Digital government toolkit

Digital Government Strategies: Good Practices

🇨🇦 **Canada: My VAC Book**

The OECD Council adopted on 15 July 2014 the Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies. The Recommendation provides a set of 12 principles structured around 3 pillars. The OECD Secretariat is developing a Digital Government Policy Toolkit to support OECD member countries and non-member adhering countries with the implementation of the Recommendation. This practice was submitted by the government of Canada to be considered as a good practice in the implementation of one or more of the principles contained in the Recommendation.

Description of the practice:

Organisation: Digital Communications and Marketing, Veteran Affairs Canada

Name of the practice: My VAC Book

Principles implemented: Principle 4 - Reflect a risk management approach to addressing digital security and privacy issues, and include the adoption of effective and appropriate security measures.

Principle 6 – Ensure coherent use of digital technologies across policy areas and levels of government

Principle 7 - Establish effective organisational and governance frameworks to co-ordinate the implementation of the digital strategy within and across levels of government.

Principle 9 - Develop clear business cases to sustain the funding and focused implementation of digital technologies projects.

Principle 10 - Reinforce institutional capacities to manage and monitor projects' implementation

Principle 11 - Procure digital technologies based on assessment of existing assets

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Description: My VAC Book is a print-on-demand booklet that provides personalized information about VAC services and benefits. It can be accessed via the homepage of the VAC Web site at veterans.gc.ca.

It is simple to use. Based on answers to a short series of questions, an individual booklet is developed and is immediately available electronically with a hard copy arriving in the mail a few days later.

My VAC Book was part of a portfolio of projects under VAC's Transformation Initiative. It was approved through the project management approval process at VAC.

The Departmental Project Management Committee (DPMC) makes decisions and maintains oversight on all VAC projects during the Definition, Implementation and Close Out phases of VAC's governance process. Throughout these phases Committee Members play a challenge role, ensuring projects remain within the approved parameters and defined tolerances, and escalating risks, issues, and decisions as required to SMC / TSC.

Results

Veterans and their families now have a customized, print on demand publication that was can help them learn about the services and benefits that may be available them.

Development

Design: July 2011

The project was design through the project management process at VAC which includes the governance process of DPMC (see C.5).

Testing: August 2011 – May 2012

The use of My VAC Book is simple; as such minimal testing was required. The team tested the Web site with its third party service provider, internally on the project team and internally within VAC.

Implementation: September 2012

The Project Management process at VAC follows the PMBOK approach.

Resources: Budget: $30,000. Staff: 1 FTE

Diffusion and scaling: October 2012 and ongoing

Through the project management process the project team presented a close-out report, post-implementation reports to DMPC to ensure knowledge was transferred. These reports also included a "hand-over" from project manager to the operational manager (and his team).

Partnerships: None

Lessons learned

Analyse existing trends and see what services the private sector has to offer. In the case of this project VAC wanted to move more of its Communications publications from print only to Electronic only. However, VAC's age demographic was split between seniors and middle-age/young adults. This created a client based with conflicting requirements. We consulted with service providers who we in the print business, they too were dealing the balance of print and electronic requirements and had developed print-on demand tools. This lead to The My VAC Book project which satisfied the needs of all clients by offering the publication in paper or electronic formats and added value added items such as customization and quick access for paper or electronic format.

One challenge in the project was staff acceptance; they were used to giving our Services and Benefits publication directly to clients. While they liked the concept of My VAC Book, they continued to ask for the Services Benefits publication and were less incline to promote it. We analysed this scenario, staff stated they wanted to hand over material to clients as they felt it led to better perception of service rather than directing them to a web site.

Conditions required: A client base that is ready to accept new technologies, a project team that is willing to analyse and integrate existing processes with new ones and a senior management team that is willing to support new initiatives