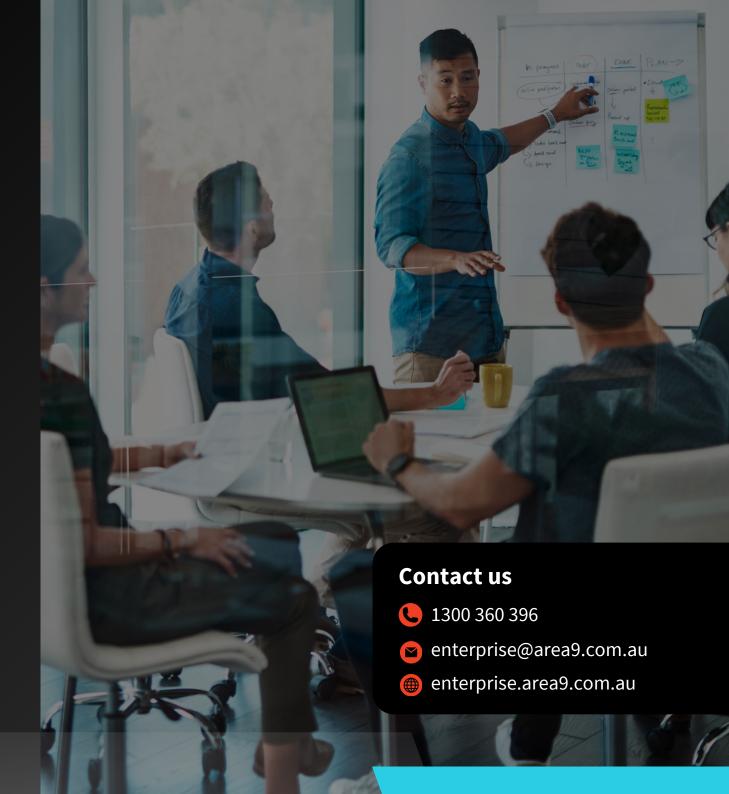Area9 | ATLASSIAN Gold Solution Partner

Area9's Practical Guide to Building Customer Centric Services

Our enterprise team share practical, real-world steps for achieving high velocity, robust and effective service delivery.

Contact us

📞 1300 360 396

✉️ enterprise@area9.com.au

🌐 enterprise.area9.com.au

Introduction

Area9's enterprise team recently participated in Innovate SA 2024 – a one day learning conference run by Public Sector Network in Partnership with the South Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The theme of the conference this year was "The Drive Forward for a Digital and Secure South Australian Public Sector." A recent whitepaper – Digital Transformation in Government – by Microsoft sums up the importance using technology to deliver better, more secure and effective services for citizens:

"Many government leaders are taking stock and imagining a future with the most attentive, helpful citizen services. They recognize that a strong digital ecosystem is the foundation for that future. In this time of crisis, governments are accelerating their digital transformation to support employees working from home and to serve citizens seamlessly."

Having successfully worked with government organisations – such as Power and Water NT, SA Government departments and government funded institutions such as Swinburne University, our enterprise team led a roundtable discussion on how our governments can take the above words and turn it into practical actions.

Table of contents

About Area9 Enteprise Team

For over 15 years, Area9 has collaboratively worked with Australian businesses and their teams to create sustainable, transformative solutions that involve people, process, and technology.

Fuelling our work is a team of problem solvers with a shared focus on seeing customer happiness when delivering real, early, and ongoing business value.

Our Area9's enterprise team are well-known for their focus on connecting people, process and technology.

The team achieve their focus and deliver ongoing value by combining business analysis with Atlassian collaboration tools and real time information to give modern workplaces a competitive edge.

The practical, real-world steps to delivering citizen-centric service.

Unless your services are consistent, measurable, and well controlled, you will not be able to improve easily.

A robust service delivery methodology that ensures the production of high-quality, actionable data is crucial for utilising fields like AI, data-driven decision making, and data analytics. Moreover, implementing insights from these disciplines requires a solid stable foundation from which to make your changes.

So, how can teams and organisations consistently and methodically approach the enhancement of services?

Our Area9 approach focuses on three stages, which essentially connects teams and customers (people) with automation and powerful digital tools (technology) to deliver outcomes through a series of actions or steps that focus on early, continuous value (process).

The result of connecting people, process and technology is a seamless flow of information and resources.

Stage 1: Getting started
How to start your project, build the team and select your tools?

Stage 2: Implementation
The first steps in implementing changes in your operations.

Stage 3: Ongoing
Once your process(es) are implemented, what now?

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Stage 1: Getting started

How to start your project, build the team and select your tools

This first stage is dedicated to the lead-in phase of enhancing service delivery projects. Here we pull together the correct people and resources and make some initial decisions on size and scope.

Area9's recommendation is to assume this project will be a longer-term initiative and if done well will likely result in further adoption than initially expected. Engage other groups or departments that have done this, or 3rd parties at this point.

Our essential tips for launching your project:

1 *Start with the Why?* Clearly articulate the reasons behind this initiative. Anticipate inquiries from employees, management, and potential vendors.

2 *Define Success:* Establish clear definitions of success to gauge achievement effectively. One way to kick-off this goal setting is to ask of your team and stakeholders: 'What does winning look like?'

3 *Scope:* Deliberately select what will be pursued as well as what won't. Develop a comprehensive roadmap covering not only the initial phase but also future plans for one or two years. Our top tip when you're scoping: Embrace ambitious goals!

4 *People Resources:* Evaluate internal capabilities, capacity, time availability, and willingness to participate. Decide whether to handle tasks internally, seek assistance from a third party, or entirely outsource the project.

5 *Sponsorship:* Obtain backing from leadership for allocating time and resources while gaining early buy-in from staff members.

Once you have built the foundation for your project launch, it is time to build your team and equip them with the right tools for progressing, monitoring, and reporting on the project.

Our suggested approach is:

Build a team:
Focus on a small core team that can work with the business's subject matter experts to build the solution. This might be one person, or it could be a whole project team. We always advise the team should at the absolute minimum include:
- Project Owner/Sponsor
- Business Analyst - someone to run workshops and capture how the business works.
- Technology Architect/Engineer - someone to implement the findings of the Business Analyst

Get a measure of "Now":
Before starting, the team should get a feel for the quality of the services and/or operations within the scope. How can they do this? Use data that is available, even if it's subjective opinions of management and staff. It's important to begin measuring early.

Choosing your tools:
Our suggested approach is don't focus on just the functional aspects of your tool. Consider adding these into your tool selection criteria:
- Does it support your governance systems?
- Does it cover all the necessary security requirements such as single sign-on, MFA, etc.?
- Does it support Entra ID integration?

If the above building block steps are out of scope with internal resourcing, consider going to tender and finding an external team who can work as part of and for your team.

Stage 2: Implementation

This stage is the first point in which you will implement changes in your operations.

The team built in the previous step will work with the operational teams to implement the solution. This team will guide the group. Let's assume the actual setup and deployment of any tools is undertaken by IT or the vendor, however if you wish to tackle this, often the application vendors themselves can provide resources at no cost. This for example, is true with our experience with Atlassian.

This cycle is highly adaptable and can be applied to small working groups or processes that span multiple business units. It requires the following key components:

- BA Tools expert.
- Project Management.
- Strong business sponsorship.
- Willingness to deploy non-perfect solutions and work to perfection.

So, how do we combine our team and tools with a process for implementation?

① **Pick a process:** Identify the process you will target. It needs to be in real terms such as:

a. "Managing public consultations"
b. "Administering grant applications"
c. "Annual Budget Planning and Distribution"
d. "Servicing general inquiries"
e. "On-boarding a new recruit"

All examples of the work going through the process need to be able to be abstracted to a common workflow. At this stage, we advise that you don't fear complexity or the size of the process, because there are enough quality and powerful tools available to support any process!

TIP

If complexity is stopping you and your team, we recommend the following approach:

Consider the thinking that starting with a more challenging process and doing it well will reduce resistance and will quickly give the team the skills to tackle the rest of the project. Alternatively start small, build confidence and, approach it incrementally. In both circumstances target your roadmap and keep moving!

Use "User stories" as an excellent technique for simplifying and describing complexity in a way that can be documented and delivered effectively.

Consider adopting Agile methodology, encouraging a very flexible approach.

Think about working with a third party.

> *The team were initially worried about the complexity of integrating the workflow into a system. However, working with Area9 and conducting workshops revealed that streamlining the process was easier than expected.*
>
> **Mina Powell, Office of the Registrar General, South Australia Government.**

Stage 2: Implementation (continued)

2   *Pick the business group:* Identify the business team representatives that know what the process is and how it works in detail.

3   *Workshop:* Conduct workshop(s) to identify and document the process, including:

- Order of work, and key hand-offs.
- Communication Inputs and Outputs (data required, data gathered, data generated).
- Automation Opportunities.
- Essential Information Capture.

4   *Implement a prototype:* Quickly implement post workshop.

5   *Test and Improve:* The team is presented with the unpolished but functionally complete prototype.

6   *Repeat the Workshop, Implement, and Test* cycle until that process is captured from end to end.

7   *Deploy into production environment and sign off:* If using an incremental approach, then start using it. If going big bang, then move onto the next process and complete all the scope before using production.

BONUS TIP
When conducting your workshop to build steps in your workflow, ask these questions.

1   **"Is this step big enough for me to go out of my way to log into a system and click a button?"**

If so, it's probably a stage/step in a workflow.

2   **"Is this a hand-off to another person, or the culmination of work with a following pause?"**

Approvals are always their own step.

3   **"Is this a record-able data event?"**

If so, usually it's worth being a step.

Stage 3: Ongoing

Once your process(es) are implemented, what now?

Once the project's scope is delivered, the biggest mistake is disbanding the project team!

Service Delivery is an ever-evolving discipline that adapts regularly to meet customer needs, government movements, new technologies, and management changes.

A high-performing Service Delivery team can quickly become average without continuous vigilance.

The project team are now a well-trained and experienced work unit capable of scoping, designing, and implementing initiatives. Take advantage of this opportunity to turn them into a continuous improvement team to carry on with improvements.

They are not required to be a full-time unit; however, regular meetings should be held to identify opportunities for enhancing processes, systems, and services.

Our suggestions for ensuring continuous improvement and development for your service delivery that has integrated people, process and technology are:

1 *Establish a Continuous Improvement Team.*

2 *Identify the scope of the team:* Give the team a goal and have them report to someone with decision making capacity.

3 *Feedback Loops:* Establish a manner that the rest of the business can feed ideas and improvement requests into the team. Ideas mailbox, section in a monthly newsletter, a regular 'ideas and improvements' session in team meetings, or a dedicated section on an intranet where suggestions can be submitted and tracked.

4 *Reporting and Dashboards:* Once you begin creating content, you'll rapidly generate highly valuable data. Make sure to utilise these dashboards and reports effectively.

Consider
Identify a person to be responsible for ensuring the team remains focused on business outcomes and meet regularly.

Our last words on ensuring continuous excellence in your service delivery project: "This is not a once off. Cycle of improvement that you should never stop. You can take the foot off the gas sometimes, but don't stop."

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For more information:

Check out our website or schedule a complimentary 30mins call.

One of the things we love doing here at Area9 is walk the talk and apply our process for service delivery improvement and business streamlining for real, everyday world application.

We are happy to talk through this process with your specific team and organisational situation through:

📹 A complimentary 30mins call. **Book here.**

🌐 Visiting our Area9 website for more knowledge share resources. **View here.**

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