

Case study

Client: Inland Revenue

Project: Review of Customer Contact by Post

Dates: September 2002 – June 2003

Carried out by: Peter Hyde

Requirement

Inland Revenue had developed a programme of business reviews designed to seek step change improvements in the way major areas of its business were performing. The review programme was overseen by the Performance Improvement Unit (PIU). Peter Hyde was commissioned by PIU to lead an internal review team to examine how the department handled contact by post with its customers. This followed a review of the Face to Face channel and preceded one of the telephone channel.

What we did

The review involved a very comprehensive programme of work which included: a detailed assessment of the current arrangements, data collection to understand the composition of incoming post, extensive stakeholder consultation, qualitative research with customers, external comparisons, a costing study and the production of working papers on particular issues e.g. internal post.

The review recommended that Inland Revenue should: redefine what it regarded as “post” in order to better focus on customer contact; improve performance on customer contact; aim to handle internal contact electronically; manage post as a channel in a way which was better integrated with other channels; and minimise the volume of incoming post by reducing the need and by actively promoting a shift to other channels.

The review was carried out in such a way as to provide new and convincing empirical evidence of the need for change. It was conducted in close cooperation with key stakeholders, both centrally and in the local office network, so that those who would need to implement the recommendations were bought into them.

Outcomes

The recommendations have been fully implemented and performance in this area improved significantly.