Looking Back, to Look Forward

How we are preparing for the future
And how change is shaping us in the present
Who am I?

• Joe McIntyre;
• Assistant Director (IT Operations);
• Strategic leader of the Support Group;
  • Nine teams, delivering a range of services from Architecture to Training;
  • 53 staff, based on three campuses;
• Worked for Anglia Ruskin University for 27 years;
My journey

- Four Higher Education institutions
- Four Professional Services
- Three Directors, One CIO
- Eight(‘ish) jobs

- Four(‘ish) network environments
- Eight versions of Windows
- Twenty buildings

Tuesday, 28 November 2017  Service Desk Institute Higher Education Event
Introducing our Support Group
Built it up or break it down, the Higher Education conundrum
Decentralised support

The case for devolution

- Hierarchies can be flattened and service delivery “turns left”;
- Decision are made closer to the customers, which makes for more personalised service;
- Proximity makes it is easier to quickly respond to changes in local circumstance;
- Individuals can specialise in their field and become the expert in a field of support;
- There is often a greater sense of local ownership;

The case against devolution

- Decision-making becomes operationally rather than strategically focused;
- The larger to organisation, the harder it is to ensure consistent quality and service;
- Economy of scale is lost as roles and functions are duplicated;
- Financial controls that promote a value-for-money philosophy becomes increasingly difficult as budgets are delegated;
- Single points of failure and inappropriate levels of control become increasingly common;
Centralised support

The case **for** centralising

- It makes the process of implementing common policies, procedures and practice across a whole organisation far simpler;
- Decisions on large scale issues are more quickly made and implemented;
- Significant efficiencies and savings can result from the economies of scale available through task sharing and purchasing;
- The customer experience becomes more uniform and easily measured;
- “Rogue” behaviours are deprecated;

The case **against** centralising

- Decision-making can appear austere and bureaucratic, especially with respect to small issues;
- Large scale solutions can lack the flexibility necessary for individual customers – it’s harder to be an exception;
- Loss of operational zeitgeist and local understanding;
- Reduces the sense of local ownership felt by customers;
- Can stifle local creativity and independence;
Scope

• Solutions supplier management and ongoing associated support;

• Commissioning, development and delivery of new software and application solutions in-house and by third parties;

• Student IT help and support;

• Installation and ongoing support of computer and multimedia teaching spaces;

• Corporate printing and copying services, including multifunction devices;

• Budgets to procure and maintain information-technology and multimedia licenses and solutions;
Aims

• Develop better understanding of student and staff business needs and priorities;
• Establish clear paths for technology leadership;
• Improve accountability for:
  • Professional standards;
  • Service quality;
  • Security;
  • Licensing;
  • Implementation of industry best-practice solutions;
• Create simplified and streamlined processes, based upon user need, that scale from individuals to the whole organisation;
Objectives

• More effectively manage third-party suppliers and ensure value for money from support contracts;
• Capture the efficiencies, benefits and savings that are a natural consequence of economies of scale;
• Reduce reliance on ‘single points of failure’ for critical services, operations and functions;
• Provide wider career opportunities and staff development for colleagues supporting information-technology across our University;
• Enhance the customer experience and improve satisfaction;
Change as a daily challenge

Planned change

• Deliberate, organised and diligently planned;
• Product of conscious reasoning and actions;
• Cascades downwards through an organisation;
• Triggered by strategic or well-recognised operational requirements;
• Assumes a smooth transition from current to desired state without significant disruption;
• Has well defined outcomes that can be used to measure the success of the change exercise;
• Suits large scale projects;

Emergent change

• Unpredictable or unanticipated;
• Triggered by immediate circumstance;
• Local and often small scale but can escalate if not addressed;
• Reactive and possibly ongoing;
• Requires innovation, agility and resilience;
• Wayfinding rather than clearly routed;
• Suits small, time-critical solutions in which quality is not primary driver;
• Often results in ad hoc solutions;
Customer Support Team

Assistant Director

Senior Support Analysts

Support Analysts

Support Technicians

Chelmsford

Cambridge

Peterborough
One Team

- Mitel telephony status screens
- Video link between offices
- Bomgar
- Monthly team meetings
- Knowledge Transfer sessions
Challenge in Chelmsford

- Team currently all based together in the same office
- Located on the main campus
- Solely IT Services office
- Moving to a new building off the main campus
- Shared space with other departments
- Secondary central location
Solutions

- Hotdesking
- New hardware
- Customer Drop In Centre
- Adding both new offices to the video link
- Find My Technician
Finally…

• Your experiences?
Some non-sequitur final thoughts…

• Change is inevitable. Embrace it, go with the flow rather than swim against it;
• Communication is key to an excellent customer experience and, most of all, “it’s good to talk”;
• Everyone on a service desk should “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes”;
• Be recognised as part of your wider community, not just for your IT support;
• Cement relationships by being seen on campus – meet your customers in places other than your own space;
• Tea is a universal lubricant;
…And finally