

Saving 15 million on a new ICT platform

“Using a solution that speaks the same language as the rest of the world has its advantages”



A sunny day on a pedestrian street in Sarpsborg

"We have moved from a situation where ICT caused a lot of inconvenience and irritation to using a solution that produces efficient routines, saving the municipality money and benefiting the citizens."

So says Knut Eggen, ICT strategy consultant for Sarpsborg Municipality. He played a central role in the introduction of the municipality's new ICT platform, involving new systems for IT administration, email, collaboration and case management. Switching office application from OpenOffice to Microsoft Office was also a crucial factor.

More time spent on troubles and delays

At the beginning of 2009, the municipality was primarily using solutions in which OpenSource and free software played a central role. Part of the problem was that even the suppliers weren't entirely sure of these solutions. "For example, our email server only had one other customer in the entire country," says Eggen. "In terms of operation and support, this was untenable."

"We carried out a comprehensive user survey and discovered that our users experienced a lot of hassles and delays on a daily basis. They spent a disproportionate amount of time on email attachments that wouldn't open and business applications that worked poorly in conjunction with the existing office applications. In 2007 alone, around 2,500 support requests were registered regarding file formats, email and shared systems. It really wasn't difficult to decide that something needed to be done."

More secure case management and better service

A strategic decision was made to build a new platform using Microsoft software, and to implement systems to improve case management. Long-desired functionality was implemented, including making calendar and meeting room bookings available to the entire organisation. Sufficient resources were spent on user training, information and documentation. Employees were given the opportunity to use the latest version of Microsoft Office at home in order to get to know the programs better. The new solution also allows for efficient synchronization of calendar and email with employees' mobile phones.

"Using a solution that speaks the same language as the rest of the world has its advantages," a satisfied Torill Lindemark, secretary to the municipal management, says with a smile. "Just being able to cut and paste from one document to another without the formatting changing saves me a lot of time. It's also much easier to plan my own time and that of others. We can see each other's availability, and the meeting room booking system is efficient and easy to follow. I'm convinced that people living in the municipality notice this in the form of better service."

Lindemark has similar feelings about case registration in the local authority's new case management system, Public 360° from Software Innovation. "Because this system is easier to use and fully integrated with

the email system, we can register more cases than previously. At the same time, it's easier to add all the necessary documentation, which means that cases are managed more securely and precisely." The municipality has also noticed these benefits in regard to operational efficiency, partly thanks to the dramatic reduction in support requests.

"Those 2,500 requests from three years ago have been reduced to a minimum. We now have a solution that is designed for interaction and a platform that makes us far more efficient in our delivery of ICT services to the municipality," says Eggen.

15 million in reduced costs

"We are an eMunicipality, and it was an absolute requirement for us to progress to developing the ICT platform of the future," says Sarpsborg CEO, Unni Skaar. She confirms the impression that case management has become more secure and thorough with a good ICT solution behind it, adding: "The platform we have chosen to build on enables us to increase our range of digital services. This allows us to achieve our target of improving the dialogue with the citizens and making the municipality and employees more accessible."

"At the same time, we can't avoid the fact that in my position I have to stick to budgets and economic frameworks. In other words, I have to be able to justify our investments by documenting value that benefits our citizens. The ICT investments we've made satisfy these requirements because the efficiency gains are obvious and highly visible. In next year's budget, we have added a saving on ICT of 15 million Norwegian kroner* compared with 2009."

*\$2 500 000



Sarpsborg Municipality CEO, Unni Skaar

FACTS

About Sarpsborg

- Sarpsborg municipality has 4,132 employees and 52,159 residents (as at 01.01.10). It is centrally located in the south of Østfold Region and has an 80 km-long coastline that is part of the Oslofjord. In 2016, the city will celebrate its thousand year jubilee.
- The municipality's vision is: "Sarpsborg will be a leading municipality in terms of the opportunities offered to children and young people". We will focus on people in the municipality and on systems that contribute to innovation, flexibility and preparation for change.



Sarpsborg kommune