
Outsourcing of the Engineering Design Process in the Alberta Transportation and Utilities Department

This document is a case study of the outsourcing of the Engineering Design Process at the Alberta Transportation and Utilities (AT&U) department. The AT&U received both the gold Premier's Award of Excellence, in 1997, and the silver Award for Innovative Management bestowed by the Institute for Public Administration in Canada (IPAC) in 1998, for the outsourcing of this process. The growing use of outsourcing in the public sector is part of the shift to a new form of public sector managerialism, one that is focused on reducing the size of government while also striving to improve the quality of services delivered to the public, at reduced cost to the taxpayer. In this case study I elaborate on this form of managerialism prior to providing detail about the restructuring of the Engineering Design Process. Following this description I situate the outsourcing of the Engineering Design Process into the larger, concurrent, restructuring of the AT&U. The impact of the restructuring of the Engineering Design Process and the AT&U on human resource practices, employees, and the union at the AT&U is then detailed, followed by a discussion of the challenges that the organization will be facing in the future. The study concludes with a summary of the highlights of the case study and some of the questions that it raises.

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