Surat, India

The challenge: Focus on improving the citizen experience when interacting with the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) — specifically, help drive meaningful citizen engagements through increased adoption of the digital platform.

Context

• Surat experienced a 55% population growth from 2001 to 2011, increasing pressure on services.
• In response, the SMC is striving to engage with citizens through a digital platform.
• Current digital content is mainly focused on mandated City services.
• Many citizens currently do not have digital capabilities and/or online access.
• The SMC has excellent departments, but they are isolated and self-contained.

Findings

• Despite low awareness, digital utilisation is increasing among citizens.
• Many different apps currently exist for citizen services.
• Citizens see value in the mobile complaint process, but the service needs improvement.
• The current mobile app is heavily weighted towards transactions versus information.
• There is overall support for the strategic digital refresh across departments.

Summary of recommendations

- Enhance the complaint process
- Create a citizen forum
- Define and implement data and technology standards
- Create a platform for data sharing
- Deploy a next-generation kiosk with transactional and print capabilities
- Create a single point of access to digital services
- Redesign virtual Civic Centre website and mobile application
- Establish an enterprise architecture
- Appoint an SMC Transformation Leader
- Implement enterprise governance
- Establish information governance
- Mandate digital platform utilisation
- Create a formal plan to market digital platform to citizens
- Partner and collaborate with industries and universities

Expected outcomes

- Identify gaps in service delivery, improving the citizen experience
- Promote better understanding of citizens’ needs and priorities
- Reduce effort to integrate services and applications
- Simplify sharing and reuse of data across departments and agencies
- Increase access to digital transactional and informational services
- Simplify citizens’ access to existing digital services
- Increase utilisation of the platform for transactional services
- Help the SMC invest in the areas that matter most
- Demonstrate that the SMC is taking a citizen-centric approach
- Help determine changes needed to integrate data and information sharing
- Improve risk management and compliance
- Increase migration by citizens to the digital platform
- Significantly increase awareness of the website and app
- Generate investments that will benefit citizens

Vision

The SMC has initiated a technical solution for citizen engagement in the form of a digital platform. To date, this has been heavily focused on technology for the front-end user interface. Surat’s transformational journey requires more than just technology; it needs a holistic, systematic, data-driven and citizen-centric framework.

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