Palming the Future: E-Government Strategy Development for a Tertiary Education Organisation

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ABSTRACT

Trans Training1 is a tertiary education organisation concerned with the provision of quality driving training for the commercial road transport, logistics, distribution, warehousing, ports and stevedoring industry sectors. At present much of their service delivery to agents, clients and trainees is administered manually. This process is slow, inefficient and allows many opportunities for errors to creep into the enrolment process. eGovernment offers the Industry Training Organisation the potential for improved service delivery and client and trainee satisfaction as well as several interesting value-adding opportunities. However, there are several challenges to adopting an eGovernment strategy including security concerns, privacy concerns and acceptance of coordination of technological investments. Many of the challenges for eGovernment strategy occur at the point where theory is applied by individual organisations and this is not covered by the literature. Readers are given the opportunity to explore some of the realities of eGovernment strategy in this case study.

Keywords: case study; e-commerce in SMEs; e-commerce strategy; electronic commerce; governmental IS; management issues; strategic planning

ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND

“I’d like every trainer to have Palm PC where they fill out training agreement forms online using a pilot pen and record a digital signature, submitting the forms electronically to us for processing and verification” said Mr G2, General Manager of Trans Training. However, Mr G understands that there is more to developing an e-government strategy for his organisation than issuing Palm PCs all round. Obviously the task of using e-government strategically will be complicated, but he is not sure how much so? Mr G hopes that by making the submission of forms electronic, he will be able to dramatically speed up the process of completing the documentation necessary for employees to begin training and improve the validity of information collected first time. However, he recognises that not all clients will have the same standard of equipment to be able to submit and access electronic information. Also he fears that there might be issues of security of the information gathered and the acceptance of digital signatures as legally binding. Mr G is also aware that his staff will also need to get used to working with electronic documentation a lot more if this project goes ahead.

Mr G works out of the head office which is in the capital of New Zealand, Wellington.
In addition to the head office, Trans Training has several one person regional offices in main centres which act as contact points for the organisation. See Appendix A for details on the general strategic direction of the organisation.

The events described in this case study occurred between October and December 2003. The company is already well established and is currently looking to take advantage of all opportunities within their market share. Trans Training is a public company relying on funding grants from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to do business (see description of TEC in the Government section). Performance is measured by how efficiently they use the budget allocated and this allows them to increase allocations for the next budget period. The organisation’s market share of the training industry is determined by the governing body TEC.

**WHAT IS E-GOVERNMENT?**

E-government can be defined as electronic handling of business processes in government and administration with modern information technology (Zimmermann 2005). Grant & Chau (2005) develop a generic framework for e-government (Figure 1). Based on their extensive literature review, they identify e-government as:

- Having a strong service delivery and information provision focus.
- Being a transformation effort
- Having diverse solutions and patterns of development
- Including IT based development

**Figure 1. Generic framework for electronic government**

Adopted from Grant & Chau (2005)
User Involvement in E-Government Development Projects
www.igi-global.com/chapter/user-involvement-government-development-projects/18892?camid=4v1a