

DBS: delivering scalable service performance

DBS was established in July 2011 by the Secretary of State for Defence to transform the delivery of corporate services to UK MOD by bringing together a set of executive agencies to serve the wider enterprise through a single service delivery organisation. DBS's vision is to become the premier business services organisation across the public sector, with other areas from MOD and other Government Departments joining progressively.

The Scale of the problem

Prior to the formation of DBS, a disparate set of executive agencies, each with their own processes and systems, and together employing almost 3,000 geographically dispersed people, were responsible for delivering in the region of 150 services covering HR, finance, management information and security vetting, to the 275,000 MOD employees and other service users, who are also distributed geographically, from Head Office through to the front-line.

To illustrate the scale of these services, civilian HR alone each year handles 1 million salary payments, 750,000 HR & Pay enquiries, and 6,500 internal recruitments.

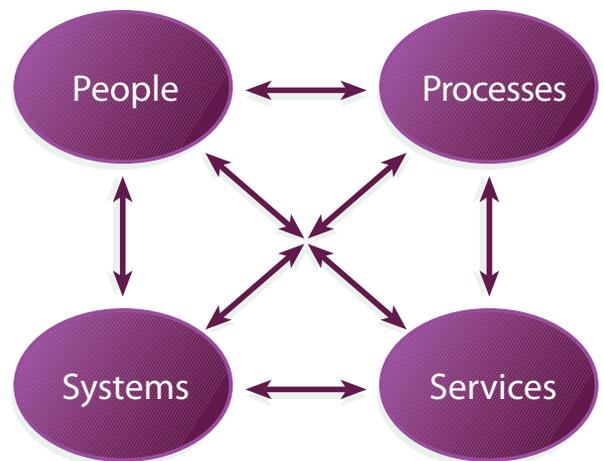
Since April 2012, the management of DBS has been provided by the specialist business services provider Serco, partnered with Accenture, working together with MOD staff to transform the organisation into a lean and effective shared services centre, building on private sector best practice. The new DBS organisation is planned to comprise less than 2,000 staff, in a single lean and effective shared service centre, delivering an incrementally increasing set of services.

The challenge faced by the DBS team is to improve service performance by up to 20%, whilst stabilising and sustaining service levels – and to do so against a 30% headcount reduction. Service users must be freed from administrative burdens so they can focus their efforts on the critical frontline.



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Business Services



Managing the complexity

Mike Stone, CEO of DBS, sees corporate services as comprising four elements: people, processes, systems and services.

The whole organization can be distilled into these four elements and the complex connections between them.

Consequently, the key to getting to grips with service performance is to distil services into their constituent parts, and then to understand and work the causal relationships between them, such that all activities and interventions are aligned to target benefits.

For example, what will be the effect on DBS objectives and KPIs of redeploying a particular team, or improving training, or of upgrading an IT system, or cutting down on staffing levels?

Understanding and working these causal relationships enables a planning process that is able to identify and investigate the options and trade-offs to meet projected supply and demand.

The approach also enables monitoring and tuning of the plan: e.g., if a planned change has slipped, or a projected demand curve proves to be incorrect, it's possible to look rationally at options before committing to a new course of action.



The DBS Decision Support Manager

Implementing this approach needs software and a decision environment with the power to bring together data from all parts of the organisation and to combine it in a way that allows the team to understand the current situation and explore the impact of different decision options on business targets and KPIs.

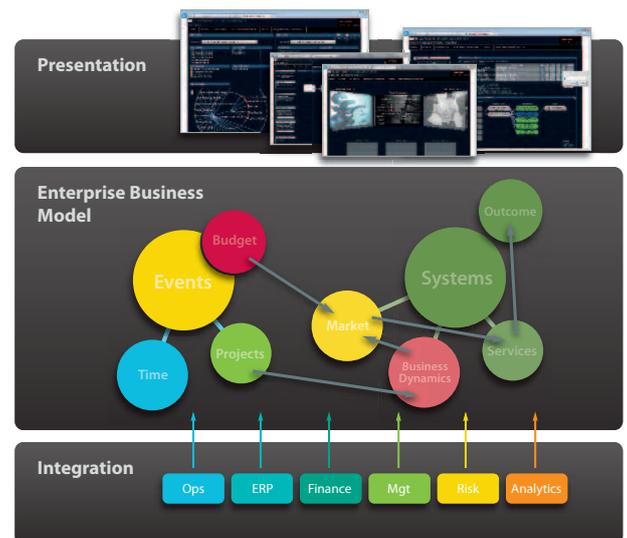
The MooD software, from MooD International – a UK-based SME – has been adopted as the basis for the Decision Support Manager for DBS (DSM).



DSM provides a visible understanding of the business landscape that enables those four key elements and their inter-connections to be aligned with service objectives, benefits, KPIs, budgets, the change portfolio, the risk profile and appetite, etc. The DSM supports joined-up decision making, with clear alignment to outcomes. It is automatically synchronised with relevant sources of data, both to avoid data re-entry, and also to shine a light on areas where data quality needs to be improved.

Before the availability of DSM, it took 7 weeks to create a comprehensive performance report, so by the time a problem was identified, the options were limited. Now, with DSM, it is done on the fly, and timely interventions have become the norm.

Mike Stone: "Data, by definition, is about the past: information is the currency of the present, knowledge includes experience which is captured as data, and finally, there is insight. You reach insight by combining, or 'clashing together,' data, information and knowledge. This is what MooD has allowed us to do."



Scaling the approach

The DBS Executive Committee uses DSM live to support Board Meetings, as well as in its core reporting and planning processes. Options and implications are played through live.

As additional services are incorporated into DBS, the environment extends incrementally, and the approach scales in a managed way, to enable continuing focus on target outcomes.

DBS has established stability in MOD service delivery and continues to exceed its objectives for delivering real performance improvements and cost savings within a challenging business environment. In line with its vision to become the premier business services provider across the public sector, DBS plans to extend the excellence of its shared service centre coherently to incorporate the service needs of other Government Departments.