



PROFILE

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Industry
Local Government

Founded
1996

Website
www.bathnes.gov.uk

Category
B2B / B2C

Customer Since
2006

PROJECT

Objective

Set up communication channel to make it easy for residents to contact Council, as well as implement a system that would encourage young generation to get involved.

Solution

Integrated SMS Server into its existing systems, providing two-way messaging and inbound communication as well as the ability to send out alerts and notifications.



Business Impact

Costs have been reduced by this technology, but the ability to deliver a personalised targeted message direct to our audience has also been a huge success."

Use of SMS encourages young generation to get involved with council activities

Bath and North East Somerset (commonly referred to as BANES or B&NES) is a unitary authority that was created on 1 April 1996 following the abolition of the County of Avon. With its administrative headquarters in Bath, it is part of the Ceremonial county of Somerset and provides a single tier of local government with responsibility for almost all local government functions within its area.

The Challenge

Like most local authorities, Bath and North East Somerset Council is under increasing pressure to provide effective methods of communication for its residents. One of the Council's recent priorities has been to influence young people into taking an interest in the Council's responsibilities. The Council's commitment to social inclusion and its willingness to engage in local issues emphasises the concerns it has in the interests of its youth residents.

Councillor Paul Crossley, leader of the Council, highlighted the apprehensions the Council had: "We wanted to make it as easy as possible for all our residents to contact us how they want and when they want. The ideal situation is always for the residents to inform us of a problem, and for us to immediately inform them on how the solution is going to be resolved. This ideal is very hard to maintain, and some residents are reluctant to inform us of problems in the first place."

"An action line has recently been implemented into the Council, constituting an immediate point of contact for customers. This action line receives approximately 6000 telephone calls and 500 emails and web submissions a month, and the monitoring of this consumes a lot of employee time. The ability to contact the centre directly has worked well, although there were a limited number of responses from young people within our community."

The Solution

The Council needed a solution that would complement the younger resident's lifestyle. It needed to provide information that was accessible for all ages and encouraged the younger generation to be more involved in local politics and society. The Council decided the best way to improve the facility would be to integrate text messaging and implement M:Science's SMS Server.

"The application of SMS into the action line has been a huge success. We are always looking for innovative ways to communicate with our residents, and M:Science has provided an exciting solution."

The Results

"The application of SMS into the action line has been a huge success. We are always looking for innovative ways to communicate with our residents, and M:Science has provided an exciting solution," stated Crossley.

"The prevalence and ease of SMS text messaging makes it an ideal communication tool," added Jonathon Irving, Bath and North East Somerset Council. "Not only have costs been reduced by this technology, but the ability to deliver a personalised targeted message direct to our audience has also been a huge success."



The success of the Bath and North East Somerset's new innovative method of communication also drew comment from Phil Smith, Managing Director of M:Science: "The SMS solution can be rapidly deployed and easily integrated into existing systems, and this contributes to its success. The flexibility offered by the SMS Server provides an attractive prospect for long term plans, for example those trying to reach more voters, or possible applications for road traffic status and fault reporting automated alerts. In this case, the youth community has been a really good example of the benefits our service can have to all."



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