

Performance

Project and Collaboration Performance

The SCI was a success in terms of what it accomplished in such a short time span and client satisfaction. Clients used one or another of the channels much more often and said they were rather satisfied with the services provided. A recent survey⁽³⁾ found a 51% satisfaction rate with federal government services in general — a 4% increase over the results of the same survey two years earlier. As for the level of service usage, the Service Canada Strategic Implementation Plan⁽⁴⁾ contains the following statistics:

- In 1999-2000 the Canada website had 38 million hits, which represents a 79% increase. Officials responded to 12,000 emails, 70% of which were requests for general information. Lastly, 60% of clients expressed satisfaction with the service.
- During the same period, 1-800-O-Canada calls climbed by 32%. A breakdown of this clientele reveals that Quebec accounted for the largest increase and that 49% of the calls came from rural areas (a 21% rise in these calls since 1999).
- The in-person access centres also experienced dazzling growth as 122 centres were opened in the provinces and Northwest Territories. They received 60,000 visitors, most of whom (75%) required assistance.

On a more general level, the three channels were integrated gradually with a training plan backing deployment of the access centres; the Canada website now has 35 integrated subject areas and the 1-800 call centre database has been redesigned. Some 21 MOUs were signed with 13 sponsoring departments and agencies to set up 122 access centres. In the regions, SC gave citizens an incredible opportunity to become involved in their own development by providing human, financial and information resources, yet mainly by mapping out an integration model and supporting it. Many seized the opportunity.

The project also led to substantial learning about horizontal cooperation. By raising problems such as accountability for results, the costs attached to horizontal coordination and the lack of a regulatory framework for agreements with third parties, the SCI sparked a debate that made all participants aware of the need to develop a more formal regulatory framework for partnerships between government departments and agencies. The experience shows the key players in delivering government services attempting cooperation and becoming convinced of its value. The only missing ingredient was a tangible means to go all-out.

The evaluation report was tabled on October 18, 2001, followed by a Cabinet brief in the fall for guidance on the future of the Initiative.

Project Benefits

The development phase was a tremendous learning experience for the team as mentioned in its strategic business plan⁽⁵⁾. It developed invaluable knowledge in terms of:

- The requirements for setting up an integrated multichannel network;
- The real need for one-stop service centres across Canada;
- The necessity of a citizen-focused approach;
- The need for close ties to GOL, the other initiative underway at the TBS;
- The importance of establishing a horizontal coordination mechanism to integrate policy, operations, and communication functions.

The team therefore embarked on a consolidation phase in the development of Service Canada, an innovative approach because it aims to create an integrated one-stop network with multiple channels for accessing government services, takes into consideration the fundamental differences among Canadians and provides customized solutions for each and every one.

(3) Institute of Public Administration, **Citizens First 2000**, Toronto, 2001.

(4) xGovernment of Canada, **Strategic Plan for Service Canada Implementation 2001-02 to 2003-04**, November 2000.

(5) Development Phase Report 1999/2000.