

I/T Help Centre - City of Vancouver

The City, my buddy and me



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Overview

- About the City of Vancouver
- Corporate I/T Role
- Introduction to the Help Centre
- The Buddy System
- Benefits: Trainee and Mentor
- Lessons Learned
- Testimonials

About the City of Vancouver

- Composed of 4 service groups, 3 boards, and some smaller units
- Services to the public include engineering operations & maintenance, public safety, parks & recreation, library, planning, and permits & licenses.
- More than 100 buildings outside the City Hall campus, spread over 113 km²
- Population is estimated at 560,000
- Host City for the 2010 Winter Olympics!

Corporate I/T role

- implement and support technology infrastructure (desktop computing, storage and backup servers, WAN) and corporate applications (e-mail, web services, GIS)
- provide central services (I/T training, Help Centre, acquisitions)
- develop and support standards
- relationships with business unit I/T groups

IT Help Centre role

- tier 1 & 2 problem and service request tracking and resolution (software, hardware, communications)
- customer advocate on project teams
- training, web site development, documentation
- implement and support our service tracking system

IT Help Centre customers

- 3500 of the 9000 City staff
 - limited services to Library, Police, and outside workers
- elected officials
- citizens
 - limited number of applications

IT Help Centre team

- 8 regular plus 5 temporary staff
- 4 staff on phones
- average 118 new incidents/day
- emphasize first contact resolution
 - calls average 5 – 7 minutes
 - attempt to resolve hardware and communication issues as well as software

IT Help Centre team



April 2004

City of Vancouver

IT Help Centre team

- flat organization
 - City culture encourages direct contact between front-line staff and managers
- all Help Centre team are CUPE members
- team is central to the hiring process
- very tightly-knit, close team
- diverse (age, sex, cultural background)
- low job turnover

IT Help Centre team



What hit us?

- since 1996 City computing environment has become increasingly complex
- in 2001, within a few months, 5 out of 9 staff graduated from the Help Centre
- how to train 5 new staff as quickly and thoroughly as possible?

Buddy system evolved

- needed a formalized training program
- team identified skills and abilities a successful member demonstrates
- Help Centre staff developed a structured 12-week training program
- variety of facilitated, self-study, interview and demo-based work activities
- mechanism for maintenance

Voila! The Buddy System

- the buddies: a trainee and a mentor
- trainee paired with mentor (trainer, guardian angel, advocate, buffer) who
 - oversees training program
 - is interface with team
- all team members participate in the training

Voila! The Buddy System



Voila! The Buddy System

- training encompasses:
 - City structure and business
 - customer service standards
 - Help Centre tools
 - software and infrastructure supported
- weekly cycle - objectives, practice, study, review, feedback

Voila! The Buddy System

Time	Item:	Responsibility	Buddy's Notes	Trainee's Notes	Completed
Week 6	<p>Review objectives for the week: At the end of this week, you should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - handle incoming calls independently, with a first contact resolution rate of 50% of the Help Centre team average, and with call handling time no more than 200% of the Help Centre team average. -describe the structure of the City's municipal area network -use Openview to identify a communications break with a server -distinguish between a server which is down and a communications failure 	Buddy			
	Schedule briefing with Network Engineer Personal/network/mainframe/printer overview	Buddy & Network Engineers	Review municipal area network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - types of connections - IP & IPX connections - communications hardware - likely points of failure - basic troubleshooting Review use of Openview for monitoring network performance		
Wed	Review Meeting	Buddy & Manager	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -review progress to date and adjust program for upcoming 6 weeks as necessary 		
	Review the week's objectives, activities and actions, and work through review questions	Buddy			

Benefits: the trainee's view

- training is comprehensive, expectations are clear
- mentor helps integrate trainee into a tight, close-knit team
- encouraged to be proactive
- buddy relationship continues after the training period and outside work
- opportunity to contribute own perspective

Benefits: the mentor's view

- program helps deal with difficult situations, problems during training
 - limits escalation to supervisor or manager
 - problems can be addressed immediately
- enables 'reverse' mentoring
- forced to fill own knowledge gaps
- forced to take holistic view of the team

Lessons learned ...

- time-consuming to review, update and implement
- timing of some program elements outside team's control: had to build in flexibility
- had to watch for (inappropriate) assumptions new employee brings
- both partners must work to accommodate differences

Testimonials

“One of the greatest fears we have when starting a new job is that we will not be given adequate training. The Buddy System ensures that new staff get to be productive team members at a much faster rate than if we were left to sink or swim.”

Trainee, 2001

Testimonials

“Everything was structured and I had my own special assignments right at the beginning. Having a purpose at the start helps you feel more productive. My buddy was a main contact person that I knew was there to help me with anything I needed. I didn't feel so awkward approaching people with questions about procedures, the City, and roles of other staff.”

Trainee, 2002

Testimonials

“Being a buddy gives you the chance to look at things with fresh eyes - you can see ways to improve a procedure or eliminate one and it is always a wonderful opportunity to double-check your own skills.”

Mentor, 2002

Questions

For a copy of our training guideline,
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The End