

**Kansas Business Center**

CATEGORY: Government to Business

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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PROJECT INITIATION: July 7, 2014

PROJECT COMPLETION: September 9, 2014

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach and Kansas Governor Sam Brownback announced the launch of the new Kansas Business Center in September 2014. The Kansas Business Center integrates online services and information from multiple state agencies to reduce the time needed to perform routine filings required to start and operate a business in the state. A video introduction to the services available can be found on the main page of the website at <http://www.kansas.gov/business/>. By consolidating the online services across agencies and enabling a single sign-on for users, a platform for greater collaboration in service delivery was created for future progress.

The Kansas Business Center is a collaborative effort between the Information Network of Kansas, Kansas Office of the Secretary of State, the Kansas Office of the Governor, the Kansas Department of Revenue, the Kansas Department of Labor, Network Kansas, and the Kansas business community. The partners engaged in the project are continuing to provide new and expanded information on a regular basis.

The redesigned Kansas Business Center represents yet another step in our efforts to remove barriers to business formation and ongoing filing with the state. By listening to the business community and collaborating with both our public and private partners, the Kansas Business Center has made state government easier to navigate and put the citizen first.

After gaining feedback from user-based focus groups, key emphasis was placed on providing a more mobile-friendly experience, a more intuitive approach to site navigation, and a simplified list of the most commonly used forms. Furthering the ease-of-use is the integration of KanAccess, the Kansas.gov Single Sign-On tool allowing users to rely on a single set of credentials to manage a variety of their online services. It is a one-stop shop for businesses in Kansas which streamlines the process of registering and reporting to the State of Kansas.

The efforts to improve the Kansas Business Center have yielded a strong increase in overall users. Since the launch in September 2014, monthly page views have increased by 42% and monthly mobile usage has increased by 80%. The most popular areas have been the "Registering," "Operating," and "Forms" sections of the Kansas Business Center. In addition, the video introduction to the services available, which is found on the main page of the Kansas Business Center, at <http://www.kansas.gov/business/> is the most popular of the videos featured throughout.

The innovative technology solution supporting the service is provided by the Information Network of Kansas, Inc. (INK), the state's partner for innovative information service delivery. INK is responsible for the oversight of the official website and software development portal for the state of Kansas, Kansas.gov. The portal operates through a public-private relationship between INK and the Kansas Information Consortium, LLC. Their goal is to help Kansas government entities web-enable their information services. Kansas Information Consortium, LLC builds, operates, maintains and markets Kansas.gov and is part of eGovernment firm NIC's (NASDAQ: EGOV) family of companies.

The portal operates under a unique self-funded model in which the portal absorbs the costs to develop eGovernment services. INK staff dedicated 5,806 hours to the Kansas Business Center update in 2014. In terms of cost avoidance, that translates to a value of over \$991,300.

## BUSINESS PROBLEM AND SOLUTION:

In 2003, the state of Kansas was tasked with finding a way to improve the way businesses interacted with government. Kansas.gov and the Secretary of State worked together to develop the Kansas Business Center. A refreshed version of the Kansas Business Center was launched to the public in 2009. The most recent redesign occurred in early September 2014.

The Kansas Business Center integrates online services and information from multiple state agencies to reduce the time needed to perform routine filings required to start and operate a business in the state. It is a one-stop website for new and existing businesses in Kansas which streamlines the process of registering and reporting to the State of Kansas.

By consolidating the online services across agencies and enabling a single sign-on for users, a platform for greater collaboration in service delivery was created for future progress. The single sign-on is a combination of integral technologies to ensure a secure and true one-time authentication for users. The most important of these technologies is the Central Authentication Service (CAS), a critical underpinning of KanAccess, the Kansas.gov Single Sign-on Solution. CAS permits a user to access multiple applications while providing their credentials only once. CAS allows web applications to authenticate users without gaining access to a user's security credentials, such as their password.

Organized and pertinent informational topics were carefully positioned to improve the overall experience for the user. The Kansas Business Center is organized in the areas of "Planning," "Registering," "Operating," "Closing," "Moving," and "Forms." It is worth noting that the Forms section was created at the request of business community power users (i.e. accountants, attorneys and other professionals). This is an area for power users who have the exact knowledge of what they are looking for to file with state of Kansas. All of this was accomplished via a Content Management System.

Other key technologies integrated into the Kansas Business Center were:

- *Font-Awesome*: open-source vector icons which play well with multiple frameworks
- *HTML5*: Latest standard for markup language
- *CSS3*: Standard for CSS which allows all properties to be standard in modern browsers
- *Foundation*: CSS Framework which is easy to manipulate, fast to code and flexible to view on any desktop or mobile device

Activity on the Kansas Business Center remains largely consistent throughout the year, but the most notable change has been toward higher mobile adoption with an 80% increase in monthly mobile usage since the launch in September 2014.

The partnership of the state of Kansas and Kansas.gov is providing business subscribers with reliable, high-quality online services that make conducting business in the state more efficient and easier for businesses. As new services are added and the site changes to meet ever-evolving and diverse needs, Kansas businesses will continue to benefit from the Kansas Business Center.

## SIGNIFICANCE:

The redesign of the Kansas Business Center integrates online services and information from multiple state agencies to reduce the time needed to perform routine filings required to start and operate a business in the state. It is a one-stop website for new and existing businesses in Kansas which streamlines the process of registering and reporting to the State of Kansas.

To gauge customer opinions and to better understand their needs, the Center for Public Policy & Administration at The University of Utah conducted a telephone survey of Kansas.gov business subscribers. The survey included interviews of 500 customers who are users of Kansas.gov digital government services.

Nine in every 10 Kansas businesses surveyed say they prefer to conduct their government business using an online format rather than using offline methods. In this digital age, consumers expect that online services will be user-friendly, high in quality, and delivered to them quickly. The state of Kansas, in partnership with Kansas.gov, is working to meet the demands of its business consumers.

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Furthering the ease-of-use is the integration of KanAccess, the Kansas.gov Single Sign-On tool. By linking their KanAccess credentials to their Kansas Business Center account, users may rely on a single set of credentials to manage a variety of their online services.

In addition to providing services which support business registration and ongoing filings, the website also includes:

- Information about developing a business plan;
- Short videos to assist entrepreneurs in selecting a legal structure for their new businesses;
- An integrated online chat feature to help answer questions in real-time, provided by Network Kansas, an organization that connects entrepreneurs with a network of 500+ partners providing resources for small businesses across the state;
- Links that allow businesses to learn more about regulations which may apply to them, and to quickly find and comment on new regulations under consideration by state agencies;
- A searchable library of agency forms for business filing and reporting that features links to equivalent online services, where available.

The Kansas Business Center has been marketed to citizens and businesses through the following marketing activities in an effort to drive awareness:

- Public Relations
- Joint Press Conference featuring Kansas Governor, Sam Brownback; Kansas Secretary of State, Kris Kobach; and the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Labor, Lana Gordon
- Social Media
- Online Advertising
- Videos featuring the Kansas Secretary of State, Kris Kobach

**BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT:**

Kansas.gov operates under a self-funded model in which the portal absorbs the costs to build the portal's technical infrastructure and develop eGovernment services. Kansas.gov staff dedicated nearly 5,806 hours to the Kansas Business Center update in 2014. In terms of cost avoidance, that translates to a value of over \$991,300.

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- **USABILITY:**

The application was rebuilt with the on-the-go user's needs at the forefront. Users who need quick access to business filings are presented with streamlined information on their handheld device in a thumb-swipe friendly format vs. the need to pinch and zoom multiple times to access the same information.

- **SECURITY:**

INK's commitment to security is paramount. The security program includes a comprehensive suite of information security solutions to support the eGovernment operations of every government partner. This proven approach integrates security assessments, monitoring, and management to deliver best-in-class security solutions.

The portal endures several third-party security audits for its network infrastructure and operational practices, including certification through the Verizon Security Management Program and Sarbanes-Oxley. The portal's payment engine is Level-One Certified for Payment Card Industry (PCI/DSS) standards.

- **ACCESSIBILITY:**

Kansas was a pioneering state in Web accessibility with legislation in 2000. Since that time, the state has created enterprise standards and IT policies for accessibility. In 2011, the INK Board of Directors provided a grant to the Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology for the provision of a Web-based scanning tool for state agencies to test their systems. Through this assessment, Kansas can provide a wider scope of accessibility of its online information. The benefits of the tool accrue not only to agencies, but to all of their customers, expanding access for not only disabled users, but to a growing population of aging citizens as well as mobile devices.

- **PRIVACY:**

Kansas.gov provides a statewide privacy policy for the portal; however, the operational practice employs the third-party security audits to ensure that customer data is highly protected. Kansas.gov does not sell any customer information.