



PROFILE



Industry
Local Government

Founded
1965

Website
www.kingston.gov.uk

Category
B2C / B2B

Customer Since
2006

PROJECT

Objective
Improve communication channels across Borough and make communication methods more efficient. Increase young people's involvement in local issues.

Solution
Implemented SMS Server enabling it to provide two-way SMS messaging facilities to its personal and corporate information systems using existing messaging infrastructure.



Business Impact
The Council now has an advanced communication network and has increased efficiency as well as the interactive connection between subscribers and the Council.

SMS proves valuable communication channel for Royal Borough of Kingston

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is a borough in southwest London. The main town is Kingston upon Thames and it includes Surbiton, Chessington, New Malden, Tolworth and part of Worcester Park. It is the oldest of the four Royal Boroughs in England. The borough was formed in 1965 by the merger and the transfer from Surrey to Greater London of the Municipal boroughs of Kingston-upon-Thames (which itself was a Royal Borough), Malden and Coombe and Surbiton.

The Challenge

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Council maintains a comprehensive website, providing a wealth of information for its residents, emphasising its enthusiasm for involvement in society.

With a population of approximately 150,000 it is important that communication methods are efficient. By improving communication services across the borough, huge differences can be made to the local environment, to social exclusion and to society in general. A national concern for councils as a whole is the lack of enthusiasm from young people's involvement in local government and politics in general.

"Communication is central to the Council's activities, and an efficient communication network can make a substantial difference to resident participation, specifically with regards to young people's involvement," explained a project officer for the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Council.

The Solution

The Council implemented M:Science SMS Server enabling it to provide two-way SMS messaging facilities to its personal and corporate information systems using existing messaging infrastructure and line of business applications.

SMS Server is an ideal extra communication link between Council staff, administrators and residents. The Royal Borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames Council has implemented the server into their existing systems and it is fully integrated with emails.

The SMS Server means the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Council can instantly communicate with its residents, and also provides residents with an opportunity to immediately reply back.

"We have found M:Science's SMS solution to be a very convenient and cost-effective method of communication. We have many future plans for the solution, even integrating it into some of our existing databases."

The Results

"After researching SMS text messaging solutions on the internet, through press reports and listening to personal recommendations, M:Science was seen as the most appropriate solution for our requirements. Text messaging is an extremely suitable service to offer young people within the borough as this has become the key method by which they communicate."

Mobile Technology enables young people to contact council officers quickly, cheaply and anonymously.

When a text message is received it is automatically directed to a database and linked with a contact management system. The database forwards the text message on to the relevant department within the Council, and they either instantly reply, forward the message on or close the message and reply via an alternative method. Countless man-hours have been saved as the database interprets the message and efficiently decides on the relevant department to process the information.



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"We are very pleased to be able to offer this cost-effective and efficient method of contact. It is particularly appropriate for young people. We have set up several opportunities for young people to use the SMS service. One very successful project has been an SMS newsgroup. The newsgroup is a small group of subscribers that discuss a range of topics. Some recent subject areas have been anger management, unlicensed mini-cabs, dealing with bullying, and even details on future teen discos."

Young residents have been given the opportunity to contact the council for confidential help and advice through SMS, which has vastly improved communication as it can be done anonymously. Statistics show that uncertainty towards privacy is one of the main causes for young people not asking for help and advice.

The SMS solution has been very successful, with currently over 70 young people subscribing. The Council has even enabled text voting for the youth parliament elections and this has increased political awareness amongst residents.

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames now has an advanced communication network and has increased not only the efficiency but also the interactive connection between subscribers and the Council.

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Future plans

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Council is considering providing its residents with the ability to pay parking fines through SMS and even implementing traffic bulletin alerts through SMS. There is also the possibility that the Council will provide young people with the opportunity to participate in text consultations.

"We have found M:Science's SMS solution to be a very convenient and cost-effective method of contact. We have many future plans for the solution, even integrating it into some of our existing databases. It would then be possible for us to target the messages to specific areas of the borough so that members of the public only receive messages which are of concern to them."



"After researching SMS solutions on the internet, press reports and listening to personal recommendations, M:Science was seen as the most appropriate solution for our requirements."

Phil Smith, Managing Director of M:Science, commented: "M:Science's SMS Server is the complete text messaging solution. It provides flexibility, efficiency and security in one package. It is rapidly deployed and easily integrated into existing systems, which makes it an attractive prospect for long-term plans. In this case, the Royal Borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames has been a really good example of the benefits SMS can provide to all."



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