



North King County Regional Public Safety Communication Agency

The Business

The North King County Regional Public Safety Communication Agency (NORCOM) is a consortium of 14 fire departments and five law enforcement agencies serving the eastern suburbs of the Seattle-Bellevue metropolitan region. NORCOM's mission is to provide high quality 911 emergency service communications to the public for emergency fire, police, and medical services.

In support of their mission, NORCOM initiated a program to acquire and implement an integrated Commercial-Off-The-Shelf software that would provide NORCOM's 19 member agencies with solutions for Computer Aided Dispatch, a Records Management System, Mobile Dispatch, and Field Reporting and Corrections – all in one system.

During implementation, the selected product was unable to provide all of the functionality outlined as mandatory requirements in NORCOM's original Request for Proposal. The implementation of the new product was not well received by members; some members directed NORCOM to back out the deployments and other members struggled using the new system which did not adequately support their police officers, fire personnel, and other employees.

The Challenge

NORCOM needed to address short-term needs while also staying aligned to long-term objectives. In the short term, it needed to successfully collaborate with the software vendor to remedy system shortcomings and manage a failing program. As a newly formed entity, NORCOM needed to mature its IT capability and develop a long-term strategy that its membership could commit to.

Resolving the issues was critically important in order for NORCOM to retain its members and provide the value that economies of scale offer through a large consortium.

To help solve these complex issues, NORCOM sought services from an independent third party firm and engaged with Online Business Systems (Online).

The Approach

To address the urgent and tactical requirements, Online provided NORCOM with program/project management services combined with supporting technology consulting services. To address the more strategic requirements, Online provided management consulting services as well as financial consulting and technology consulting services.

Program/Project Management and Technology Consulting Services

Online consultants worked closely with the NORCOM Executive Director and leveraged Online's portfolio of project management, delivery management, quality assurance methodologies, tools, and templates to help NORCOM implement improvements quickly. Online:

- > Provided program management and project management services, introducing project management and delivery management best practices.
- > Restructured how the program was organized to provide improved oversight, management, approvals, and project execution.
- > Created and executed communications plans for all program participants and stakeholders, including elected officials, city managers, fire chiefs, police chiefs, fire fighters, police officers, 9-1-1 call receivers, and other business and technology personnel throughout NORCOM and its member agencies.
- > Coordinated with adjacent County Consortiums SNOPAC/ SNOCOM.
- > Managed the relationship with the software product vendor and established an agreed path for remedying the software product shortcomings.

- > Incrementally, managed the deployment of software updates to resolve software defects and provide greater stability to the production install base.

Management Consulting, Financial Consulting, and Technology Consulting Services

Supporting NORCOM's long-term objectives, the Online consultants worked closely with the NORCOM Executive Director to help NORCOM develop a strategic plan. The team:

- > Collaborated with member agencies to identify alternative strategies and critical success factors, and to measure alternative strategies against these critical success factors.
- > For the short list of preferred alternative strategies, performed a technical assessment of existing production architecture, estimated potential upgrade options to existing products, and investigated other products/upgrades to provide options

for path-forward decisions based on risk, suitability, cost, and effort. This also included high-level costing and effort estimates.

- > Generated agreement among member agencies for a strategic direction.

Conclusion

Through this initiative, NORCOM was able to provide significant improvements to the overall functionality and stability of the production systems. The NORCOM consortium also benefited from increased commitment from their members, resulting in all members potentially realizing greater efficiencies and cost savings associated with the economies of scale of a large consortium.



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About Online Business Systems

Celebrating our 30th anniversary in 2016, Online Business Systems is an information technology and business consultancy. We help enterprise customers enhance their competitive advantage by designing improved business processes enabled with robust and secure information systems. Our unsurpassed delivery, our people, and the Online culture of loyalty, trust and commitment to mutual success set us apart. Today we have nearly 300 business and technical consultants throughout Canada and the US.