Buckinghamshire County Council
Case Study

Nadia Kühn, Business Partner- Corporate Business Support and James Mansfeild-Sturgess, Technology Strategist at Buckinghamshire County Council talk about how Convene made their board's transition from paper to digital meetings, seamless and secure.

As part of our future shape program and corporate priorities, our aim was to become more digital and commercially minded. The vision of the One Council Board was to lead the change from the top and adopt paperless processes where at all possible.

We were looking for a digital solution to manage our board meetings and found Convene through a combination of online research and looking at the G-cloud Digital Marketplace to see what was available to us.

Cloud Solution with High Levels of Security

Over the last seven years, the council as a whole has been moving towards cloud storage and cloud based technology. We started moving documents to the cloud at the appropriate time and with the appropriate cost. Convene being a complete cloud solution ticked that box in a big way.

Before Convene, we were storing documents on our shared folders on our internal network in addition to traditional folders and files. It was the consensus that if we were going to move away from the old way of doing things that we would move to a proper, managed and secure solution.

We tried ModernGov, which is what our councillors use for high level decisions. It allowed us to be a bit more flexible compared to paper based meetings, but we needed a platform that did more.

The fact that Convene has a secure container and we are able to clear that remotely if needed is another positive. We combined it with our membership device policy so board members have a secure device and a secure container with their board packs. Considering that this is the One Council Board and the high levels of information that go into these documents, this kind of security was essential.

Convene also intergrates with the Active Directory, which is great from a security point of view. If a member of staff leaves, then their Active Directory account is disabled and deleted, which in turn will remove their access to Convene. This also makes it simpler for our current board members as they can log in with their normal credentials without having to remember another username or password.

Board Packs Become Living Documents

The One Council Board members like the functionality, because they are able to review the papers on their preferred device and can also make shared or private notes. It's more around it being like a living document.

Buckinghamshire County Council is the upper-tier local authority for the non-metropolitan county of Buckinghamshire, in England, the United Kingdom established in 1889. Bucks County Council has been using Convene since January 2016.

£2500 savings per year after going digital

9 board members

300 pages per pack per month

" Using Convene has enabled us to drive innovation, not only in terms of the print savings, but also in the style and culture of our Board meetings. The iPad app also means that we can have instant access to both current and past papers wherever we are, which fits perfectly with the agile ways of working that we are developing"

Sarah Ashmead, One Council Board Member and Director of Strategy & Policy

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Features

Award winning security

Multi-factor authentication

Document encryption on server and on device

Real time decryption

Remote data wipe on lost devices

Manage all stages of your meeting

Plan your meetings

Attach documents to agenda items

Control access & permission to files

Digitally amend and distribute board packs

Engage your participants

Start remote meetings

Have real-time interactive presentations

Lock participants' screens to the presentation

Vote on items and approve documents

Follow-up easily

Send a meeting summary immediately

Track actions after the meeting

Review previous meetings and documents

Quarterly upgrades

Convene is updated every quarter. An upgrade is done when it is convenient for the client.

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The administrative team find Convene very useful when it comes organising meetings, from adding participants and inviting guests to setting the agenda. One of their favourite features is the ability and the flexibility around adding papers after the meeting has been published.

Saves Time and Paper

Before, the executive assistants were spending about two hours for each meeting, putting the papers together, printing, binding and distributing them to our nine members of the One Council Board.

The board meet once a month and naturally the papers are due by a certain time. But inevitably, people will have updates or they send in information a little late. When an update arrived, we had to print all of the re-numbered pages and the process began again.

It was a big, laboured task and very expensive. It took an awful long time and an awful lot of paper.

Easy to Learn and Implement

Fainne Smith, one of our executive assistants to the board, had a training session over the phone about how to set up meetings in Convene. It was very basic and straightforward so she just delved into it. In regards to the One Council Board, again it was a simple case of downloading the software onto their laptops and they launched the pack through the meeting request or through the app directly. Otherwise it was the usual case of having a new application to learn and how to use it practically.

Good Client Support and a Simple Set-up

Having a trial allowed us to test the capabilities of the solution. If it wasn't what we wanted, we weren't about to spend a huge amount of time setting it up. However, as Convene is cloud based there's nothing much to install except for the software and simply start integrating it into our meetings.

We appreciated the customer and support calls with Convene. Nothing was ever too much for Convene staff, from actually getting the product in, extending the trial period, to the crossover from the file to the live environment. We always had useful, clear and very productive phone calls with our account manager.

Accolades, Accreditations, Affiliates, Partners and Integration

convene

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