

## Linea Amica

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**Organisation:** Formez PA (Centre for Services, Assistance, Studies and Training for the Modernisation of the Public Administration)

**Country:** Italy

**Level of government:** Central government

**Sector:** General public services

**Type:** Digital, Public Service

**Launched in:** 2009

**Overall development time:** 16 months

**Link to the innovation's website**

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# Description

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Linea Amica is a multichannel contact centre within the Italian public administration, providing information and assistance to citizens. It supports a unified, helpful, modern and measurable public administration. It is designed as an advanced multi-channel information communication technology (ICT)-enabled service accessible through a free telephone number, e-mail, web, chat and skype. By giving timely answers to citizens, it operates by forwarding their requests to the appropriate public service, and by collecting citizen feedback on the quality of their interactions with the public administration.

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## Why the innovation was developed

Since 2008 the Minister for Public Administration started reforming the public administration (Law Decree N° 112 of 2008, Law N° 15 of 2009) to improve the quality of services provided to citizens. The Ministry has promoted a series of initiatives to improve the relationship between citizens, companies and the government. The reforms place the citizen at the centre of the planning, budgeting and performance evaluation of public administrations. Linea Amica is one of the tools aimed at simplifying the relationship between citizens and the public administration by assisting citizens to solve their problems and speed up responses to citizens' requests.

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## Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve social equity, Improve user satisfaction

- Improve service quality for citizens through constant qualitative and quantitative monitoring of citizen requests.
  - Contribute in reducing inefficiencies in the public administration and in providing survey and assistance to other public entities.
  - Provide a relevant contribution for the reduction of the "digital divide" related to internet-based services provided by the public administration.
  - Design and implement a network between public administrations aiming at the improvement of the citizen's relationship with the public administration, through continuous and fruitful cooperation.
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## Main beneficiaries

Civil Society, Elderly people, Ethnic or racial minorities, General population, Government bodies, Government staff, Low-income groups, People with disabilities

- Italian citizens.
  - Linea Amica also provides specially tailored services for the elderly, disabled and immigrants, and for specific sectors (e.g. a support line created after the earthquake in the Abruzzo region in 2009 which aims to speed up and facilitate the return of the population to their homes by supporting the handling administrative of procedures).
  - Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for the implementation of new laws and regulations.
  - Local and national public administrations (approximately 40 000 bodies), who use the service to provide an indication of how citizen services are improving, through monitoring and the qualitative analysis reports that are produced by the Linea Amica team.
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## Existing similar practices

### Chiama Roma

In public administration of my country  
Municipality of Rome

Through this telephone service, citizens can contact every office in the municipal administration and related agencies.

The service is has two levels of interaction: the first is a switchboard and call centre functions; and the second level provides staff who manage more complex requests forwarded by the switchboard and call centre.

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### Service Canada

In other countries' public administrations  
Human Resource and Skills Development, Canada

Service Canada provides single window access to a wide range of government services to Canadian citizens using a strong citizen focus approach. Users can contact the service through its website, by phone or through the Service Canada Centres located across the country.

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# Results

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## Efficiency

- More than 900 000 registered contacts through telephone and email.
  - More than 480 000 addressed cases.
  - An average waiting time of 26 secs to speak with an operator.
  - All this is achieved with a staff including approximately 90 experts (front and back office).
  - Specialisation of front and back office operators according to fields knowledge (disability, revenue and taxes, social security, immigration, labour, etc.), which favours a fast and efficient reply to citizen requests.
  - Efficiency increased through ad hoc services designed and implemented in order to face emergencies and specific requests by the Government in order to address the needs of the citizens (*Linea Amica Abruzzo*, *Linea Amica semplificata*, *Linea Amica immigrazione*).
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## Effectiveness

- Customer satisfaction analysis provides additional evidence on the achievement of expected results:
    - Approximate 90% of customers express satisfaction with the service.
    - 68% of the sample stated that its problem had been solved thanks to Linea Amica.
  - The constantly increasing number of public administrations joining the Linea Amica network (almost doubled in the 2009 - 2012 period) should be considered hard evidence of the achievement of the network creation objective.
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## Service quality

### Accessibility:

- A multi-channel approach favours high standards of accessibility. Customers can easily contact Linea Amica through:
  - A free telephone number/ skype/chatline: Monday through Friday (from 9 am to 6 pm).
  - Web: 24/7, by completing an online form describing the problem to be forwarded to experts.
  - Voicemail: 24/7, by leaving a message describing the problem.
  - App: which can be downloaded free of charge from the Apple Store.
  - Social Networks: following updates, expressing opinions and requesting support through Facebook and Twitter account.
- The web portal “Il Portale degli Italiani” (Portal of Italians) was designed and implemented in respect of the European Union standards in terms of accessibility. Through the portal citizens can access public administration services using a unique “virtual door” in a prompt and simple manner. Some features of the portal:
  - Public administration search engine [www.italia.gov.it](http://www.italia.gov.it)
  - Frequently Asked Questions Encyclopaedia divided in thematic areas.
  - More than 5 800 published news.

### Responsiveness:

- Operators are specialised in fields of knowledge and are constantly updated on laws and regulations regarding the most frequent topics (taxes, social security, work, disability, immigration).
- Continuous delivery of internal training for front and back Office operators.
- An automatic menu which guides customers in order to select the most appropriate operators according to the type of request and helps them to quickly contact them.
- Back office operators who are “charged” with the issue and support citizens throughout the solution process by favouring interaction with the public administration.

### Reliability:

- Only institutional and official sources are used to answer customer questions, thus ensuring high standards of reliability.
  - The internal Knowledge Base has a content-based structure and organisation and is constantly updated, favouring operator queries for the solutions of customer problems.
  - The preferential relationship with the public administrations joining the network allows Linea Amica to solve more complicated problems, in cases where direct contact with the competent public administration is required.
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## User satisfaction

- Continuous customer satisfaction analysis is in place, using tools fully integrated within the Customer Relationship Management system. The system combines a customer satisfaction check and the monitoring of the responses provided by the service. The general aim is to spot criticalities and areas for improvement.
  - Following contact with Linea Amica, 93.7% of customers expressed a positive evaluation of the service that they received.
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## Evaluation

- Linea Amica is constantly monitored and weekly reports have been regularly drafted (number of visitors, pages visited, average time of response to requests, negative and positive reports per topic etc. are published on the website).
- Two Customer Satisfaction Reports were produced (in 2009 and 2011).
- The request flow is constantly subject to quantitative monitoring investigating a number of thematic areas and describing the evolution and trends in requests. Qualitative monitoring (analysis of demand trend) and quantitative/qualitative reporting regarding the request flow to Network contact centres are regularly carried out.
- Linea Amica also represents a privileged observation point providing a unique picture of citizens' demand in Italy and Europe. Through this picture it is possible to collect precious information useful for the improvement of public administration standards. This detailed analysis takes shape through the publication of the *Monitor* report, a document providing information on the citizen - public administration relationship with a focus on customer needs.
- Some data concerning the 2009-2012 period:
  - 895 442 handled contacts.
  - 5.5 million website visitors.
  - 11.3 million accessed webpages.
  - 1 841 FAQs published online.
  - 500 services available online.
  - Contact details of 97 816 public service offices published.
  - 1 800 different created free telephone numbers.
  - 230 million contacts to the entire Linea Amica Network.

<http://www.funzionepubblica.gov.it/lazione-del-ministro/servizi-per-il-cittadino/linea-amica/dossier-sullattivita-di-linea-amica/indagine-customer-satisfaction-.aspx>

# Development

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## Design

Linea Amica was created to strengthen the capacity of Italian service centres to respond to citizen requests and to create a seamless user experience of Italian public services. Research by the Department for Public Administration indicated that the (approximately) 5 000 contact centres of the Italian public administration system receive and reply to almost 500 000 requests for information on services, via telephone or web each day. In addition, not all of these contact centres have the same service levels and the response to complex cases is difficult due to issues such as the use of obsolete technologies, scarce financial resources and lack of human resources training.

Design time: 3 months

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## Testing

- As a first step, the software (Content Management System and Customer Relationship Management), the hardware components and the communications systems were developed according to the service's special needs.
- The testing phase lasted for 10 days and started on 15 January 2009. It aimed to identify any weaknesses or problems of completeness and reliability in the software components and the ICT systems.
- During this phase 200 new members of staff were recruited and trained according to their tasks.

Testing time: 1 month

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## Implementation

### Tools used:

- Management of response on two levels: a front office for prompt replies to requests and a back office for problematic requests requiring deeper research and direct contact with the public administration.
- Specific Help Desks:
  - *Linea Amica Semplifica*: support to small and medium-sized enterprises to implement the framework of administrative simplification measures taken by the Government to improve Italy's competitiveness.
  - *Linea Amica Immigrazione*: provision and dissemination of correct information regarding the contribution of immigrant citizens to Italy's social and economic life.
  - *Linea Amica Abruzzo*: created after the 2009 earthquake in the Abruzzo region, it aims to speed up and facilitate the return of the population to their homes by supporting it in handling administrative procedures.
- A Customer Relationship Management system custom tailored to Linea Amica's needs and a Computer Telephony Integration system to record and track the history and evolution of requests.
- A knowledge base for content management, systematisation and filing. It supports the research and collection of information requested by citizens and fosters the exchange and sharing of knowledge within the Linea Amica team.
- A web portal [www.Lineaamica.gov](http://www.Lineaamica.gov) providing citizens with a contact point with the public administration, representing both a useful support tool and an essential knowledge base.
- Customized support is available through e-mail, free telephone numbers, app.

### Resources used:

- Cost of highly qualified staff that have been selected for different activities. Accounts for approximately 70% of the annual project budget.
- Cost for the implementation of the technology infrastructure (software and hardware) accounts for about 10%.
- Cost of free telephone line accounts for about 12% of the total budget.

Implementation time: 12 months

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## Diffusion

- A second phase of Linea Amica was launched in February 2012 in order to integrate the central and regional administrations network, through an integrated platform, a uniform request system, and voice transfer functions by means of voice over internet protocol (VoIP) technology.
- Customer relations management systems and an integrated knowledge base were installed in 30 associated public bodies (including regions, municipalities, healthcare centres) and five federated bodies within central administrations.

Diffusion time: Ongoing

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## Challenges and solutions

- Promote the development of a customer oriented and service approach by the public administration: this is the most relevant challenge faced by Linea Amica, interacting with citizens as “clients”, not just “users”. In order to do this, three main instruments were designed and implemented:
    - A network of public administrations.
    - The thematic specialisation of operators to manage requests and responses.
    - A continuous quantitative and qualitative monitoring and customer satisfaction analysis.
  - A difficulty of Italian public administrations in creating an effective cooperation towards a common objective. The Linea Amica Public Administrations Network was also created to address this lack of synergy. At the moment, more than 1 200 public information services are involved in the network all working together to improve the quality of the service provided to citizens.
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## Partnerships

### Ministries and agencies

#### Other Public Sector

Linea Amica’s network is composed of more than 1 200 information services of public administrations e.g. from the central government:

INPS (National Institute for Social Security ), INPDAP (National Institute for Social Security of Public Administration employees), INAIL (National Institute for Insurance against work-related injuries), Internal Revenue Agency and other ministries, e.g. Public Education, Cultural Heritage and Activities, Economic Development, Communication, Health, labour and social policy.

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### Regions and regional Healthcare Centres

#### Other Public Sector

The regions of Basilicata, Lombardia, Piemonte, Abruzzo, Sardegna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trentino Alto Adige, Valle D’Aosta, Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Liguria, Molise, Puglia, Sicilia, Toscana, Umbria, Veneto participate in the Linea Amica’s network.

The Healthcare Centres of Lazio and Emilia Romagna as well as the Healthcare Centres of most regions have joined the network.

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### Provinces and municipalities

#### Other Public Sector

Approximately 65 provinces and the municipalities of Rome and Milan have joined the Linea Amica Network.

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### The National Council for Research (C.N.R.) and universities

#### Academics and Research Bodies

The National Council for Research (C.N.R.) and 24 universities, e.g. University “La Sapienza “ of Roma, University of Bologna, University of Milan are part of the Amica Linea’s network.

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### Social federations and groups

#### Civil Society

A virtual desk on disability related issues and the social and occupational integration of disadvantaged people was established in collaboration with the Federazione Italiana per il Superamento dell’Handicap (Italian Federation for Overcoming Handicap), il Consorzio Sociale Gruppo Darco (the Social Consortium Darco Group), and the social cooperative onlus RE.RO - Renzo Romagnoli.

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# Lessons Learned

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## Lessons Learned

- Combine a top-down approach (creation of the public administration network and signature of memorandums of understanding and agreements with public organisations), with a bottom-up approach, so as to actively involve bodies from civil society, namely citizens' associations, trade associations, professional orders, Volunteering Centre Services, etc. This is not only in order to broaden the range of services directed to citizens, but also to increase the representativeness of citizens' specific queries to institutional interlocutors.
  - Linea Amica Contact Centre should adhere to a direct marketing strategy and customise the service supply e.g. by adjusting communications campaigns on the basis of users' know-how and characteristics.
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## Conditions for success

Conditions for success of innovation are in place, but the success could be greater if the following elements were present:

- Wider diffusion and strengthening of country technological infrastructures (i.e. broadband to avoid digital divide).
  - Greater effort and continuity in promoting the service.
  - Realisation of shared and common technological platforms fostering cooperation between public administrations.
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## Other information

- Facebook account: <https://it-it.facebook.com/LineaAmica>
  - Twitter account: @lineamica
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