

Customer portal strategy for Smart Government platform enables the City of Bern to offer online services



PROJECT DETAILS

Industry: Public Services

Users: Stadtbewohner:innen, Stadtverwaltung und Dienstleister in der Stadt Bern

Team: Agile team set-up
City of Bern: Product Owner, IT, professional responsibility and users
mimacom: Project leader, software architect, user experience designer, business analyst

Development period: 2019 – 2020

METHODS

- Contextual Inquiry
- Interviews (RE/UX) and Surveys (RE/UX)
- IT Architecture Workshop und Design
- User Journey
- Proto Personas
- Heatmap

The residents of the City of Bern use the municipal services every day. A Smart Government platform is intended to integrate this service into the digital life of the population in the future. Working with the City of Bern, mimacom developed a customer portal strategy.



Digital
Stadt Bern

Background → The residents of the City of Bern contact the city administration with a wide variety of inquiries, creating a large administrative effort. This is why the city administration wants to use a portal to offer online services to its residents in the future.



The basic idea behind the portal strategy is the quest for the sustainable development of municipal services. This means easy access, pooling resources, more time for the people and stronger democracy.

Jonathan Gimmel, Head of Human Resources, Finance & Digital Development



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The Smart Government platform is intended to provide generic access to municipal services and thus increase the quality of life of

Challenge → Nevertheless, the development of online services presents a major challenge: digitization allows easy access to public services, but to do so, the platform has to accommodate a variety of age groups and issues. Only then it will be able to offer low-threshold, inclusive access to all its residents. The City of Bern, therefore, decided to work with mimacom as a user experience expert. Together, they developed a customer portal strategy enabling the city administration to translate the needs of its residents efficiently into online services.

Human-centered design for a new understanding of service

In-person visits to access government services are a thing of the past – digitalization and automation are creating new opportunities. The aim of the portal is to bring the online services of the City of Bern closer to the people and to contribute to higher quality of life. From the perspective of the city administration, this is based on a service understanding that focuses on user experience rather than technology.

As part of the E-Bern innovation project, municipal services will be systematically developed from the user's perspective going forward. For example, residents who have recently moved to Bern will automatically receive all the necessary documents automatically and have access to online information available in their language.

Solution → mimacom approached this understanding of service with human-centered design, a methodology that puts the needs of users first. mimacom used regular interviews and tests to understand the needs and requirements of the residents and to develop a customer portal strategy that meets them.

Agile approach based on the Digital Accelerator Program

The project was used as a preliminary study to find out how to provide residents with the services they need. For Jonathan Gimmel, this was about finding the right concept rather than the perfect solution.

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I don't care whether it is fancy or not, I just want the level best," Gimmel said. "mimacom's agile approach enables us to pinpoint the actual needs and requirements.

Jonathan Gimmel, Head of Human Resources, Finance & Digital Development

Project management

based on the Digital Accelerator Program

With agile project design, mimacom translated social logic into digital logic. "In this way, mimacom meets the expectations in terms of user experience, that we also set for ourselves," explains Jonathan Gimmel. The iterative cycles of the Digital Accelerator Program have made it possible to generate a best-practice guide for the Smart Government platform.

- The strategy development was based on agile parameters and co-creative project design
- The project design was based on the Digital Accelerator Program and included iterative phases with desk research, stakeholder interviews and strategy workshops
- The result is an IT detail concept as well as the associated architecture including an implementation plan for the customer portal strategy and system architecture
- The new system architecture replaces tedious management processes with lean end-2-end processes and smart technologies

Fundamental change for residents and the city

With regard to the customer portal strategy, Jonathan Gimmel speaks of a fundamental shift in the relationship between the city administration and the residents. The new platform is designed to provide residents with the highest quality of service and to make services easy to manage. The services of the City of Bern can thus find a place in the digital life of its residents.



Digital touchpoint for residents and the city administration

Benefits → In the future, the residents of the city of Bern will benefit from personalized and convenient access to municipal services. The digital touchpoint also promises to save time thanks to smart technologies.

Digitalization should not only create more virtual interactions, but also free up more time for analog services thanks to resource savings achieved by the city administration. "No one should be left out. While we want to use the customer portal to promote digital solutions, we also want to use the new resources to help people without digital access," says Mr. Gimmel.

A city with a digital vision

The customer portal strategy serves as a guide for the city of Bern and the developed architecture as the basis for the Smart Government platform, which is expected to be available by 2024. In the meantime, further technological developments are planned: In addition to a desktop version, the resident portal should also be available as an app and include a communication platform capable of sending notifications to residents. A responsive design and a CRM base module are intended to make the application even more user-friendly. This vision of the City of Bern is an unique example of excellent user experience in the area of urban digitalization: "Happy residents are the best reward," says Mr. Gimmel.