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City of Ottawa: Finding common ground for a newly amalgamated city

Canada's capital city rises to the challenge of bringing together 11 amalgamated municipalities and a regional government to face the future as a fully unified organization

Challenge

The capital of Canada and its fourth largest city, Ottawa is a thriving G8 technology and business center with an enviable quality of life and a diverse population. So when its provincial government legislated the amalgamation of 11 nearby municipalities and one regional government into a single City of Ottawa on January 1, 2001, the City's IT staff had its work cut out for it: how to get everyone quickly onto the same page, with standardized technology, consistent business processes and the ability to support effective decision making.

Solution

The City decided that the best way to create common ground was to transform the very heart of its operations: its core management systems. The City migrated 16 HR/Payroll systems, nine maintenance management systems and eight property management systems over to a single SAP implementation serving more than 15,000 employees. The initiative also involved consolidating 50 different time sheets and 24 payroll cycles, as well as replacing 54 collective agreements that were in place at the beginning of the amalgamation – thus giving staff and management the unified platform needed to manage the daily business of the City and find

innovative solutions to the challenges facing the newly created City.

Benefits of innovation

Working with IBM, the City of Ottawa not only rose to the challenge, but delivered 11 overlapping project releases – on time and under budget – over a three-year period. Benefits include:

- Enables the sharing of data and common business practices throughout the organization
- Automates workflow chains from one department to the next
- Improves decision making by providing timely and accurate “total picture” information
- Enhances productivity by increasing business process efficiency
- Projected to deliver savings of over C\$8 million annually by 2010
- Supports the provision of cost-effective, accountable services to residents of Ottawa

[The City of Ottawa: It's all about building a solid foundation for the future, developing new business solutions and looking for innovative ways to deliver services.](#)