

Serco Asia Pacific

The Backbone of the Shared Service Centre

Serco supports governments around the world in the delivery of essential public services.

In Asia Pacific, Serco employs more than 9,000 people across Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and mainland China.

In 2019 Serco celebrates 30 years of delivering essential services to their public sector customers.

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It started out with half a dozen people and a shared mailbox.

Although the processes were manual, the workload was small. The method was sufficient for the task. But in a short space of time, Serco Australia's operations underwent a rapid expansion, going from 1000 employees up to a height of 9000. In 2012, Serco implemented a shared services model.

The team of half a dozen people quickly multiplied and the manual processes were inadequate for the new demands. It's a recurring theme among shared service centres who often connect thousands of employees across a multitude of sites, each with their own set of processes and requirements.

Software systems are like the grease in the wheels. Without process automation, large-scale operations require considerably more human effort, a concept not lost on Serco during their growth phase in Australia.

As a multi-national service company, Serco provide services across a variety of different industries ranging from hospitals and public transport to prisons, detention centres and defence contracts. When establishing their Adelaide shared service centre, they recognised the need to manage the volume of queries and requests coming in via email. The ability to allocate to different teams and to track progress were the chief requirements, leading them to implement the case management tool, versaSRS. The method became sufficient for the task once more.

Over time, the shared service centre expanded from Payroll to include HR Advisory and Recruitment. Similarly, versaSRS was expanded from one queue to three with the different skill groups sitting under each of them. Yet there was more afoot that just an increase in people and departments. There was a maturity developing as economies of scale were being realised. The shared service delivery model offers enormous potential for process improvement initiatives and such a mindset was gradually coming to the fore.

“It really did start just as a place that we could route the emails into, to give people a ticket and allow us to allocate out to different groups”, says Sue Hann, HR Administration & Customer Support Manager. “It was only when I moved in to my current role, that we started to build on using it a lot better than we did to begin with.”

It is a sentiment reiterated by Anthony Lind, “I knew we were using it pretty basically but it could fit the purpose at the time. As I’ve progressed and gotten further into what I do, we’re now looking at what kind of functionality we can use for process improvement”, says Anthony.

“Over time we got some automation, some routing that we’ve built into it. But as processes have progressed with e-forms and those sorts of things, we’ve looked at our reporting. We’ve improved our categorisation to get better statistics out of it. We’ve changed our queue set ups and our skill group set ups so that better works for the teams themselves. HR advisory, Payroll and Recruitment all use it quite differently. And that’s ok because they’ve all got their own needs”, says Sue.

With around 90 users in the shared service centre at present, the common thread among the different teams is their reliance on versaSRS. It provides the backbone for their function and employees.

“Almost everything here in this office goes through versaSRS”, says Sue. “And we use it internally as well. We try to make sure that every single possible task that is requested goes through Versa so that gives us our statistics and is also a repository for that request. We also use it for audit. It allows us to have records for everything in the audit trail”, she says.

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In terms of the biggest impact versaSRS has made on the business, “there’s really two main things”, says Anthony. “It’s the workflow, so, knowing exactly what we’ve got, what’s required, the priority on things; And it’s historical, so it’s being able to find the information with a simple search.”

Looking to the future, there are yet more areas to add value and no shortage of ideas. The new version of versaSRS now available will enable the teams to access greater functionality and a vast array of live dashboards. However, the critical thinking is at the process level and the things that will make a difference to the day to day activities. Feeding data into versaSRS from others systems is one example of the direction that Anthony intends to take in the Recruitment team. “That piece, Im really keen to try and build”, he says. “I can see HR getting a lot out of that as well. I can see Payroll getting a lot out of it. I think that is probably going to be the next big thing that will make a huge difference to almost everyone.”

The capability of versaSRS is there,
when the business is ready for it.

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