnership does not come so much from the selection of its IT and consulting partners (although for development companies there is an accreditation list which replicates, in terms of process, the one from the provincial government and allows them to considerably restrain and accelerate contract attributions) but from the role OBC assigns to private organizations and NPOs in the service delivery process.

Project Impacts

The time required to do a business name search, which was initially four weeks, is now five minutes, while the time to register a name shrunk from eight weeks to 20 minutes. This gain is especially beneficial for future businesses. Regarding the business name, a renewal is required after five years. However, it is estimated that about 12,500 businesses do not follow this rule. It will be a benefit to the Government when OBC starts sending reminding letters. Other new sources of revenue are expected, such as the sale of non-confidential information by the government.

A survey conducted with users (clients-citizens) in 1999 revealed a very high overall satisfaction rate (95 percent). However, the way in which the survey was administered was not explained and the survey was not given to non-users and people who started but did not go through the process. The survey revealed that people appreciate the possibility of filling out forms online because they are more accessible and time-efficient. However, the interfaces need to be improved to make them more user-friendly. A survey question also revealed that respondents are divided regarding the advantage of using these services through a private company.

The results are very good at the conceptual and logistical level, but the implementation is more complicated, especially at the interorganizational level. The learning curve is very steep and the implementation results are less than excellent. OBC does not implement as much as it could, because of the need for an infrastructure that will take time to build. The current conclusion of government leaders is that OBC successfully delivered the IT structure for the services centers, but since then it offers nothing further. Several IT developments are currently being considered to establish links with ministries' systems. However, results must be shown in the next few months. Otherwise, the current functioning mode could be put in question.

Beyond these crucial elements, the most important goal is to make the Ontario government the electronic administration best connected to its citizens. By recognizing that the design and conceptualization of a real integrated service-delivery architecture requires a long term investment, the Ontario government is finally taking the lead over other administrations on this journey without seeking the involvement of all the stakeholders in the community, public as well as private.