



ABOUT NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Population: circa 840,700

“Norfolk County Council recognises the need for personalised communication with its residents. Through GovDelivery, we can offer our residents the option to sign up for email updates on a range of topics, from committee papers and news releases to library events and Adult Education courses. This way, our residents are kept informed of changes to our information and services, particularly the things they are specifically interested in”.

- Vanessa Lindsey, Web Communications Officer, Norfolk County Council

Norfolk County Council achieves channel shift cost savings using efficient digital communication

Situation

In 2005 Norfolk County Council identified that communicating more effectively with their community would help them achieve channel shift and deliver other cost savings.

Having realised that many Norfolk residents were receptive to digital communications from the Council, they looked for more efficient methods of sending the latest news, events and public service updates electronically.

Norfolk County Council decided that a one-size-fits-all electronic newsletter wasn't the most effective way of engaging a wide audience. Personalised alerts would enable Norfolk to provide a range of information whilst ensuring that each message was relevant to the recipient, who would choose the information they wanted, and when and how they received it.

Solution

Following a detailed evaluation, Norfolk County Council selected and implemented GovDelivery's Digital Subscription Management (DSM) service which addressed the Council's desire to engage residents in an efficient, personalised and measurable way.

GovDelivery enables Norfolk County Council to offer the personalised subscriptions they needed. The service allows their subscribers to individually identify the information they receive from the Council. With hundreds of items available for subscription, the Council is providing a full range of information whilst ensuring that residents receive only the information that is important to them.

Subscribers sign up for automated alerts on very specific issues such as: scams; committee reports; library charges; Norfolk reading groups; and adult education courses or more generic categories including Council and democracy; Libraries; books and reading; and Arts.

GovDelivery has estimated that a council with a population of 100,000 residents could save over £60,000 per annum. Savings are based on actual and estimated data from over 400 government clients and are based on reductions in postage, staff, avoidable contact, IT equipment, administration and management services.

STAY CONNECTED, KEEP INFORMED:



Norfolk Website: <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk>
 Norfolk Subscription Sign up:
https://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi_subscribe.html?origin=&code=UKNORFOLK

Norfolk County Council also offers a broad range of information via collaboration with other government agencies, such as the Highways Agency and the Met Office. These relationships mean Norfolk residents now have access to local information including severe weather warnings and local travel alerts.

According to the 2010 SOCITM (Society of Information Technology Management) Better Connected Report, the average transaction cost of each telephone call is £3.21, face-to-face visit is £8.23, and print newsletter is £0.56. With GovDelivery there is no incremental service cost.

The shift to digital communications is particularly timely given the proposed changes to the Local Authority Publicity Code of Practice consultation. Principle 28 reads, in part, that: “Local authorities should not publish newsletters, newssheets or similar communications which seek to emulate commercial newspapers in style or content. Where local authorities do commission or publish newssheets, they should not issue them more frequently than quarterly.”

Norfolk County Council's migration to digital communication illustrates how the Council is already delivering many of the goals of the “Big Society”. These goals include “creating a climate that empowers local people and communities, building a big society that will take power away from politicians and give it to people.” In fact, three of the five stated priorities of the Big Society tie in well with what Norfolk County Council has implemented with GovDelivery – giving communities more powers, encouraging people to take an active role in their communities, and publishing government data.

Results

As of November 2010, nearly 12,000 Norfolk residents and businesses are signed up to receive personalised, real-time updates from the Council on a range of topics. Since the service was launched almost 1 million personalised messages have been sent.

Automated communication has proved to be very cost-effective, simple to use and less time consuming for Council staff to manage. GovDelivery has reduced the internal resource needed to manage communications while significantly increasing the number of residents the Council can engage on a daily basis.

Norfolk County Council has succeeded in meeting the objectives it set for itself when it first adopted this service:

- Norfolk County Council has reduced the number of traditional paper processes and has moved users to more cost-effective online channels.
- Council staff now spends less time sending messages and managing distribution lists. Where appropriate, messages can even be fully automated without any manual input required.
- County Councillors receive alerts when the latest committee reports are published, and this is predicted to reduce printing costs by £20,000 per annum.
- Subscription rates have experienced a steady increase, rising from 1,145 subscribers in April 2007 to 4,826 in October 2009, and 12,246 in September 2010.
- More than 68 percent of clicks from messages sent via GovDelivery sent users directly to the website.

The success of the GovDelivery service has helped Norfolk achieve channel shift from traditional methods such as printed communications towards cheaper online service channels which can help reduce avoidable contact in the form of face-to-face meetings and telephone service requests.

Whilst avoidable contact and channel shift are very difficult to measure, GovDelivery client studies have shown that using proactive digital communications can reduce customer service spend by as much as 20 percent and increases customer satisfaction of the services being provided.

GOVDelivery

GovDelivery is the leading provider of government-to-citizen communication solutions. Our Digital Subscription Management solution is a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that provides organizations a fully-automated, on-demand public communication system.

