



CASE STUDY: Harborough District Council

Harborough District Council embrace the convenience of SMS technology

To help Harborough District Council serve the 230 square mile rural area of South Leicestershire, they have adopted Text Message Server in order to communicate more effectively with residents, businesses and council employees.

Improving services for rural communities

Because of the rural location of the Council, the distance for residents to travel to Council Offices made communication difficult and time consuming, so alternatives needed to be found.

Harborough District Council wanted to improve services for residents and streamline the methods for the reporting of problems – notification of abandoned cars and fly-tipping for example, and questions to council staff.

Peter Rowbotham, Customer Services Manager at Harborough Council said “The challenge was about making it easier for people to contact the council. Not everyone has the time to visit the council offices in person and can find texting questions and service requests easier and faster.”

Text messaging improves communications

The upsurge in SMS as a convenient and fast means of communication, coupled with accuracy and lost cost, makes SMS a unique and confidential means of communication.

ProcessFlows’ Text Message Server (TMS) is a corporate SMS solution which enables the sending and receiving of text messages on networked PCs, to and from mobile

phones. TMS integrates seamlessly with email and offers an inbound SMS address for each user.

SMS messages are delivered in close to real-time and replies come directly back to the desktop, speeding up the communications process and giving organisations a truly competitive edge.

“Text Message Server is a true messaging ‘solution’, integrating seamlessly with email, CRM and back-end software and services, to provide a fast and cost-effective communications platform. It is just a matter of time before every business network is SMS enabled. Organisations that have embraced this technology are already reaping the benefits of enhanced information.”

Chris Thompson
Managing Director ProcessFlows

The technology can also be used for consultation purposes, sending out community messages and the processing of electronic payments.

Texts are received at Harborough District Council’s Contact Centre in the form of an email. The system, which was funded by a Government grant, allows customer service staff to acknowledge messages from their PCs, delivering a reply directly back to a mobile phone. Both the Government and Harborough District Council recognise the benefits of SMS as a quick, easy and cost effective way of contacting local residents.

Maximising the text investment

Peter Rowbotham said “The Council acknowledges that SMS is a complementary and convenient channel for our customers to contact us, but SMS is not just about simple service requests. We see the potential for SMS in notifying our customers of service changes, carrying out consultation, etc. and we will be working to develop the processing of car parking payments using this technology”. He goes on to say “We will also be using the system for distributing important information to our own staff – such as severe weather warnings. With the E Government agenda we are confident that the use of SMS will continue to grow in the public sector.”