

Oulu is the largest city in Northern Finland. Oulu city has 140,000 inhabitants and in Finland is well known for its' strong economy, especially in the hi-tech sector, its' lively cultural climate and the quality of citizen services by the City of Oulu.

## City of Oulu Improves Regional Processes with QPR ProcessGuide

### CUSTOMER CASE:



Mapping, improving and communicating processes with QPR ProcessGuide has been proven to be an efficient and effective way to improve operations based on the experience gained by the City of Oulu and the counties in Oulu region.



**The City of Oulu as well as its nine neighboring municipalities use QPR ProcessGuide software for their documenting service processes, for sharing best practices and for optimizing processes in a co-ordinated manner.**

### Process Mapping for an End-to-End View

Process Mapping became a topic of interest for the City of Oulu already in the 1990's, when the benefits of documenting workflows (operations that involve a single department) became clear. The City's Engineering Department had positive experiences with workflow mapping and creating written work descriptions for its' construction projects.

In early 2000 therefore, the City of Oulu started a project for rationalizing the production of forms, electronic forms and the use of electronic authentication in filling and handling forms, in order to avoid a wild growth of electronic forms.

"When we started looking into rationalizing form production, we realized that in order to optimize amount and function of forms

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*Kirsti Mattila, Project Manager*

we needed to take an end-to-end process view." says Ms. Kirsti Mattila, Project Manager coordinating process modeling in the City of Oulu.

In order to map the process in an efficient manner, the City of Oulu chose QPR ProcessGuide, mainly because of its ease of use and web-based user interface.

### Productivity Gains with Process Management

"Based on the experiences gained in pilot projects it was obvious that moving to web-based services provided significant opportunities for improving our operations and thus increasing the productivity in service production."

"For example, using web-based services just for our administration tasks simplifies and speeds up our internal work processes".

"This allows us to focus our resources to providing personal service to citizens and to do more motivating work", concludes Mattila.

At the first stage the current state and the target state for few processes were modeled using QPR ProcessGuide. The

results were presented to the people involved in these processes and to the members of city board and city council. Both the employees and the management agreed on the significance of process modeling and especially, insight in the end-to-end process in renewing the service production.

"Process modeling is a necessity for planning different service channels to citizens. We talk about multi-channel services. Processes are now included also in the vision and service strategies of both the City of Oulu and the Region of Oulu" says Ms Kirsti Mattila.

Common goal for services is stated in the Oulu Vision 2011 as one of the four cornerstones of the vision: "Oulu provides a good environment for living and the most advanced services based on citizens' needs" continues Mattila.

## QPR ProcessGuide as a Common Tool

In 2003, Oulu Information Technology (OIT), a business unit of the City of Oulu that offers IT services to the whole Oulu region, made an agreement with QPR Software for using QPR ProcessGuide based on the positive feedback from an extensive piloting period.

From then on, users in all municipalities in the Oulu region could use manage their service processes in the same format and manner as employees of the City of Oulu.

"This agreement enabled the multiple Municipalities in this region to start modeling and optimizing service processes in a collaborative and co-ordinated manner, by using the same software, same format and same process life cycle management processes and thus avoid any overlapping or duplicative work." points out Ms Mattila.

## Expanding usage in the City and the Region

Process modeling workshops have been arranged in good cooperation with the nine municipalities in the Oulu region. Several process improvement projects have started also in various departments and units of the City of Oulu. Personnel involved

in the actual processes are always participating in the modeling sessions.

The objective is that the local authorities produce high-quality and customer-oriented service processes to the citizens (customers).



First the strategic key processes - together with the closely related support processes - are mapped. Modeling is started by mapping the current state. Next the analysis of the current state is done and process is improved based on the ideas gathered in the modeling session.

"Process modeling also enables us to improve internal operations by using the "internal supplier-customer" concept between the internal units of the organization as well as when we utilizing outsourced services."

"We want to support a culture of personal continuous improvement, which is a natural way of working in Oulu." notes Ms Kirsti Mattila.

## Benefits and Experiences

"Mapping processes collaboratively with the personnel using QPR ProcessGuide has enabled us to improve our operations beyond unit and county boundaries. Better operational efficiency helps us to provide even better and more cost-effective services to the people in the Oulu region." summarizes Ms Katriina Puhakka, Director of Development in the City of Oulu.

"Using QPR ProcessGuide has proved to be a very effective and efficient way of improving processes. QPR is easy and attractive to use, which allows us to actively involve our employees. Furthermore, because it is web based, because it captures all process information in a central repository, and because it offers web-based tools for

online collaboration we can do it in a collaborative, co-ordinated manner with our neighboring municipalities." Says Project Manager Kirsti Mattila.

A common notation for modeling processes makes process mapping faster and makes communication easier. Also the ability to attaching various documents and information – e.g. laws and regulations or document templates and work instructions – improves the usefulness of the process maps in everyday operations.

Especially communicating the processes and changes in them to the personnel in the City of Oulu and the neighboring municipalities is now much easier and faster due to the automated web publishing features of QPR ProcessGuide.

## Future Directions

In the future the departments of Oulu and neighboring municipalities will expand the process mapping to further processes. The usage of intranet and personalized process information will be utilized even more effectively.

The Region of Oulu is a national forerunner in Finland regarding modeling local and regional processes. The Region of Oulu has promised to provide their process maps also to other municipalities and regions in Finland as part of the process repository to be established in the near future.