



CASE STUDY: FACILITATING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

“Janet LeBlanc was brilliant at facilitating our strategic sessions and helping us move forward with clarity and a well-organized action plan. One on one, she is very thought-provoking and drives the conversation forward without being challenging. In a group setting, she is effective at bringing different ideas to the table, keeping everyone on track and creating a strong sense of engagement and ownership from all participants.”

Susan Ingram, Senior Director General
Service Canada College



SERVICE CANADA COLLEGE—STATS

Service Canada locations
in Canada: **600**
Mobile outreach service units: **200**
Service Canada College employees: **180**
Service Canada employees (clients): **21,000**

www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Service Canada College

OVERVIEW

Service Canada College@ HRSDC (SCC@HRSDC) is a national corporate learning institution. Within the area of organization administration, SCC@HRSDC is responsible for developing learning policies, guidelines, standards and tools in support of consistent implementation of Service Canada’s vision for learning and advancing the innovative use of learning technologies/e-learning. With 25 curricula made up of approximately 533 learning products, the College responds to all areas of organizational learning including corporate training, leadership development, executive training and Service Canada business line training.

One of the College’s flagship offerings is the Service Excellence Certification program which was created to support all service delivery professionals throughout their careers within Service Canada. One of its main focuses is to foster the qualities that are essential to service excellence—which it defines as knowledge, timeliness, fairness, outcomes and going the extra mile—through on-the-job coaching, assignments, in-class and hands-on instruction, and virtual sessions. By channeling these qualities through all of its courses and programs, and promoting the concept of “service” as a profession in and of itself, the College aims to help Service Canada employees reach their full potential in achieving service delivery excellence.

CHALLENGES

Only a few years old, Service Canada College had already made great strides to integrate and manage its mandate, core business and resources in a new era of transformational change. As can be expected with initiatives of this magnitude and complexity, various challenges emerged that would eventually become road blocks if not promptly addressed.

Susan Ingram, Senior Director General of Service Canada College, explains,

“We got to a point where we absolutely needed greater clarity and reorganization on many fronts—from streamlining and reassigning hundreds of roles and responsibilities within our organizational structure to determining how best to redefine and deliver our service offerings in a consistent manner. We had achieved a lot during our formative years and now needed to take Service Canada College to the next level.”

The economic climate, budget pressures, a changing workforce, technological advances and an ongoing need to find operational efficiencies did not make this task easy. As one of many examples, despite its preference to encourage people-oriented experiences and interactions, Service Canada College could no longer justify cross-Canada travel as its primary business model. Travel costs accounted for the majority of the training budget. The challenge was to start leveraging learning technologies that could transform how services were delivered while balancing the budget across other service delivery platforms.



CASE STUDY:

Service Canada College cont'd

In fall 2011, Ingram sought to organize a planning session with her senior management team in order to meet these and other departmental and government needs over the next three years. She says, "I needed to bring everyone together, sort through all of our challenges, make a plan and be able to follow through. We had much ground to cover."



SOLUTION

In October 2011, Janet LeBlanc + Associates—internationally recognized for its expertise in customer value and experience management—was brought in to facilitate a two-day strategic planning session attended by Service Canada College's national and regional directors.

Janet LeBlanc, President of Janet LeBlanc + Associates, explains, "The objectives of this planning session were to develop a strategic plan, strategic imperatives, a core value proposition and a roadmap of key initiatives for one-year and three-year timeframes. I wanted to ensure that Susan Ingram and her senior management team walked away with a clear articulation of their strategic focus, core business, areas of strength and weakness, and key initiatives and metrics."

Ingram says, "Janet LeBlanc is an excellent facilitator with great people skills. She held a mirror up to us, told us what our clients and staff had been saying, and validated what many of us suspected. She helped us frame and articulate not only our vision, but she was also able to drill down further and help us identify and organize five strategic imperatives. Each director was then assigned two tasks: to take ownership of one initiative and to back up another's leadership of a second initiative. We came away with concrete commitments and an action plan that was ready to go that same day. We were amazed by how much we accomplished."

In January 2012, Janet facilitated a second strategic session for managers—this time using video conferencing technology to bring together 35 people from nine locations across Canada. Initiative Leaders (directors) presented and answered questions about each of their strategic imperatives. The agenda also included briefings and discussions about the new business offerings, transformational challenges and how to break new ground.

"We tested our learning technologies and discovered how best to integrate e-learning and blended learning as an innovative and cost-conscious way of designing and delivering our learning programs," says Ingram. "We also collaborated on how best to deliver our mission-critical service offerings while effectively rolling out the transformational changes to come."

RESULTS

A year after the first session, in October 2012, Service Canada College implemented its new governance model and reorganized service offerings. Hundreds of employees were impacted by a realignment of roles and responsibilities when 200 work descriptions were consolidated and reduced to 20. In addition, 280 service offerings were made more manageable by redefining and reducing them to 28. These and other changes were so well-executed that Service Canada College's approach has been named a best practice and shared with other government departments.

Ingram says, "When we briefed employees during an information session in early October 2012, instead of resisting the changes we had implemented, they gave us two standing ovations—despite the fact many of them were being displaced or given new roles. They appreciated that in the months leading up to implementation, we had been transparent, clear, sensitive and principled in our decision-making. We had also been dedicated to building trust by inviting employees to virtual information sessions in order to provide updates, explain difficult decisions, prepare them for changes to come, and engage them in shaping our new vision. In our commitment to service excellence, we led by example."

"Janet LeBlanc + Associates exceeded our expectations in every respect—helping Service Canada College overcome huge challenges and embrace transformational change in all the best possible ways," she adds.