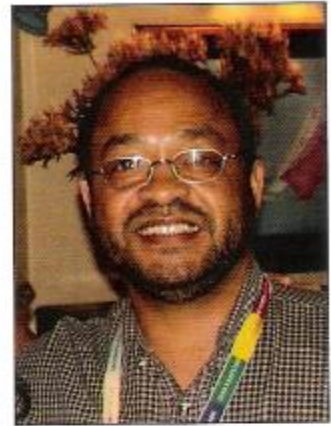


New receipting system improves service delivery

Mr Derek Harris, director of revenue – City of Cape Town was interviewed after the successful implementation of the metropolitan's new receipting system. Mr Harris was questioned on the reasons that prompted this change and the success of the project.



Derek Harris, director of revenue for the City of Cape Town

Question: What prompted the need for a new receipting system?

Harris: The City of Cape Town has moved in the direction of being a "smart" city, providing a "one stop shop" for all its residents by implementing the SAP system. Cash receipting formed a critical part of this strategy but it was outside the scope of the SAP implementation because the functionality of the SAP receipting module was inadequate and did not meet the City's cash receipting functional requirements for a number of reasons.

The implementation of SAP created a requirement for a single integrated cash receipting system for the city. As a result of financial constraints and the SAP Cash Receipting software being inadequate for the City's needs, an interim solution had to be found. There were four systems being used by seven former administrations, running on diverse platforms and software versions. The most cost effective interim solution was to run with two systems, HRK and VENUS receipting systems respectively. Although the interim solution was successfully implemented it was found that the interim solution was unable to fully cater for the current and future needs of the city because the technology was 13 years old, the hardware was obsolete, the software functionality was inadequate and it was not cost effective to run and maintain two systems. A new cash receipting system was thus required.

Question: Please detail the system implemented

Harris: It is a standardised, fully manageable and integrated system which reduced the total cost of ownership while providing increased levels of support to both users and

residents of the City of Cape Town.

Question: Was the system delivered in time and within your budget restraints?

Harris: Yes, the system was delivered in time and within our budget restraints due to HRKs responding timeously with the Software changes which resulted from the testing.

Question: How was it implemented and was the implementation successful?

Harris: A user workgroup was constituted, which scheduled the project meetings with set timeframes. Resources and individuals were allocated relevant deliverables and ensuring relevant quality controls were in place. Functionality testing on the testing environment and integration testing were done. Acceptance of the final version of the software by the user group was gained.

We started at a pilot site migrating from the testing environment to a production environment. We compiled the training manuals for users and trained the super trainers who in turn trained 400 users. The field roll-out to all relevant offices as per implementation schedule was completed. Yes, the implementation was successful.

Question: To what do you subscribe the successful implementation?

Harris: The service provider, together with the City of Cape Town officials formed a formidable project team led by a dynamic project leader, Kevin Brooks.

Question: How has the system been received by the staff and has it lead to productivity improvements?

Harris: The staff are very satisfied with the system because it is very user friendly and state of the art hardware. The manual system of controlling manual receipts has now been automated. The

staff feel that they "own" the system as they have been involved since the outset of the project.

We now have one common system throughout our uni-city which means that staff can move around and not require training on a different system. The touch screen technology make for an intuitive interaction with very little training required.

Question: How has the system made impact on service delivery?

Harris: The scanning device makes receipting fast and accurate. The system facilitates timeous and accurate updating of financial transactions. It is one system, one receipt and maintenance and support is enhanced. Effective and efficient utilisation of staff resources in that staff can now be rotated between offices.

Question: Can the system grow beyond the original requirements?

Harris: It has already done so in that the city can now receive online validation of its traffic fine payments. With minor development the system can enable the city to become a third party collector as well as selling prepaid electricity and water.

I am positive that we have one of the best, if not the best receipting systems which suits the needs of a municipality, in the country. It was designed by the local market for the local market using the latest technology with ability to change for the future. ■