
Restructuring the Corporate Function in Government

A Case Study of the Integrated Justice Sector Corporate Services Division in Ontario

Governments of all stripes are undergoing fundamental changes in what they do and how they do it. Pressures for changes in government are coming from a variety of sources, including increasing global competition, fiscal crises arising from economic slowdowns, technological changes, an aging population, shifts in guiding philosophies and ideologies, public dissatisfaction with government efficiency and the quality of public services, and increased public demand to participate in the design and delivery decisions regarding public services. Due to these pressures, the nature of government work is changing, which in turn, requires a different set of skills for government employees and the introduction of new workplace practices. The main purpose of this case study is to examine how government work is changing and to analyze the corresponding changing skill requirements and workplace practices from the perspectives of multiple constituencies.

In this case study we examine the changes taking place in corporate services in the Justice Sector of the Government of Ontario. The Justice Sector in Ontario encompasses two ministries: the Ministry of Attorney General (MAG) and the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services (MSGCS). MAG oversees all aspects of administration of justice and ensures that administration of public affairs is in accordance with the law in Ontario. MSGCS is responsible for police services, public safety and security, the operation of correctional facilities and the provision of probation and parole services in Ontario. The key objective of the restructuring described in this study was to integrate the corporate services of the two ministries for greater efficiency. The two ministries together employed 40% of the Ontario government employees working in the provincial police, courts, jails, and in public prosecutions in 1998. Prior to integration, corporate services in the Justice Sector comprised finance and administration, human resources, information technology, audit services, freedom of information, French language services and facilities management.

This case study site was selected for detailed examination for several reasons. First, it allowed examination of changes in internal government services that were provided to inside clients. In most jurisdictions where governments carried out restructuring of public services, corporate services were reviewed early in the process and often contracted out to private sector deliverers, at least partially, if not fully. The restructuring of corporate services in the Justice Sector presented a

unique solution to the problem of efficient and effective delivery of government services. It was the first shared services delivery mechanism created in the Ontario government and became a model for restructuring of corporate services affecting all ministries in Ontario. Secondly, the restructuring of corporate services in the Justice Sector allowed analysis of changes in government work and workplace practices precipitated by both fiscal constraints and technological changes. Last, the Division carried out separate surveys of employees and customers, which complemented our case study design and allowed a more thorough examination of the impact of the restructuring.

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