

Citizen Shops

"Lojas do Cidadão"



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Organisation: Agency for the Administrative Modernisation

Country: Portugal

Level of government: Central government

Sector: General public services

Type: Public Service

Launched in: 1999

Overall development time:

24 months

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

This innovation is about building a network of local citizen shops that integrate several public and private citizens' services, ranging from public social security and tax services to private services, e.g. administrate the connecting and disconnecting of electricity, water and gas or cable TV subscriptions. Each citizen shop is based on a continuous effort to improve collaboration and partnerships between public and private entities.

In one single place, with an intuitive organisation and following common rules of service delivery, citizens have access to a wide range of services with longer opening hours and can save a considerable amount of time. The citizen shop model is based on client-focus management and promotes a quality oriented culture in public services delivery. Citizens' opinions and satisfaction are more important and increasingly considered in the revision of service delivery practices.

The citizen shops evolved into second generation shops providing new concepts and models of attendance, including integrated counters organised according to certain common life events (e.g. "I Lost my Wallet" service; "House Settled" – house selling/buying/tax paying/other related services; "Having a child" related services), as well as multi-service counters. They developed the concept of a mobile citizen shop. This concept is regarding the Palmela's Mobile Citizen Shop. This Citizen Shop works in a van, and it goes around municipality of Palmela. This shop works in weekly routes and the schedules are pre-defined, where the citizens can access services regarding citizen cards, social security, municipal services.

Why the innovation was developed

Before the citizen shops, services were delivered within a highly fragmented network, geographically dispersed and organised bureaucratically. The inefficiency in public service delivery culture was seen as a serious handicap for national development. The fragmentation of services resulted in higher delivery costs of services and citizens in terms of time spent waiting. With the Citizen Shops concept, the access to public services was revolutionised.

Objectives

Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve user satisfaction

- Efficiency and quality gains due to the concentration of several different services in one location.
 - Introduction of client-oriented procedures.
 - Reduction in time of service delivery.
 - Savings in costs and resources (rent, space maintenance) through provision of services in only one instead of several locations.
 - Increase in citizens' satisfaction with services, assure access to services and foster equality through provision of citizen shops all over the country.
 - Transform the relationship between the citizen and the state through a more client-oriented focus.
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Main beneficiaries

General population, Government bodies, Government staff

Portuguese citizens and residents who now have access to 35 citizen shops with 5 more openings planned in 2013, covering all geographic areas with most of the districts' capitals having their own shop.

Existing similar practices

Balcão Único de Atendimento -Single Attendance Point

In public administration of my country

In several local entities, for example in the Guimarães and Seixal municipalities

Concentrates services from local administrations into one single point of contact.

http://www.cm-guimaraes.pt/PageGen.aspx?WMCM_Paginald=19753

Results

Efficiency

- Savings in resources (rent, office space) through allocation of several services in one location.
 - Cost reduction through integrated service delivery.
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Effectiveness

The success of a Citizen Shop is measured in terms of visitors, waiting time to be attended and number of complaints. As mentioned before, the Citizen Shops created a new concept in which the services must give effective answers to the citizens and, therefore, the culture of complaint for improvement started to improve.

Service quality

Accessibility:

Better and faster access to different services for citizens.

Responsiveness:

Client focus assures better services for citizens.

Reliability:

Quality monitoring practices in the citizen shops improve service delivery.

Other:

The ability of citizens to find in one place all the services, giving them more time and quality of life.

User satisfaction

Better and more rapid delivery of services to citizens.

Evaluation

The success of a citizen shop is measured in terms of visitors, waiting time to be attended and number of complaints. The citizen shops created a new concept in which the services must give effective answers to the citizens and, therefore, the culture of complaint for improvement started to grow.

Development

Design

In the first place, the XIII Constitutional Government (1995-1999) prioritised improvements in service delivery and created a Mission Structure in 1997 to implement the concept of citizen shops, starting with a trial of the first shop in Lisbon in 1999. With the opening of the first shop in Lisbon in 1999, the concept was implemented for the first time. Several services, from public and private spheres, were delivered in a single place for citizens' convenience. In this sense, the Citizen Shops is an obvious result of a serious effort and compromise of several entities in service delivery domains.

Testing

Two citizen shops of the "first generation" were opened in 1999 in the cities of Lisbon and Oporto, integrating several services into one location. With the final agreement of all parties, the Citizen Shop was implemented. The model is already pre-defined in what concerns the image.

The organisations involved started to prepare the moving and the re-organisation of the services. AMA is responsible to provide the furniture, PC's and the communications infrastructure.

Implementation

Tools used:

- After successful pilots, creation of the Institute for Citizen Shops Management with the objective to coordinate the network of citizen shops at national level. Since 2007 the newly created AMA (Agency for the Public Services Reform) has this function, e. g. is responsible for defining the policy and procedures that should be implemented in all citizen shops, according to high quality standards.
- To implement a citizen shop, a study indicating the number of citizens to be served is usually conducted, allowing for planning of the space and dimensions of the shop.
- To build a Citizen Shop, the committee from the local administrations is needed, which usually provide the place and the central organisations.
- The local services plan the moving process and the re-organisation of their services.
- A pre-defined model, including design etc., is implemented.
- AMA provides furniture for the new offices, PCs and communications infrastructure.
- Training is provided to all employees to introduce them to the procedures to provide services (e.g. how to deal with complaints or how to behave when attending citizens).
- Managers are appointed who are responsible for a shop and who are the main point of contact for interaction with AMA.

Resources used:

- Buildings that need to be re-modelled to host all different services.
 - After having used mainly private buildings for the citizen shops during the first phase, citizen shops are now implemented in public and historic buildings that need to be restored.
 - Costs for furniture, hardware and other infrastructure.
 - Reallocation of resources.
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Diffusion

After successful pilots, creation of agency (first Institute for Citizen Shops Management, then AMA) to coordinate the network of citizen shops at the national level. For 2013, five new shop openings are planned. The network of citizen shops now covers almost all district capitals in Portugal. Cape Verde also developed its own citizen shop to which the Portuguese knowledge contributed.

Challenges and solutions

The engagement of every public body with a direct relationship to citizens and companies in service delivery for the definition of governance and costs model.

Partnerships

Private entities

Private sector

Private entities related to energy, telecommunications, banks, etc.

NGO's

Civil Society

Organisations that use the citizen shop to pass a message, e.g. to fight cancer or help people with special needs.

All relevant public sector organisations

Other Public Sector

The Citizen Shop is a project that covers all public administration.

All the entities that could be integrated in a citizen shop are involved from the beginning:

- Social Security.
- Civil and commercial register.
- Finance and taxes.
- Regionally organised services such as e.g. driver's licences.

The local authorities are involved to provide buildings as well as their own services.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- Direct involvement and support of the politicians are needed to overcome the change aversion of most public services.
 - Public service delivery revitalisation: In a time where public service delivery was increasingly criticised for its inefficiency, the citizen shops proved that public services can provide high quality standards. This has fostered a new culture of client focused service delivery.
 - Integration of databases: A general agreement is needed concerning information sharing among public entities. The information must be available for those who may need it.
 - Positive experience with public services partnerships: Partnerships between public institutions are very welcomed in service delivery. These kind of common efforts become very useful and convenient to citizens, and also generate important improvements in terms of efficiency.
 - Contagious commitment to improve: The success of the one stop shop model became very useful to motivate continuous improvements in several directions. Having the citizens' interest always in mind, the simplification of the necessary procedures to use a public service became a priority. Multi-service desks and services organised according to the citizens' needs in certain situations were developed.
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Other information

As a conclusion, citizen shops were and continue to be a very inspiring model of innovation in public service delivery.

The citizen centricity has become the cornerstone of all new paradigms based on simplicity, efficiency and convenience.

That is what the new public administration should be about.

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