

Calderdale College



Description

A medium sized F/HE college offering broad-based provision in a former textile manufacturing area, now home to the financial services industry. With no higher education institution in Calderdale, the college is a major source of higher education provision for local people.

Specialisms

The new Halifax Creative and Conservation Skills Centre will have local, regional and national coverage, offering a blend of traditional and high-tech skills. The Corporation already has a specialist Network Academy offering IT Vendor Skills, with provision from Level 2 through to Career Certification in computer networking.

Why a Managed Service?

When Calderdale first introduced managed services from Tribal Managed Services in 2001, the college was heading for an inspection and had lost a number of key staff in the management information system (MIS) area. Many posts were vacant and those in post often lacked necessary skills.

Unsurprisingly, staff morale was low. The course file had yet to be completed for enrolment and there were problems with corruption of core college data. The ebs™ MIS system was introduced in December 2000 to replace an in-house developed system, but was not being used to its potential.

"We believe that a key weakness [MIS] has been turned into a significant strength."

Monica Box, Principal and Chief Executive

Key Facts

Location	Rural & Urban
Turnover	£14m
No. of sites	1 main, 3 satellite
Learners	9,600
Enrolments	13,000
Courses	500+
MIS	ebs™
Finance System	MicroCompass
Interim services from:	May 2001
Full managed services from:	October 2001

The managed service at Calderdale covers:

- A 3 year contract awarded after interim services successfully completed
- A new structure for MIS and IT services
- Management of MIS and IT services
- Successful fast track implementation of the ebs™ MIS and on-line enrolment
- Ongoing management of MIS enhancements
- Provision of real time data
- Information needs analysis, business process reviews & IT review

Monica Box, who took up the post as Principal in October 2001, comments: "Confidence in the data was at an all time low. We were due for inspection in January 2002. We needed to clean the data and establish a reliable MIS function. We didn't have the skill levels to tackle the problem in the time frame available. The managed service offered a means of fast-tracking staff capability and gaining the required expertise from day one."

Vice Principal for Resources and Finance, Denise Cheng-Carter, who also joined the college in autumn 2001, explains, "We invested a lot of time in working with Tribal Managed Services to get to the root of the problems. In order to tackle the issues faced by the college, we needed a sound evidence base for our decision making. We needed data to understand where our strengths and weaknesses lay and to be able to explain the need for change to staff."



Monica Box, Principal and Chief Executive

With previous experience of running multi-million pound training contracts for large organisations, Monica Box was familiar with contracted services: "The danger is the perception that the contractor is totally responsible for the solution. There has to be reciprocity. It took time for staff to adjust, but we have established real co-operation with understanding and sensitivity on both sides. The Tribal Managed Services consultant works on-site with us and is part of our senior management team. Tribal Managed Services knows as much about our operation as we do, and together we get from A to B."

The results are evident. After MIS was marked down in the January 2002 inspection, it was reviewed again in January 2003. Both the Ofsted and subsequent Individualised Student Record (ISR) audit results have been positive. Monica Box comments: "We believe a key weakness has been turned into a significant strength."

"Staff are delighted with the data they are receiving from the on-line learner information system. It is currently helping in planning the curriculum for our new Creative and Conservation Skills Centre. As the data infrastructure has built up and is now delivering real support, staff confidence continues to grow."

Achievements to date

- Restructuring of the MIS unit, Exams section and IT unit, achieving significant savings for both pay and non-pay budgets
- Recruitment of new staff where required and provision of interim services to ensure operational continuity
- Re-deployment and training of existing staff to achieve fully functional teams
- Support in securing significant Standards Fund monies for MIS improvements
- Successful introduction of on-line enrolment
- Provision of real-time data on student numbers and income projections
- On-site support prior to and during inspection and ISR audits
- Business process reviews for key student data processes including Enrolments, Registers, Exams and Progressions, leading to improved efficiency
- Information needs analysis leading to implementation of on-line learner information for all staff and streamlined reporting
- IT review including short-term risk assessment and long-term investment advice, leading to improvements in network security and help desk support
- Creation and management of a College Information User Group to agree requirements and build trust between the College Information Services team and academic staff

Benefits to the College

- Access to breadth of expertise and experience of a specialist IT company to help train and develop staff
- Review and streamlining of key business processes
- Access to accurate, real-time management information
- Reduction in both pay and non-pay budgets

Good practice recommendations

- Partnership model between college and IT supplier
- Close involvement of the senior management team
- Awareness of the need for organisational change

Tribal Managed Services is a Tribal Technology business