



Auckland Regional Council

Doing more with less through effective PPM

The Auckland Regional Council (ARC) currently manages a range of activities across the Auckland region. The ARC's work covers transport and urban development, regulatory services, policy and planning, the operation of 26 regional parks and the provision of community services through both programmes and partnerships.

The breadth and variety of this work means the council's ICT department is constantly managing many different projects, programmes and staff, all designed to support the organisation and ensure its vision and strategies for the Auckland region are realised.

In less than 12 months time, the Auckland Regional Council will merge with the region's 7 other local councils to create one council, dubbed the 'Super City.' This is an exciting and challenging time for the council and its ICT team.

Doing more with less

With considerable organisational demand and limited resource, the ARC's ICT department needed to do more with less. The team identified three immediate challenges around the delivery and management of project outcomes which became the key deliverables of the ARC's PPM solution.

1. A visible delivery picture

In such a large organisation with a diverse range of ICT projects underway at any one time, ICT has to be sure that projects can be delivered on time and in budget. The team needs to know when projects are experiencing problems so it can take the necessary steps to bring them back on track.

The council's Executive Management Team (EMT) and wider stakeholders also need to have a clear picture of the projects underway and their stage of development.

With a clear picture of what is happening and where, the EMT can make the best decisions for the organisation, ensuring that ARC priorities are delivered on.

2. A balancing act – resourcing

Across the ARC, the demand for ICT resource, particularly for projects, is considerable. The challenge ICT faces is how to best meet these organisational demands and priorities within the limited available resources.

The challenge is made greater because, like many organisations, the ARC has limited dedicated project resources and must coordinate project activities with non-project (business as usual, BAU) work across teams.

ICT needs a clear understanding of the resource picture. It needs to understand what people are working on and their BAU load in order to get a clear, forward looking picture of project capacity across teams and to plan and resource projects accordingly.

3. Objective prioritisation

The final challenge is ensuring the right projects are selected for investment. EMT and ICT know it is critical that the limited available resources are focussed on the projects that best deliver on the ARC's strategic objectives.



The selection criteria

With the challenges identified, the ARC realised it needed effective Project Portfolio Management (PPM).

Prior to researching PPM suppliers, the ARC's project management office had focussed on establishing a project delivery framework to ensure that the right processes and practises were in place across ICT. Therefore, a key requirement was a system that would enable them to embed this framework and drive it through the ICT area.

Other ARC requirements of a PPM system:

- Easy to use and tailored to the organisation to minimise change management.
- Quick and relatively straightforward to implement.
- A cost effective and comprehensive solution that would address the key challenges.
- A system supplier with a strong track record across Australasia

Based on these criteria and market consultation, the ARC decided upon Sentient PPM.

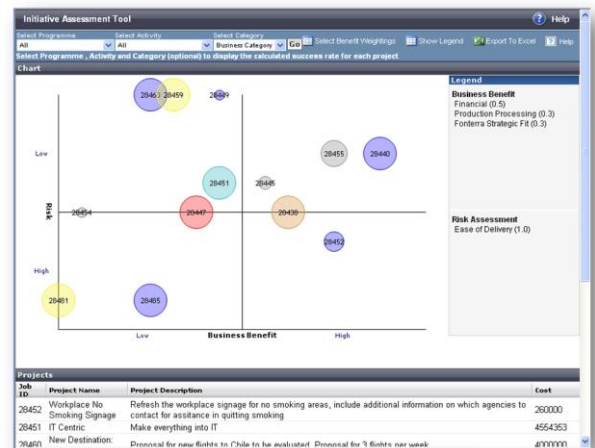
“Sentient PPM was configured specifically to meet our organisation. We did not need to impact the entire organisation by changing GL codes and the like. Sentient was quick and flexible while the other systems and offerings were just too hard.” [Abi Cameron, Project Manager Corporate Services, ARC].

The results

With Sentient PPM Status Reporting and Pipeline Management, the ARC immediately gained crucial visibility and understanding of the progress and status of projects and programmes across ICT. Armed with dashboard summaries and clear visibility, exceptions are now managed quickly and more projects are delivered on time and on budget.



The Sentient PPM Initiative Assessment and Prioritisation functionality provide a consistent and strategy-centric approach to the assessment and selection of ARC initiatives. Graphical snapshots provide the EMT and ICT with immediate clarity, objectivity and rich information to aid decision making.



“The biggest benefit was the quick wins made in prioritisation and initiative assessment – this was hugely useful. Now people see that ICT are “not the bad guys”, and that we are doing the best job possible. [Abi Cameron, Project Manager, Corporate Services, ARC].

Resourcing and visibility were a major challenge, but the ICT team leaders and managers now have a clear, forward-looking resourcing picture. This allows the ARC to understand capacity across ICT resource pools and plan delivery accordingly.

Most importantly, the uptake across ICT has been strong as Sentient has made it easier for managers and staff to do their jobs.

“It's running really well and everyone is using the system. One team leader who was initially resistant has really taken the BAU planning on board. He is now running everything through it, to the hour.” (Abi Cameron, Project Manager, Corporate Services, ARC)

Finally, Sentient PPM has reduced administration and reporting overheads. Streamlined workflow, improved collaboration and system automation means that Sentient PPM is taking care of a lot of the legwork. The ICT PMO and project resources are now spending less time on admin and more time delivering projects.

Looking forward - The ARC's path to PPM maturity

While implementing Sentient PPM has brought significant benefits to the council, there is scope to add further benefits. Over the next 24 months, as the ARC moves to the Super City, it will build on and develop the PPM capability through the structured implementation of additional Sentient modules designed to deliver value to ICT and across the new organisation.

After seeing Sentient PPM's smooth implementation and operation at the ARC, the Auckland Transition Agency (ATA), tasked with the establishment of the Auckland Super City chose Sentient PPM for the transition. With tight timeframes, the need for clear visibility and the critical importance of on time delivery, Sentient was the logical choice.

"Sentient delivered for the ARC. The results speak for themselves and results are how Sentient do business. They have now been selected for one of the most significant local government projects in Australasia - where a large number of critical projects must be delivered over a short time, to make sure the Supercity delivers for Auckland and New Zealand." [John Holley, Group Manager ICT, Corporate Services, ARC]



Sentient PPM features:

Assessment and prioritisation – objectively assess and prioritize all the different projects across your business to ensure the most important projects receive the proper attention.

Investment workplan – build out your investment workplan, monitor progress and respond to internal and external changes.

Project pipeline management – get control of your pipeline and proactively manage troubled projects to bring discipline to your delivery process.

Risks and issues management – bring consistency and clarity to the management of project risks and issues

Governance and compliance – ensure process and delivery governance is adhered to; bring control to your business.

Project and summary status reporting – company-wide project status reporting, including top-down program summaries.

Team management – remove ad hoc scheduling and gain a central view of your true resourcing picture.

Document management – provide a one stop shop for all your project documentation information in a single place.

Where to from here?

a. arrange a demo

ph: NZ +64 9 366 0655

ph: AU +61 2 8006 2334

b. watch a video

www.sentientsoftware.com

c. request a starter pack

email: PPM@sentientsoftware.com