


**Business Advantage
Through IT Skills Management**



*Implementing the **BCS** model has shown that you can run a professional **IT service** within the **public sector** to the same standards as in the **private sector***

*Simon Morioka, Head of Business Transformation and IT Service,
Lambeth Council*

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Lambeth

The London Borough of Lambeth is home to approximately 270,000 people, inhabiting a large and diverse area stretching from Waterloo and the London Eye in the North, to the suburbs of Norwood and Streatham in the South. It is the largest London borough within the thirteen local authorities which make up Inner London.

Supporting and enabling the council's delivery of service to its residents is an IT department of 150 staff. Simon Morioka, head of the Business Transformation and IT Service division explains: "My division is responsible for all council IT services including applications, network services, first and second line support, as well as delivering business transformation across the council. The division works in partnership with all the service departments to deliver projects and programmes around changing the way we deal with customers."

In 2004 the organization utilized BCS Professional Development Consultancy to help implement the centralisation of the IT division, ensure that the division had a unified set of professional job descriptions, help develop a clear career progression and identify skills requirements. Ian Wathen, Project Manager comments: "Part of the challenge was to bring all the roles together into one central organization." He continues: "We needed to find a way of creating new job descriptions acceptable to staff and management and also of a professional nature. To overcome this we decided to seek expertise from an external organization and the BCS was the obvious choice; in fact I think it was the only choice."

Ian explains how a BCS professional development solution, Skills Manager, helped them develop industry standard roles for their IT workforce. "We chose BCS because it is the professional body in IT and therefore we knew that all the job descriptions would be technically correct. In the past we hadn't really got the technical basis for our job descriptions, however, the SFIAplus standard around which BCS Skills Manager is based, gave us the technical competences which we lacked and added to our standard Lambeth competences covering professional, administrative and managerial competences."

The Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) is the high level UK Government backed competency framework describing the roles within IT and the skills needed to fulfil them. SFIAplus contains the SFIA framework of IT skills plus detailed training and development resources to provide the most established and widely adopted IT skills, training and development model reflecting current industry needs.

The implementation of job descriptions linked to the SFIAplus standard has had a very positive effect on employees. Simon continues: "Part of IT professionalism is bringing the right

people with the right mix of skills into an organization; it's also about managing them and developing them within that organization. At Lambeth, people are managed to their job descriptions which are now very tightly linked to their business and technical skills through the BCS model. Because it's a national standard people can now see and understand why they're being managed in a certain way and how by developing those skills and delivering on projects and programmes they are supporting their own career development, whether that be here in Lambeth or elsewhere."

Through the use of BCS Skills Manager Lambeth has been able to develop clear career progression for their employees, expand the professionalism within the IT division and make big savings. Simon explains, "One of the things that BCS Skills Manager has been a key enabler of, is embedding IT professionalism within the council. It's not to say that there have not always been IT professionals working in Lambeth but they had not been working in a structured way or within a single centralised function. There had not always been clear career progression and career development opportunities. The way the model has been implemented has really assisted us in actually showing people that there is career structure here at Lambeth."

"The most interesting impact has been in the mix of our internal permanent staff and the employment of consultants and contractors. Historically there were a lot of issues in recruiting professionals into the organization. However, the implementation of clear career paths and remuneration linked to the BCS model has allowed us to bring in a lot more permanent staff, which has saved us £300,000 a year in the cost we were paying out to agencies. We now get upwards of 50 applicants for every job we advertise within the borough and that is a very unique position in IT recruitment."

In addition the organization has been able to assess the skill set within the division by mapping their existing staff skills against SFIAplus, a process which proved that they had the full complement of required skills to deliver their services.

As for the future, Simon says: "There is nothing static about IT and we expect to continuously review the job descriptions to make sure they are fit for purpose. We're keen to consolidate the roles so that we move from 30 to 40 separate job descriptions to a much smaller set. We now want to make them more generic so that we can maximise opportunities for staff to obtain experience across the whole range of the IT life cycle, rather than being tied to any particular area of IT development or support."

The London Borough of Lambeth's commitment to ensuring that its IT division is second to none is conducted through continuous delivery of services to its residents, as well as its commitment to attracting and retaining professional staff. Simon explains, "One reason I work at Lambeth is that I believe you can run a professional IT service within the public sector to the same standards as in the private sector. Taking the BCS model and implementing it within a public sector environment, and showing what can be done, the benefits for the organization and the staff, is a good example of this."

**For further information contact the BCS on:
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