

Focus on... Risk Management

Case Study: Reading Borough Council

"Focus on... Risk Management is proving to be an effective training programme for raising staff awareness on the identification and mitigation of risks. It also helps to demonstrate the effectiveness of our governance arrangements."

Paul Harrington, Head of Audit & Risk Management, Reading Borough Council



The Need

Unforeseen risks can negatively affect all aspects of service delivery in Local Government. This applies, in particular, in the current environment of constant change and much reduced resources. Whereas most Authorities have adopted strategies for managing risks, they are often not fully understood by managers or applied effectively. Both the likelihood and impact of such risks increase as a result.

Effective awareness training can quickly mitigate such risks. Indeed developments in on-line facilities mean that such training can be rapidly and widely delivered at a fraction of the cost of "chalk and talk" sessions. It can therefore provide significant savings on existing training budgets.

Meritec's Response

Focus on... Risk Management is an e-awareness product that effectively raises the understanding of middle managers about the need for risk management and their responsibilities for delivering risk strategies.

It is based on learning experiences from 3 Local Authorities and has flexible content that can be easily tailored for local needs and priorities.

Implementation costs are minimised as access is achieved via a simple Internet connection. There are no ongoing support costs.

Focus on... Risk Management maintains a database of learners and issues a certificate to users that successfully complete the course. It is easy to track and record scores, trends and feedback – all beneficial statistics for justifying performance against national and local indicators.

Reading BC Experience

Reading BC is developing an effective risk management culture supported by a wide-reaching awareness programme.

Having successfully rolled out Meritec's Focus on... Fraud & Corruption product in 2009/10, Reading BC licensed **Focus on... Risk Management** in May 2010. It is now being made available to all managers, staff and elected members to raise their awareness on, in particular:

- the importance of risk management
- key risks for the Council and how their impact and likelihood can be reduced
- the expectations on individual managers.

Feedback so far has been very positive.

James Clements, Auditor at Reading BC confirms that "**Focus on... Risk Management** is really easy to use. It also has high value content that is simplicity itself to change to meet local circumstances and priorities."

Reading BC Benefits

In summary, Reading BC expects that **Focus on... Risk Management** will enable:

- **Reduced losses** from the timely referral of quality information on potential risks
- **Improved Use of Resources** from self-service learning at a time that suits
- **Cost Savings on training** via a hosted, Internet facility that enables rapid roll out to an unlimited number of users.

Highly cost effective learning

Contribution to governance requirements

Anywhere, anytime use

Unlimited numbers of users

Helps protect service delivery, budgets and reputation

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