

Case Study: IT Management Healthcheck (May 2006)

Client: Large Housing Association, Ipswich. 200 employees

Problem

IT is managed centrally by a small team, headed by an Information Systems manager. General IT support is provided by a large IT service provider and specific application support by different application vendors. Although the client had no major problem or issue they were interested in improving the way IT was managed and run.

The initial step was for Technites to familiarise itself with the way IT was currently being managed. This was done by looking at the local documentation and talking at length to the IT team. The team had already put effort into producing a “policies and procedures” document, which covered a range of management issues and practices.

At the appointed day, the healthcheck commenced as planned with interviews with key individuals who had already been notified. To get the a complete view, interviews were held with a representative of senior management, the IS manager and team and 2 users. The interviews took the form of a structured questionnaire and lasted anything between 40 minutes and 2 hours. It went through all main areas of management: strategy, costs, training, security, new users, technical support etc., from policy to actual practice. Any gaps between what senior management believed happened to actual practice was readily apparent.

Following the interviews, a report was produced by Technites summarising the main findings and identifying issues that needed to be addressed. A follow up session was then held with the IT Team to go through the report, eliminate any errors or misunderstandings and where possible to act on any immediate issues. A prioritised list of recommendations was submitted to senior management for follow up action.

Of necessity, this involved only a limited sample of users viewpoints. More interviews with users would have yielded improved quality of information on their perception of how IT affected their work.

Benefit

Quote from IS manager: “We found the healthcheck to be a useful way of checking whether we had any gaps in our management framework. It confirmed some issues we had known about which was reassuring. It also highlighted others that we were not aware of. We plan to act on these in a staged way. Technites approach of working along side us to find solutions for us rather than just find faults was very much in evidence”