



Simpl project management for NZIS delivers student permit renewals on campus



The New Zealand Immigration Service and selected tertiary institutions have formed a partnership to make the renewal of student visas and permits easier for New Zealand's growing number of international students. Simpl provided project management expertise and knowledge instrumental in the development and rollout of the Students Online project.

The New Zealand Immigration Services (NZIS) manages the entry of visitors, students, investors, workers and permanent migrants into New Zealand.

Recognising the importance of international students to the New Zealand economy, NZIS developed Students Online, a system which enables tertiary institutions to manage renewals of student permit applications.

Students Online was developed to empower tertiary institutions to manage the entire application process, from helping students to complete and submit the application through to advising students on the status of their application and sticking the label in their passport.

Confidence to Complete Demanding Project

Students Online is the first business-to-business system NZIS has developed in an online channel for the education sector. To ensure successful implementation of the programme in multiple tertiary institutions, NZIS sought the assistance of an external project management team.

NZIS selected Simpl's Project Services team from a number of consultancies. "Simpl has worked with NZIS on other projects, proving both management consulting and IT expertise," says Project Sponsor Arron Baker, NZIS Market Manager of eServices. "We have always been extremely satisfied with the quality of service and consultancy and so were confident Simpl could achieve the deliverables within the short four month time frame and limited budget without compromising the quality of service."

Foundations for Expansion

Formation of a disciplined and rigorous methodology was crucial to the success of the Students Online project due to the diverse range of organisations involved.

Simpl used its 3PM Project Portfolio and Programme methodology at NZIS, playing a central role in developing the project, getting it running and handing it off to the NZIS internal systems administrators.

To assist with a smooth transition from the development stage to business as usual phase, Simpl addressed a range of issues. "Simpl managed the documentation, internal capacity building and training, ensuring the system could be rolled out with confidence to new locations using internal resources following Simpl's methodology," says Baker.

Credibility in the Relationship Matrix

Simpl was required to manage and coordinate multiple relationships throughout the country, from the internal NZIS branch network, senior management team and IT Steering Committee to external IT providers and tertiary institutions. "Not only did Simpl represent NZIS credibly and transparently at external meetings, it provided excellent visibility over project process and potential business issues," says Baker. "I was particularly appreciative of the big picture approach taken. I was made aware of any potential issues, even those outside the scope of the project, such as staff performance or a media risk and was able to intervene as Project Sponsor where necessary."

CASE STUDY

Adaptable Project Management Solutions

Simpl's flexibility was also key in the successful deliver of the project. "In the process of the project we had to reassess the scope of the project in line with directives from the IT Steering Committee, with potential implications in terms of time and budget." says Baker. "The recommendations and approaches suggested by Simpl enables NZIS to address the directives yet still deliver the project on time and within budget."

"Simpl was proactive in addressing issues raised and offering constructive solutions," continues Baker. "The account management oversight was also very well done. The Project Services Business Manager took time to sit down with me and discuss the project's process and to make sure my needs were being met. The Project Services team has been positive and helpful and I am extremely happy with the whole execution on Simpl's part."

Spurred by Customer Service, New System Brings Financial Advantage

Students Online was launched in February 2004 and has been very well received by both the tertiary institutions and international students seeking permit renewals. Driven by customer service and a need to remove periodic pressure on NZIS offices at the beginning of the academic year, Students Online has also provided financial advantages. NZIS is now in the marketing phase of the project to increase uptake and potentially expand the audience using the system.



CASE STUDY