IT CONNECTION CENTER

Connecting State Employees to IT Resources

The State of Tennessee
Department of Finance and Administration
Division of Strategic Technology Solutions

NASCIO Award Category: Business Process Innovations
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TN Department of **Finance & Administration** | Strategic Technology Solutions

Executive Summary

You had a vague sense that your customers needed additional assistance finding the tech tools needed to perform on the job, but the concept doesn't fully crystalize in your mind until you're sitting in a meeting of Agency Commissioners, where you are being told, point blank, that the issue is costing state agencies too much time, productivity, and as a result, tax payer money. *Ouch.*

So, now that the problem is acutely clear, how do you fix it? STS service resources needed to be centralized, easy to find, and easy to use. Brainstorming sessions began, birthing the idea of a single splash page containing not just STS tech tools and service information but also adding the training required for those tools in a downloadable format.

A team was formed and four months later, after many meetings with service owners and customer liaisons, the STS IT Connection Center was brought into fruition. Our customers were ecstatic! Great, right?

We had no idea how great, until a year later, when Nashville was hit with a devasting tornado, followed less than two weeks later by a world-wide pandemic, protests, one or two riots, and then capped off with the Christmas morning, Downtown Nashville explosion. 2020 was quite the year for the State of Tennessee!

In March of 2020, at the beginning of all the craziness, Tennessee state employees were sent home to work, and STS was faced with provisioning a newly commissioned "work from home" workforce, almost instantaneously. Thousands of state employees now needed laptops, network connections, and all the tools and training needed to go along with it. The STS IT Connection Center went from being very helpful to becoming an indispensable resource, and one of the primary keys to our extremely successful transition.

Idea

What problem or opportunity does the project address? State Employee Access to IT Resources

STS received regular feedback that the resources for the IT desktop tools were scattered and very difficult to locate. Agencies were spending days, sometimes weeks, finding information related to their desktop tool needs. Statewide, this issue potentially cost the state tens, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost time and productivity.

Why does it Matter? A Fortuitous Choice

Initially, our concern was responsiveness to the needs of our agency customers for a well-organized, central source for their IT desktop tool needs. Less than a year later, when the Nashville tornado hit and was immediately followed by the pandemic shutdown, the STS IT Connection Center became a central and crucial element in our state workforce's sudden and somewhat unceremonious transition to a work from home business model.

The STS IT Connection Center brought time and resource efficiency to our desktop centric staff, saving untold thousands of dollars across the board in productivity for our staff in a time when every available resource needed to be redirected to the needs of Tennessee's citizens.

What makes it different? The difference is simplicity.

The STS IT Connection Center is distinct in its well-organized design. A splash page which is simple, clean, yet robust with all the IT desktop resources a state employee needs to execute effectively in their role. Additionally, each state employee has an STS IT Connection Center link on their desktop providing easy access.

What makes it universal? Service Delivery and Transparency

Among our State CIO's top ten priorities is service delivery and transparency. The IT Connection Center eases access to IT desktop services through the convenience of having needed resources located on one web-based splash page, thereby creating a greatly enhanced delivery of service, and additional transparency into available services.

Implementation

The project implementation was straight forward and simple. The team utilized a project management waterfall approach consisting of six project phases.

Project Phases

1. Define Project Goals
Three project goals were defined.
- Users need to find the information they are looking for in three clicks or less.
- Categories of information organized in an easy to understand format.
- A central repository of technology resources.

2. Gather Requirements
- The team met with several department leaders to determine what technology resources their employees needed.
- After gathering the information, it was organized into eight distinct categories.

3. Design
The Design consisted of two phases.
- Logical Design: the team brainstormed solutions (what technology tools and resources are needed for state employees to perform their job.
- Physical Design: the team developed concrete specifications for the splash page to organize the information in understandable categories of information.

4. Implementation
- Team members were assigned tasks with an associated timeline.
- The splash page and corresponding pages were created in Adobe Experience Manager.
- The team reviewed the final page with STS Executive Management.

5. Generate Awareness
- A communication plan was developed outlining the audience, media vehicles, tactics, messaging, and timeline.

6. Maintenance
- An ongoing maintenance plan was developed to ensure information is consistently current and relevant.
- The plan includes adding new content (news, updates), any necessary link adjustments, and content modifications based on web traffic.

Who was involved? An in-house team

We assembled a team consisting of the Director of Customer Care Center and Workstation Support, the Director of Enterprise Development Solutions, the Business Relationship Manager and the IT Business Administrator who is responsible for the STS TeamTN website.

The resources needed for this project were human and time. There were no costs associated with this project. The information needed to be easily accessible and organized into understandable categories. A "three clicks or less" mindset was utilized when organizing the information into eight distinct categories.

Working Remotely — Technology tips and quick reference guides for collaboration tools such as Jabber, Webex, and Adobe Sign

Help Desk — Department specific help Desk list, STS Customer Care Center information, and frequently asked questions, and tips

Training — Training resources for Adobe Experience Manager, Adobe Sign, Jabber, SharePoint, Webex, and ServiceNow

Additional Support — Information on changing Active Directory passwords, connecting to the State Network, workstation support and email resources
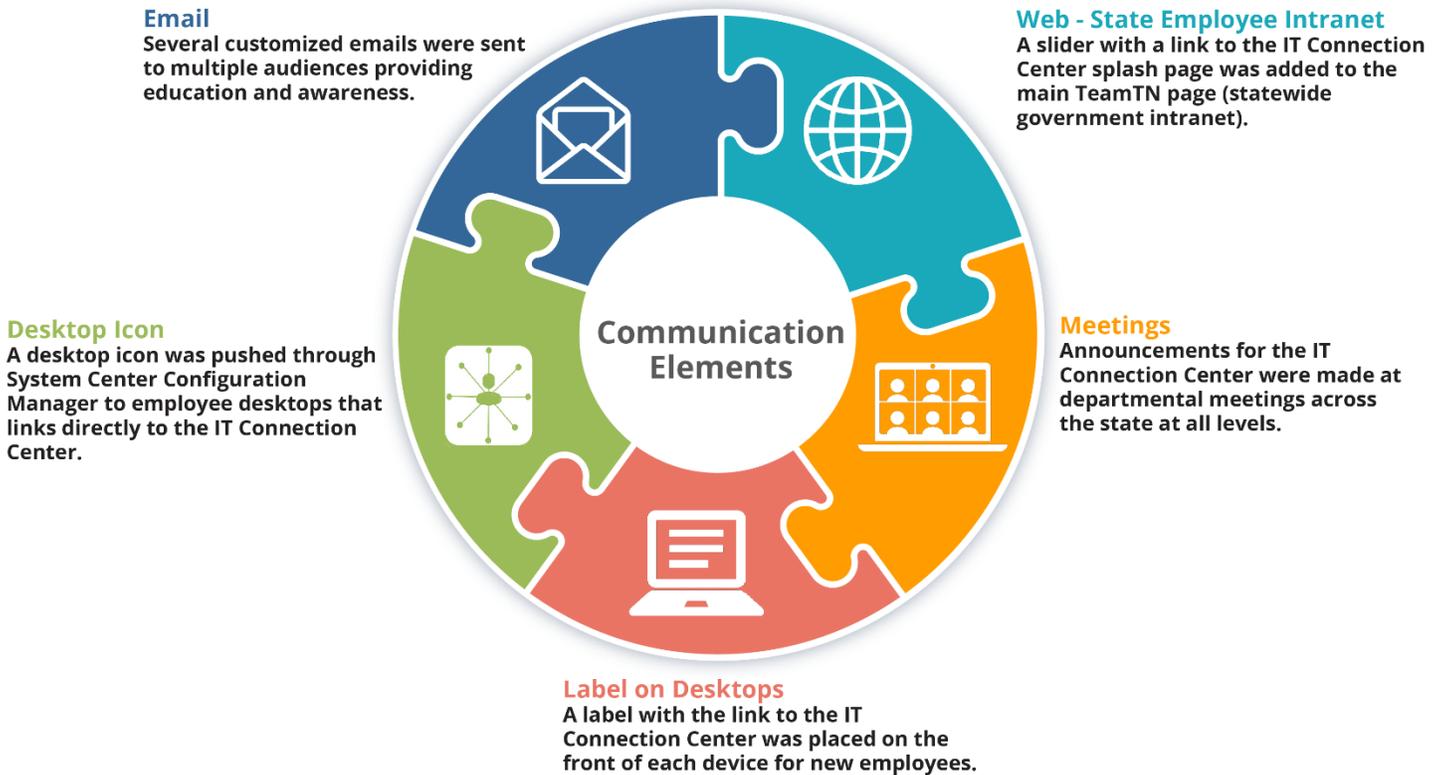
IT Connection Center

ServiceNow — servicenow. — ServiceNow training, and frequently asked questions

Collaboration Tools — Information on collaboration tools such as cell phones, IPT Phones, Jabber, Webex

How to Buy Stuff — Information on STS Business Operations and Procurement, and the STS Workstation Store

STS Security & Policies — Cybersecurity incident reporting, security training, STS policies, and job openings within the state

How awareness was obtained? A detailed communication plan

Several avenues were utilized to promote awareness and adoption of the IT Connection Center. A communication plan was developed that outlined the audience, media vehicles, tactics, messaging, and timeline.

Email
Several customized emails were sent to multiple audiences providing education and awareness.

Web - State Employee Intranet
A slider with a link to the IT Connection Center splash page was added to the main TeamTN page (statewide government intranet).

Desktop Icon
A desktop icon was pushed through System Center Configuration Manager to employee desktops that links directly to the IT Connection Center.

Communication Elements

Meetings
Announcements for the IT Connection Center were made at departmental meetings across the state at all levels.

Label on Desktops
A label with the link to the IT Connection Center was placed on the front of each device for new employees.

Impact

**What did the project make better? Accessibility to IT Resources**

The IT Connection Center gives state employees something they didn't have prior. It provides complete transparency into STS enterprise offerings, along with the ability to access those offerings in a simple and efficient manner, thus increasing productivity while saving time, and ultimately saving tax-payer dollars.

The centralization of resources through the STS IT Connection Center provides state employees with the ability to instantly access services, training, and additional resources, which, in turn, saves time and money. Money is also saved by the resource efficiency provided on the site though downloadable training as opposed to the staff lead trainings which were needed prior to site development.

How do you know? The Numbers

The numbers tell the story. Based on web traffic analytics, the IT Connection Center continues to be the most visited page on the STS TeamTN site.

IT Connection Center Website Traffic Analytics

27% Increase over last Year

23,494 Visits in 2020

28% Unique Visitors Year over Year Increase
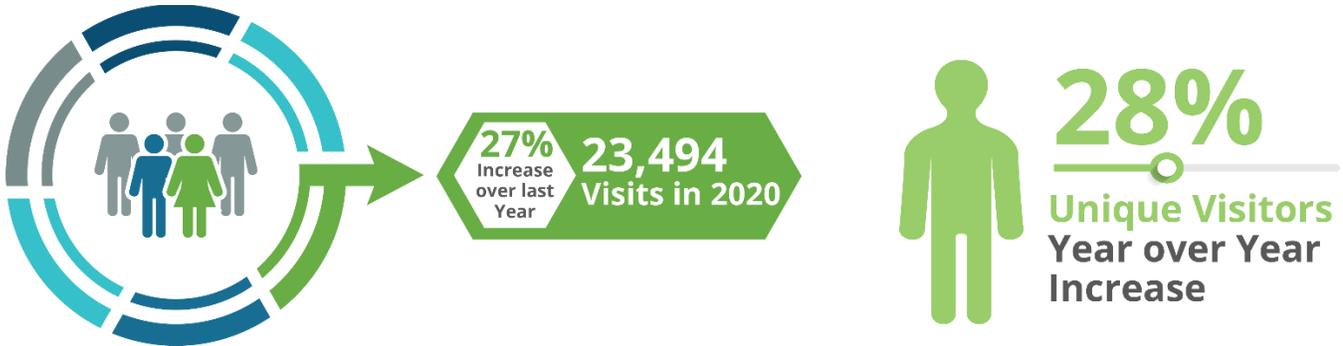
> **"The IT Connection Center has helped us because we are able to guide people to reference material and training that we did not have before, there is no telling how many employees across the state it has helped that resulted in them finding the answers to their questions without needing to call us at the Customer Care Center."**
> -Brian Lane, Customer Care Center Service Desk Manager

29,734 Page Views — **2019**

46,127 Page Views | **55% Increase** — **2019**

> **"The IT Connection Center has been extremely beneficial. Most of the questions I have regarding Teams have been answered through the FAQ. I don't have to call the help desk for a simple question anymore. I have this page bookmarked for future reference."**
> -Derrick Johns, End Point Management

> **"As a user, the IT Connection Center is concise and provides direction and information for my IT needs. As a service owner, the IT Connection Center is a one-stop shop for users and customers. We can reach a broader audience of users through the IT Connection Center."**
> -Sandy Strickland, Director of Fiscal Services

What now? Ongoing updates and promotion
Based on customer response and as information is updated and new applications are rolled out new categories with information are added. As of today, we have added two additional categories: MS Teams Information Center and STS Billing Connection. We will continue to update information, provide additional resources, and promote the resources as the state moves forward with a hybrid work from home model.