R&A RICHARDS &
ASSOCIATES

Business & IT Alignment

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Case studies

These are some of our clients' success stories, including their perspective on what was really important to them and the results they achieved. Some client and organization names are withheld for reasons of confidentiality.

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IT strategic plan development

The Town of Okotoks re-aligned its IT function to support fast growing demand for additional services.
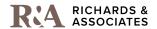

Client

The Town of Okotoks is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada. The Town's vision is to be a leader in sustainability, driven by an involved, connected and creative community.

Situation

The Town wanted to develop an IT Strategic Plan to optimize resources required to deliver IT services, improve service delivery, identify opportunities for efficiencies, improve transparency of IT costs and alignment with business priorities, and strengthen relationships between business units and IT.

Approach

We worked with the Town's senior leadership team and IT stakeholders over three months to perform an assessment of the current state, develop future state recommendations and define an implementation strategy.

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Results

The project was delivered on time, on budget and the quality of deliverables met or exceeded the client's expectations. The Cost Mapping work was of high value in showing the growing demand for IT services and impact on costs. The IT Strategic Plan was approved by the Town's senior leadership team and presented to the new Town Council. Key recommendations from the Strategic Plan were imbedded in the annual budget.

The development of an IT Strategic Plan for the Town of Okotoks was achieved on time, on budget, and with support of a great Cost Mapping tool. You listened well and our working relationship was open, honest, trusting and transparent. You had a great overall process from beginning to end, from the kick-off meeting to the final wrap-up meeting and all that occurred between. We now have an IT Strategic Plan with eight solid recommendations that will support us in our work going forward. You did an excellent job.

— Wayne Braun, CMA - Municipal Treasurer, Financial Services Manager, Town of Okotoks

The Cost Mapping work was of high value in showing the growing demand for IT services and impact on costs.

— Charlene Nagy-Gyorgy - IT Team Leader

Building a cohesive IT support team

Two different IT support groups were integrated into one information services team and agreed upon a common approach to their work.

Client

The client is a leading employee-owned North America-wide integrated project solutions partner.

Situation

The client wanted to consolidate separate SAP and corporate application support groups into one integrated team and implement a consistent process for managing small enhancements. This was a difficult task as relationships were strained and the two teams had opposing views on how to best manage their work. Adding to the challenge was the dissatisfaction of the senior executive team with the results achieved and high operating costs for one of the groups.

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Approach

Working with the SAP and corporate application support groups, we facilitated a series of workshops to complete a diagnostic, agree on a common process for managing small enhancements, and develop an implementation roadmap. The workshop approach and related activities were carefully designed to improve collaboration, relationships, process effectiveness and accountability for results.

Results

Communication and relationships were noticeably improved as the groups worked together to agree on a consistent approach to managing small enhancements. The previously observed tension was no longer an issue and the groups were successfully combined into a single Enterprise Applications support team. The new sustainment process (once enabled in ServiceNow) will enable the team to work more effectively with business leaders to drive process improvements and reduce operating costs.

> *I was very pleased to see the SAP and Corporate Application support teams engaged so effectively and working together to agree a common approach to managing small enhancements. This project was really about getting the two teams working well together and that has been achieved. We are very happy and pleased with the design work done and are now ready to implement it in ServiceNow.*
>
> **— VP Information Technology**
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> *Richards & Associates took the time to get clear on what goals and outcomes we needed, and delivered on those. Their knowledge and expertise in performing these types of projects really kept this moving in the right direction. We achieved our goals of getting people aligned, bridging groups and building one cohesive team.*
>
> **— Director, Enterprise Applications**

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Creating more value with IT support resources

A large healthcare provider improved its decision making about resource utilization and costs for an Oracle ERP system

Client

The client is the enterprise IT corporate applications team of a large provincial health care provider undergoing a very significant system transformation and consolidation initiative.

Situation

As part of an initiative to transform and consolidate enterprise applications, the IT executive has a strategic goal of having 60% (versus 45%) of application support resources engaged in value-creating activities such as innovation, projects and enhancements. A pre-requisite for making this shift is to understand current support costs and work volumes with sufficient accuracy to support decision making.

Approach

We worked with the corporate applications management team in three geographic centres over a period of two months to:

- Develop a visual activity-based IT cost of service model for enterprise applications

- Define a standard set of application support activities and performance metrics

- Improve management's understanding of overall support costs and work volumes

- Provide recommendations to improve cost performance and align with business needs

Results

The client now has a comprehensive understanding of the all-in spend on support and maintenance, enhancement and project related activities for its finance, general ledger, business intelligence and supply chain functions. The information was used to make a major sourcing decision and will form the basis for assigning application support resources to value-creating activities. The cost models will be used to measure the impact of savings from system transformation and consolidation initiatives, and support the budgeting process.

You clearly demonstrated your professionalism and expertise in activity based cost management. This was a very successful and nimble ' gold star' engagement that provided us with valuable information for our upcoming budget and ongoing system transformation and consolidation initiatives. We will work with you again.

—Director, Corporate Information Management Services

The Cost Mapping approach was quick and iterative... it really highlighted where to make improvements of benefit to the business. It was an eye-opener as it answered a lot of questions about the cost of our IT services. Instead of saying 'we think', we now can say 'we know'. This will be very valuable for our organization.

— Director, Finance and Supply Chain Systems

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