



FOCUS - email best practice strategy

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Background

Over the past few years, St Helens Council has embraced email communication in a big way and today has 2,500 email accounts running on Lotus Notes. But recently, it became aware that members of staff were in danger of drowning in unwanted email.

The challenge – controlling email addiction

- To get email under control and working as an effective communications tool;
- To define email best practice;
- To train the organisation to use email more appropriately.

Rosemary Turner, IT Review Officer for IT Strategy explains; "Many staff felt 'out of control' regarding their emails and we were concerned at the growth of email, our 'Cc' culture and increasing dependency on email over other means of communication. Additionally, mailbox limits were being exceeded on a regular basis incurring considerable time for IT administering the servers."

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The solution - FOCUS

Initially Mesmo ran two workshops with staff representatives to understand the email problems staff were experiencing. Monica Seeley also worked closely with the IT staff to enable St Helens to measure the ultimate benefits of the campaign.

The FOCUS campaign was developed from an initial fact gathering exercise. (FOCUS is an acronym for St Helen's email best practice charter containing clear messages and best practice for users.) The campaign consisted of a seminar delivered by Monica to the management networks covering 500+ people, followed by an interactive email fitness self-assessment. Monica then turned her presentation into a trainers' pack enabling in-house IT trainers to deliver subsequent courses.

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The outcome

"By focusing our email strategy and having Best Practice Workshops, staff felt their concerns about email were being taken seriously and that something could be done. It was also very valuable to have our email and internet usage policy checked, we incorporated small amendments suggested by Mesmo."

Informal feedback indicates that staff generally know the email product better, can use it to their advantage and are willing to attend courses to learn more where they recognise that their lack of knowledge is hampering their efficiency.

Why Mesmo?

"We used outside consultants because we knew it would add weight and gravitas to the message we were trying to get across to staff. Monica has a very commanding presence and staff responded positively to this." says Turner.

"Mesmo were very professional in their approach and dealing exclusively with Monica gave us a sense of continuity and genuine personal involvement."