2015

Transform Local Government with Office 365

MODERNIZING CITY AND COUNTY IT INFRASTRUCTURES WITHIN BUDGET WHILE DELIVERING MORE RESPONSIVE CITIZEN SERVICES, ENGAGING CITIZENS AND UNIFYING EMPLOYEE SERVICES

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ABOUT SP MARKETPLACE www.spmarketplace.com

SP Marketplace is a provider of software applications that drive higher organizational productivity using Microsoft Office 365 and SharePoint. SP Marketplace offers application templates, web parts and branding solutions designed for Office 365 and SharePoint Online and On-Premise implementations. These templates include Intranet Portal, Employee Self-Service, HR, IT Support, Project Tracker, Facilities, CRM, Customer Service and other applications. SP Marketplace, through its unique "Application Provisioning" approach, offers a cost-effective business solution approach for small to medium businesses that wish to use the Office 365 and SharePoint platforms.

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Introduction

Emerging technology and local government initiatives are empowering cities and counties to transform how services are delivered to citizens and how employees communicate and collaborate. As a result, cities and counties are teaming up with technology providers to develop and provide solutions that deliver more responsive services, driving higher levels of employee productivity, and engaging citizens to be an active part of local government, all while realizing significant cost savings.

A large part of this transformation in local government is due to cloud technologies. At the core of this transformation opportunity is Office 365, Microsoft's cloud productivity platform. Built from the roots of Microsoft Office, it is a cloud platform with which your staff is already familiar but is exceptionally more robust and practical.

Microsoft has transformed Office 365 into more than just an office platform. Instead, it creates an organizational ecosystem that facilitates document management, collaboration tools, business process automation, and much more. It is a core part of Microsoft's CityNext initiative that brings a full cloud platform solution to local government. Best of all, Office 365 is built to bring your organization into the mobile world, supporting smart phones and tablets. It also provides the ability to collaborate through chat and online meetings.

Office 365 alone is a powerful platform but its capabilities can be extended further than ever imagined with out-of-the-box solutions provided by Microsoft CityNext partners like SP Marketplace and others. Cities and counties can extend Office 365 to drive more responsive services, employee productivity and citizen engagement at a reasonable cost and virtually no infrastructure investment.

With smarter technologies in the cloud, social, mobility, and analytics offer local government innovative approaches to improve inefficiencies and reduce costs. This is what Microsoft rightfully labels "New with less."

If you are reading this white paper then you most likely are using Office 365 or considering it and how it can transform operations and processes in your organization or agency. This document will demonstrate for small- to medium-size cities and counties how Office 365 and SP Marketplace solutions will allow them to leverage the Office 365 platform to deliver more responsive citizen services, improve employee productivity and collaboration, and drive citizen engagement.

Many small and medium cities and counties envision a more modern IT Infrastructure or even modernizing parts of its current infrastructure but don't know where to start. Limited budgets and lack of IT resources further spawn trepidation.

Numerous third-party providers offer cloud-based services but cost tens of thousands of dollars, an amount that immediately closes the door for cities and counties. Office 365 though is a cost-effective solution to begin evolving to the cloud. This does not mean a city or county has to start over from scratch but rather is able to begin at its own pace and level and see immediate results on its cloud ROI.

In this white paper, cities and counties will learn how applications and templates built on Office 365 and provided by SP Marketplace will transform local government in the cloud and how to proceed at a pace that is right for their city or county. SP Marketplace has learned these best practices from years of experience and more than 600 satisfied small- to medium-size customers that include cities and counties. We hope this information is useful in presenting options for using Office 365 to transform your city or county in the cloud.

SP Gov Suite on Office 365

SP Employee Services

Improve employee communication, productivity and collaboration with the SP Employee Services. This out-of-the-box Intranet structure consolidates processes, access to documents, and provides an intuitive portal interface for employees and internal service departments.

SP Citizen Request System

Combine the power of a 311 system with a central service management application to automate citizen service request tracking and management. Capture requests via Internet forms, smart devices or traditional emails and calls. Review, route and track service requests to appropriate departments for resolution. Automate status notification emails to the citizen. Features full reporting and dashboards.

SP Community Portals

Provide City Council, County Board, and Commissions with Portals designed to drive meetings, collaboration and sharing documents while maintaining security between groups. Choose the board or committee module or the community portal depending on the type of group sites needed.

I. Citizen Services

A. Citizen services response and department silos

A primary focus for most local governments is delivering responsive services. However, the very structure of government may inhibit citizens from easily requesting services. One of the challenges that cities and counties face in providing services to citizens is department silos. Often IT infrastructures and departmental organization grew through siloed departments and agencies, each having its own systems, policies, and procedures.

Department silos create a maze that leads to frustration and disillusionment when citizens are looking for services and submitting requests. This has resulted in a breakdown of a city's or county's ability to communicate with citizens and deliver services. Additionally, department silos have led to the absence of a citizen-centric system.

This department-centric approach multiplies response times to citizen requests and leads to inefficiencies. As a result, it will ultimately cost more money and resources in the future.

Department silos aren't the only challenge with aging city and county services. Often with older systems, manual processes are still in place that could be swapped for automated processes that improve not only the quality of response but also increase the quantity as well.

Today, citizen requests are often captured and handled manually by email or phone, which can be inefficient. Most importantly is that these requests cannot be linked to a trackable project or task. They often get lost among the hundreds of other emails from different departments. One lost email request or issue might not seem very important but putting it into perspective (see example below) with a real-world example demonstrates the magnitude of modernizing citizen requests.

EXAMPLE:

Issue: Nicolette Jones submits a request to fix a blocked drain on a main street adjacent to her neighborhood. If this request is not routed to the correct departments or staff, this issue could become a larger problem, such as a flooded street. If the street is flooded then it hinders Nicolette's ability to get to work, take her kids to school, and also presents a safety hazard.

Result: More resources, time, and capital costs will be required to respond to this issue rather than if the initial request had been addressed in the first place.

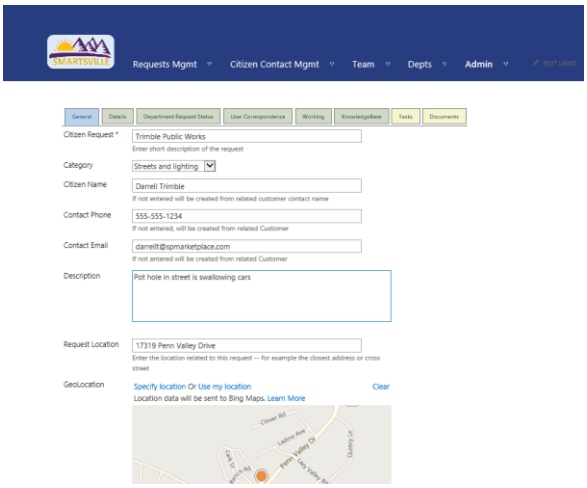
B. Creating citizen central on Office 365

To resolve the issue caused by department silos, a service management layer needs to be placed over top as a central location to capture, manage, and route requests from citizens. With the Office 365 cloud platform and an application template provided by SP Marketplace, cities and counties can deploy a central system resembling a Help Desk that becomes Citizen Central Services for back-office response to requests.

Deploying the Citizen Services Module by SP Marketplace easily and quickly creates the Citizen Central Services Layer over department and agency silos, which automates response and processing to citizen requests.

With this Citizen Central System on Office 365, requests are captured, tracked and logged and routed (if necessary) to the relevant department, which will then address the request. After the issue is resolved, an update notification is sent back.

For government decision-makers, influencers, and leaders looking to improve city services and invest in new technology, evolving to include Office 365 as part of their existing systems offers a simple yet powerful strategy. Going even further to include an application template from SP Marketplace will extend a city's or county's ability to enhance citizen services, improve responsiveness, elevate collaboration between staff and increase communication between city and citizen.



Citizen Request for Review

C. Making it easy for citizens to submit requests with an integrated 311

A key success factor for cities and counties is the ability to capture requests and ensure the requests are carried through an organization with an effective 311 (citizen request) design. Additionally, this should be part of the overall citizen engagement strategy, often delivered through your city or county website.

Many cities and counties rely on a standalone 311 mobile app rather than one that is integrated with the website. This presents a lack of unity and a level of disconnect because downloading a separate app can be a hassle for the citizen and lead to technical issues between device types (iPhone, Android, etc.).

Choosing a standalone system may seem easy and modern at first but ultimately will cause more trouble than it's worth. First, the city or county has to develop and create the app then make it available for download. They have to make sure it's compatible with different mobile operating systems as well as their own internal organizational systems. Some apps are compatible with iPhone but not Android. Next, the city or county has to allow for regular system and software updates and maintain the system and cover any costs. This approach is often out of reach for small to medium organizations.

With the advent of responsive web design (support for all devices), web forms are now available directly from your website. By integrating the 311 with your website, all a citizen has to do is go to your website, hit the service button and fill out a responsive form (supports all mobile devices). This design supports a citizen engagement strategy built around your website where they can access information and see alerts before submitting requests.

Office 365 offers the functionality of a responsive 311 CRS that creates and leads to a citizen-centric system. SP Citizen Request System (CRS), offered by SP Marketplace, is one example of an integrated 311 system that takes advantage of the Office 365 platform, allowing citizens to quickly and easily submit requests on any device.

What makes Office 365 the perfect platform for a 311 CRS is that it is web based, making it easily accessible by everyone, from citizens to city managers to field workers. This creates a seamless flow of communication and collaboration, improves response to citizen requests and increases the level of services a city or county is able to provide.

II. Citizen Engagement

A. Driving citizen engagement with community portals

Engaging citizens is an important step in transforming local government. Cities and counties are inherently more productive and responsive when citizens are involved.

To involve citizens and encourage citizen engagement, local government must provide them with the ability to be active participants, voice their opinions and collaborate and communicate with city leaders. Sending an email, writing a letter, or calling a telephone number are not very dynamic ways to engage and oftentimes are ineffective.

Boards, commissions and committees provide a dynamic channel through which citizens can be more active, and participate and engage with cities and counties. You want to make it easy for these groups to collaborate and share information. A challenge though is the inability to provide a central hub for committees and commissions to collaborate and communicate outside of periodic meetings and email. This is where the concept of online group portals can transform citizen engagement.

Portals are an essential element of Office 365 that provide a central hub for committees and commissions to come together, and allows cities and counties to more effectively engage citizens.

With SP Community Portals provided by SP Marketplace and built on Office 365, portals can easily, quickly and cost-effectively be set up for different communities and groups. These portals also improve productivity and communication by managing information, meetings, and providing a virtual space to share documents and projects.

Having community portals that serve as hubs for councils, committees and commissions to meet online, share documents and collaborate will facilitate the ability to take part in active discussion and action without having to be physically present. This is especially important if a member is traveling, is out sick, or a physical location is unavailable. The ability to meet virtually enhances ownership, productivity, effectiveness, communication, and collaboration.

III. Employee Services

A. Internal impact of department silos

Over time city and county departments have established their own procedures, processes and systems to deliver internal services. While this is good for the department, for employees accessing internal services (IT, HR, etc) it means they have to deal with inconsistent processes, different systems, and multiple ways to request services. This not only can lead to frustration but also takes time away from the business of government.

Employees are a valuable asset to local government whose needs must be considered when evaluating and updating an IT infrastructure. For internal staff, department silos create a complex vertical and lateral hierarchy that leads to inefficiency and redundancy.

Department silos not only lead to inefficient delivery of services but inefficient delivery of internal services, such as HR, IT, and Facilities, making it hard for employees to find and access the services they need most to do their jobs.

Achieving operational efficiency of city and county employees is important to increase productivity. Geographic, functional and informational silos can impede performance of employees and different agencies.

Like businesses, local government organizations need to get away from the silo mentality because coordination across departments is where the greatest opportunities lie to create efficiency, drive change and incorporate consistency for all employees.

You do not have to disassemble departments but rather apply an internal services and communication structure over the top that provides a consistent employee experience for communication and obtaining services.

In some cases, like with help desks, you may be able to replace disparate department applications with a single solution across departments that saves money and could potentially pay for itself.

A. Creating an Intranet hub to empower employees

Implementing an organizational hub structure on Office 365 will empower employees by providing the latest government news, announcements, achievements and activities of other departments, agencies and employees. It also provides a consistent way to access services from departments. This hub is easily and quickly accomplished by implementing SP Employee Services Suite from SP Marketplace. It provides a full Intranet structure including department portals.

SP Employee Services Suite turns Office 365 into a vibrant, dynamic, flexible portal for city and county employees to communicate and collaborate and access internal services. With its unique "Active" content feature, content is automatically reviewed and important operational events and announcements are pushed to the home page.

An Intranet hub allows local government to span siloed internal service departments like HR, IT and Facilities to provide a single consistent approach to requesting internal services, through Help Central, accessing policies and procedures, and using common business processes like time-off and expenses.

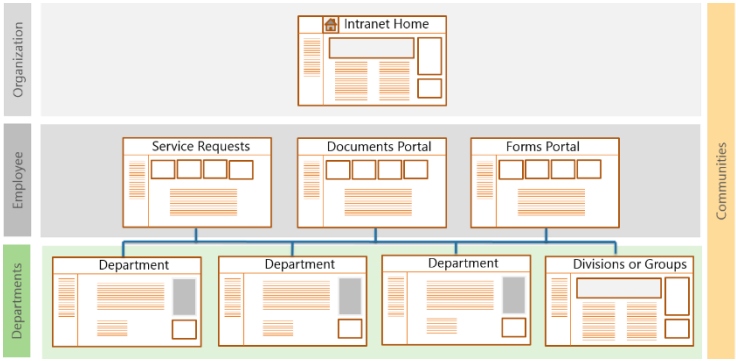
Empowering employees allows them to focus on the business of government and providing better city services to citizens rather than tedious internal administrative tasks. Like the citizen-centric strategy, an Internal Services Hub can be layered over existing systems to provide a common approach to internal services for employees. Additionally, many local governments have used it to consolidate costly disparate systems, creating the opportunity for significant savings.

B. How to structure the Intranet

In most cities and counties the Intranet might feature an organizational portal at the top that serves as the Home Page and several department portals underneath, such as HR, IT and Facilities.

Each department might serve as an extended Team Site with a department tasks list, calendar and document libraries. You can create one of these and make it your department template for the staff of that department to access and use. This is the simplest structure and a good start place to start.

However, while this structure serves basic needs eventually it will need to expand to provide self-service functions for employees and employee portals in each department to separate the department staff site from employee access. Below is one example of an advanced Intranet structure.



By implementing an Employee Services layer, cities and counties will drive productivity further. From here, city and county employees can go to Help Central to request service from any department and check the status, submit commonly used organization requests like time off, workers compensation, reimbursement for work-related expenses and continuing education and certification.

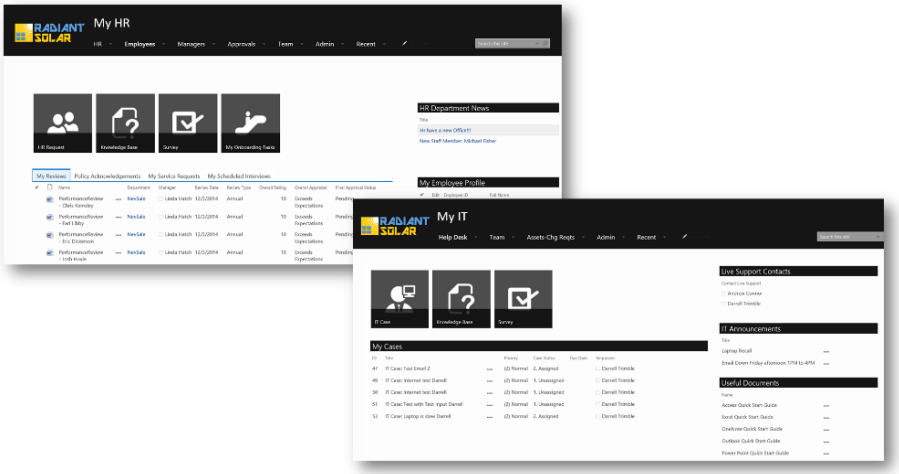
Employees also can access policies and forms in a central place rather than spread across networked drives. This replaces department silos with an employee-centric internal service structure.

C. Creating a consistent look, layout and user experience

Having the right structure is a good start but it's just as important to make sure that the user experience is consistent across sites.

An employee that uses the Intranet and then goes to the Facilities portal or the Projects portal should experience consistency in the look, organization and navigation. Often this is not the case because each department sets up its own portal without regard for a common experience for the end user in relation to other departments.

If access to important documents or forms for Facilities or Projects is in completely different locations in the department portals then the user can become confused or frustrated.



If each department uses a different Help Desk or Service Request approach, this also can be confusing. It's important for each department to use a common design to employee facing portals. Below is an example of how to design portals across different departments so they achieve a consistent feel.

IV. Begin Transforming Local Government on Office 365

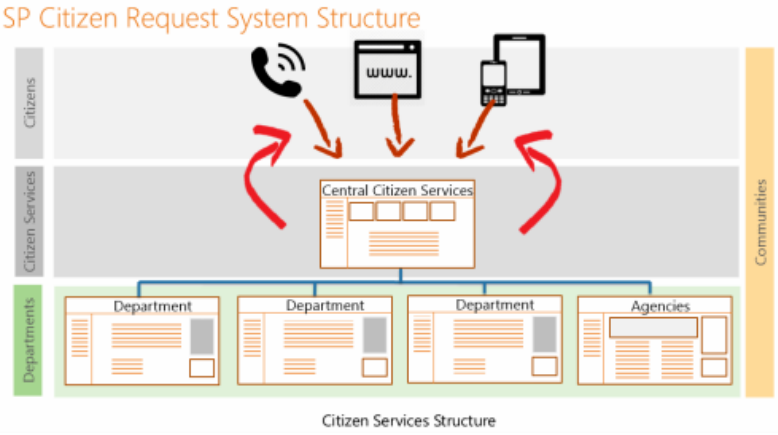
As more cities and counties begin to think about modernizing their IT infrastructure and evolving to the Office 365 ecosystem, it's important to take into consideration all levels of government, from citizens to employees. Office 365 is the right platform to help cities and counties take their departments to the

cloud. But by deploying application templates built on Office 365 and working with SP Marketplace, local government can go further to more effectively and easily deliver responsive citizen services, engage citizens and modernize how employees work.

By choosing to go with Office 365, city and county decision-makers, influencers and leaders have the opportunity to improve the way services are delivered, potentially reducing costly inefficiencies. Whether you are a small city or county using manual processes or a medium-size department or agency with an established system, learn how to go "New with less."

A. Start with citizens services

It's easy to start implementing citizen service modules on Office 365 without forced replacement of existing systems. Choosing an application template like SP Citizen Request System expedites the process and avoids headaches and frustrations because it is an affordable out-of-the-box template that cities and counties can customize themselves.



Citizen Services Structure

Furthermore, SP CRS is integrated *with* a city's or county's website, as opposed to a standalone app, making it easy for citizens to use immediately from any device for all stages of their requests, from submittal to receiving updates about the status of their request.

An integrated 311 CRS on Office 365 makes it easy for local government to connect with citizens and can even feature the ability to communicate directly over the phone or live chat with Skype for Business. For city leaders, this means happier citizens and less complaints, which allows department accountability to be measured.

B. Continue with citizen engagement

By adopting a cloud platform approach like Office 365, your city or county has the potential to deliver essential services more efficiently, reduce capital expenses and cut operational costs. But a successful local government goes *beyond* just being able to provide superior citizen services.

Engaging citizens ensures a more transparent, responsible government. It's easy to engage citizens with Community Portals on Office 365, which provides a virtual meeting space for city council, county boards and commissions, and citizen committees.

Implementing a secure portal for citizens, council members, and board members allows them to become involved, voice their opinion, which leads to local government that is more productive and responsive.

Imagine if your city is planning a new park or zoning change. Citizen feedback and collaboration is required and can be helpful in identifying issues not immediately apparent. Portals provide an avenue for this discussion and planning to take place.

C. End with success - employees

It's just as important to be considerate of employee needs as it is with citizen requests and citizen engagement. While citizens may be the life blood of any city or county, employees are the arteries that help transport citizens and citizen requests throughout the system.

With Office 365, a city or county can implement an integrated structure designed to drive employee collaboration, communication, and streamline internal services like HR, IT, Facilities, Projects and drive employee self-service.

An Employee Services Suite on Office 365 from a third-party solution provider like SP Marketplace makes this not only possible but quick, easy and cost-effective. Employees no longer have to give in to frustration when looking for a form or policy or how to submit a time-off request.

Employee Services Suite uniquely address the issue of internal department silos. Employees also have their own portal from which to request help from any department, access frequently used processes like expenses and purchase requests.

With this integrated structure employees can access the latest news and announcements, set up their own personalized content links, access relevant documents like policies and procedures and see the latest events calendar. This leads to operational efficiency necessary for increased productivity.

V. Start the Office 365 Transformation Today

By evolving from a siloed system model to a modern cloud platform on Office 365, your local government will save across the board. Disparate hardware and software maintenance is greatly reduced, system complexity is reduced, and IT resources can be shifted to more strategic initiatives rather than ongoing maintenance. Citizen satisfaction and employees' ability to respond also improve making for a more successful, forward-thinking and modern city.

If you want to learn more about how Office 365 can transform your local government, SP Marketplace offers SP Gov Suite and a range of services to cost-effectively start the Office 365 transformation today.