

Public Utility New Operations Center

Client Profile

Public Utility
Southeastern
United States

INDUSTRY

Local Government

Entara Services

- Thought leadership
- Program Management
- Organizational assessment

Key Benefits

- The primary benefit centered creating a model facility that improved employee efficiency and productivity

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PUBLIC UTILITY

Following a merger of business operations and initiating an investment of over \$100 million in upgrading and extending the its service delivery infrastructure, a public utility asked Entara to help develop a prototype of a new combined operations center, integrate the newly merged organizations, improve managerial performance, and support collaboration among knowledge-workers. The point was not change for its own sake; but rather to meet the challenges of increasing demands for service, safeguarding the environment, improving financial performance, and leveraging the knowledge of workers. The 40,000 square foot prototype operations center brought together four different and previously separated functional units in an open-architecture work environment supported by new computing and communications technologies designed to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration where previously these neither existed nor were encouraged.

BUSINESS GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The business challenges facing this and many other public utilities include a more stringent operating environment, the need for new water supplies, higher costs, increased responsibility for the environment, aging infrastructure, a changing workforce, and a prior reluctance on the part of mid-level managers to change. To the above challenges must be added that the utility's service area was rapidly growing to "world-city" proportions. The client turned to Entara to help ensure that momentum for change did not falter.

ENTARA SOLUTION

For this project to be successful, an effective focus on the innovation process was needed. Participating in the process were executives and senior managers of the utility, numerous consultants and consulting organizations, engineers and building contractors, various technology providers, and numerous staff from various organizations. Entara very quickly consolidated them into a team to help design, develop, implement and coordinate – over eight months:

- Performing oversight of the building developer including performing economic and environmental studies, lease negotiations, compliance checking, and construction close out.
- Defining work-space requirements.
- Assessing senior managers' readiness to change.
- Drafting facility plans including the furniture configuration and how agency staff was to be physically situated.
- Drafting standards and guidelines based on these plans to be applied to the new combined operations center.
- Monitoring the work of architects and building contractors of the new prototype operations center with particular regard to costs, schedules and factors contributing to potential cost overruns and delays.
- Developing an initial understanding of functional organizations to be relocated to the new facility, their core business processes, governing policies, how work was scheduled, how people collaborate, spans of control, level of service metrics, customer facing activities, and what information technology was used and needed.
- Designing and implementing new communications and security systems.
- Conducting social network analysis and locating staff into the new work space.

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The success of this project was due, in very large part, to the vision, determination and support of the chief executive. He was quite unique in terms of his sense of urgency and his ability to communicate that urgency to others to prepare his agency for the future. The success was also due to Entara's ability to communicate his vision to multiple stakeholders and constituencies and to coordinate the thinking and work of so many.

CLIENT RESULTS

With Entara's help, the utility completed the successful development of the new model operations center and the consolidation of disparate organizations within an advanced work space that sets the stage for a transformation of the entire organization over the course of the next three years. In addition to improving employee satisfaction, collaboration with others, and retention of key knowledge-workers; all of the above resulted in substantial savings in time per employee on non-productive activities that translated directly into cost savings for the utility.