

Innovation and Performance Process

Numérisation complète de la chaîne
des délibérations présentées
aux Conseils des adjoints
et aux Conseils municipaux



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Organisation: City of Aix en Provence

Country: France

Level of government: Local government

Sector: General public services

Type: Human Resources, Organisational Design

Launched in: 2011

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Description

The Innovation and Performance Process was launched to support the administration of the city Aix en Provence in the implementation of its political objectives. The process was co-designed with middle managers in defining work methods and themed priorities.

Groups of voluntary agents and administration officers from all municipal departments then defined concrete actions for ten priority items (e.g. improve the quality of the reception of citizens, develop e-administration, and implement a transport plan for city officers).

At the end of this stage of collaborative work, 12 contracts "Innovation and Performance" were written. Each contract included proposals for action, deadlines for their implementation, the allocated resources and responsibilities.

Why the innovation was developed

Can we continue to manage territorial administration without supporting innovation and performance in an increasingly tight financial environment? It is from this question that the CEO of the city Aix en Provence decided to start an innovation process in the administration. The purpose was to mobilise the city departments on issues of administration performance, quality of public services and innovation in the delivery of these services.

Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency

- The main objective of the initiative was to help the city administration in achieving the goals set by the elective representatives:
 - Perform investment projects strengthening the influence of the city.
 - Improve the quality of services and proximity to users.
 - Maximise all kinds of resources.
 - To do this, the approach had to meet two objectives:
 - Mobilise the whole administration and get its commitment to the project.
 - Implement the concepts of innovation and performance in the heart of the administration.
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Main beneficiaries

General population, Government bodies, Government staff

- The 2 100 municipal officers were the beneficiaries of this innovative approach that has allowed the rapid implementation of measures improving the functioning of the administration and the working conditions.
- Users of the administration were also the beneficiaries of this process: better access to services, better quality of services.

Results

Efficiency

- The Innovation and Performance Process has led to establish the de-materialisation of the resolutions of the City Council.
 - Investment in digital tablets was amortised in one year.
 - The annual costs of the meetings of the City Council have been cut: a saving of EUR 3 000 has been realised by reducing printing costs.
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Service quality

Accessibility:

- The process has increased the public opening hours of some administration departments (national identity cards, passports).
- In the framework of the contract number 2, aimed at improving the quality of call handling, making appointments for national identity cards and passports was moved to the unit 'Relations with users' in order to improve the response time. With this new organisation, the number of complaints regarding response time for appointments has decreased from 475 in October 2012 (35% of customer complaints) to 292 in May 2013 (16% of complaints).

Other:

The process has provided new services for users through the development of e-administration. For example, the development of an application for smart phones allows citizens to report a problem with the roads (e.g. cleanness, damage). After one year, 500 monthly requests for intervention on the roads are made via this tool.

Evaluation

- At the end of 2012, a consulting firm has been charged with assessing the Innovation and Performance Process.
- The aim was not to evaluate the results of the 12 contracts but to assess the impact of the process on the involved agents and the administration's ability to innovate and to evaluate the monitoring process.
- The evaluation method used by the firm has focused on collective and individual elements.
- The main results of the analysis:
 - The process has been considered as an opportunity for 63% of people. In addition, a resulting effect has been to improve cohesion within the executives of the city.
 - Stages of co-production and reflection appear to be interesting for more than 80% of the people. The themes were relevant to almost 60%. Finally, the method seems relevant, since 69% of respondents felt that the composition of the working groups was appropriate and 83% thought the animation method fitted to the needs.
 - Overall, the process seems to be a success, since 89% of officers would advise colleagues in other local authorities to initiate this type of process.

Development

Design

The CEO suggested the idea of a participatory approach to strengthen innovation and performance inside services to the city's executive management team. The Mayor validated and supported this initiative.

Testing

No testing took place.

Implementation

Tools used:

- Participative management has been a key instrument of this project. Middle managers participated in the method definition and identified ten thematic actions.
- Working groups were composed of volunteers from all levels and all departments of the administration. For each topic, a municipal officer was in charge of the workshop's animation.
- The conclusion of contracts has been chosen to ensure the effective implementation within the period defined in the action plans by the working groups and approved by the executive management team and the Mayor.

Resources used:

- 134 participants were mobilised: managers, head of departments, staff from all backgrounds.
 - EUR 3 536 350 have been provided for the implementation of actions. Part of this budget was allocated by the administration departments on their own resources. Another part was composed of additional credits dedicated to actions supporting innovation and performance.
 - A project manager reporting to the CEO has been dedicated to this project for one year (workshops monitoring, organisation of meetings, design and implementation of collaborative tools to facilitate the flow of information).
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Challenges and solutions

- The conduct of this project has generated, in some cases, resistance to change. These resistances were partially lifted by the participative nature of the process.
- Exchanges within working groups have created a consensus around proposals for actions. Only consensual proposals were included in the action plans and the contracts signed thereafter.

Lessons Learned

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- The Innovation and Performance Process has been considered by the managers as an opportunity to be the main actor necessary for the improvement of public action.
 - It also allowed the administration to break down barriers and increase the transversality of city departments.
 - In addition, this process was an opportunity for the executive management team to recall the urgent need for performance.
 - Finally, there is real innovation in this process if we consider the method and the interest it has generated among the involved executives. Indeed, allowing many executives to participate in discussions, even beyond their skills, was appreciated. There is a perceptible expectation that the system can integrate this "innovation" to sustain this way of working.
 - Moreover, the process itself was probably for some, like an invitation to "dare" proposals and they did. So, this is how it helped spreading the idea that some forms of internal change might be possible.
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Conditions for success

- The conditions for success of such an approach are:
 - The strong involvement of the executive management team.
 - The participation of all managers in the definition of the method and guidelines to improvement .
 - The creation of working groups including both experts and inexperienced persons.
 - The consideration of all good ideas.
 - The definition of delivery dates for contracts implementations.
 - The definition of clear responsibilities: working groups leaders and persons in charge of the contracts.
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