

21st-century shared services

for the public sector



Modern public sector shared services have increased operational efficiency, streamlined processes, and controlled spending. They have also improved visibility to speed up response times and ensure transparency and accountability to all stakeholders.

Unit4 solutions are the foundations of complex shared services transformation – delivering agility and interoperability that reduces data siloes and enables collaboration across all shared service functions. We change the way your people work, streamlining processes and reducing costly duplication so you can free up people and cash to focus on your priorities – serving the community.



Shared services, in which many groups use a service provided by a centralized office, can keep costs down and improve efficiency for a dispersed organization. At its most basic, the move to shared services involves centralizing transactional processing and administrative work for universal, standardized services such as payroll and accounts payable, but for many, it encompasses HR, Talent Management, Recruitment, Facilities, Finance, Contact Centres, and Marketing.



Delivering greater value



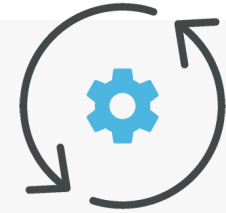
The most obvious opportunities for efficiency and value creation come from automating standard business processes, driving self-service capability for staff and customer processes, and eliminating low-value activities such as manual input, multiple authorization processes, and reconciliations.

Organizations that both centralize IT services and standardize their processes more extensively should be able to save at least **25%** while gaining unprecedented access to the latest software platforms that provide productivity improvements while reducing compliance challenges – solutions that many organizations cannot afford on their own.

Employees receive a more modern work experience, allowing them to make the most of their talents; efficient workflows and up-to-date enterprise-style applications enable them to proactively interact with each other from any location – real-time remote working, with strengthened cyber security, compliance with data governance policies, and regulations built-in.

Shared services are uniquely positioned to deliver greater value through economies of scale and reduced duplication; they can help

- ✓ identify digital strategies
- ✓ rectify front-end customer interactions
- ✓ boost internal productivity



Digitalization of shared services can further help

- ✓ acquire valuable capabilities
- ✓ identify new online products and trends
- ✓ utilize analytics models to improve business planning
- ✓ create a phased procedure to promote online citizen engagement
- ✓ assure efficiencies across the organization through automated procedures and workflows



A man and a woman in business attire are sitting at a desk in an office. The man is pointing at a smartphone held by the woman. They are both looking at the phone. A computer monitor and keyboard are visible on the desk. A white callout box is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'Realizing the benefits' and a list of five bullet points. A bar chart icon is also present in the callout box.

Realizing the benefits



- ✓ lower and more transparent costs
- ✓ more efficient resourcing; better career development for HR staff
- ✓ better quality services
- ✓ higher customer satisfaction ratings through an improved match between customer expectations and service
- ✓ a more integrated 'total solution' approach to problems

Building resilience across shared services



Today's public sector is changing to –

- **Address the priorities** from back office cost savings projects to increasing the value of frontline citizen services.
- **Simplify and align processes** across human resources, legal, finance, real estate, IT, employee engagement, and training.
- **Deliver a wider range** of back office administration in a shared service environment.
- **Use technology** (AI and RPA) to increase capacity and productivity.
- **Focus on training and cross-skilling** teams and truly transform the way they work.
- **Achieve true collaboration** via shared systems and data that deliver transparency and agility.

See more about how Unit4's ERP delivers all of these –



Cherwell District Council

Through Unit4 ERP, the Council takes a more strategic, performance management approach to budgets and finances.

[Read the story](#)



South Wales Police

A shared Unit4 ERP strategy is saving up to £4 million each year and helping keep the citizens of southern Wales safer.

[Read the story](#)



Hoople

How this public sector shared services provider is using Unit4 ERP to gain efficiency savings for itself and its customers.

[Read the story](#)

Lessons for 21st-century shared services



By now, there have been enough implementations – both successful and not – to learn how shared services can work best in the public sector. Consider these lessons to make your future adoption or expansion of shared services successful.



1. Choose the right services to share

Many benefits come from standardization, including more efficient processes and less manual entry.

Most organizations choose to start with simpler back-office functions before moving on to customer-facing sections. Make sure there are no fundamental barriers in terms of processes or regulations preventing you from sharing a common service with your partner organizations.

Identify the technologies and components needed and what interoperability they have. The core value of a shared service is streamlining processes and data, reducing duplicate entry, and creating end-to-end workflows, so the systems you use need – at a minimum – to talk to each other and ideally fully interact.

2. Take a clear look at the numbers

Cost savings are critical in a time of painful austerity measures and the pressures for increased efficiency.

Understanding the likely return on investment (ROI) using principles such as Activity Based Costing does not cover all the value modern shared services deliver. Using comparable service levels and ensuring that you quantify less-tangible benefits such as cost of savings due to time saved in transaction processing, quality of data, and ease of reporting and employee engagement.

Sharing services or cross-organization teams can be challenging for everyone, especially employees. It is critical that your organization gets buy-in from senior political and operational leaders when building and enhancing the technology used or processes enhanced across the service.

Most organizations need to recognize the effort and achievements of enhancements across the shared service – especially after the bumpy road of implementation. Make sure you have a before-and-after review, share findings, reward initiatives, and applaud employees for their great work in building the service.



3. Simplifying the governance model



Transparency compels individuals and teams to be accountable, speeds decision-making, and ultimately helps reach deadlines on time. With one version of the truth and access to all information via a solution that facilitates collaborations, it ensures both compliance with regulation and internal governance standards.

Essential in the efforts to encourage governance is a virtual common workspace for all stakeholders to guide the flow of work and ideas to the right person at the right time. This can harness everyone's energy and expose bottlenecks before they become problematic.



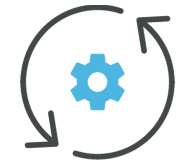
4. Don't underestimate the planning cycle, and then... plan some more



Planning correctly sets the foundation for the future, especially when working across organizations, departments, and administrative regions. Get your resourcing right before the project starts: You will need full-time, dedicated, experienced professionals from business operations and technology partners to contribute different skills at different times.

Relationships and understandings you establish during this planning process will be critical to overcome future challenges.

5. Focus on keeping it simple



Things can start to look complex from the outset – establish a standard model, mandate it where possible, and only localize it where necessary without losing out on agility. Make sure that the strategy is focused on the scope in question and isn't too far-reaching. Set tangible, measurable goals that are realistic and achievable before taking on more complex challenges. Run the model for an agreed period before adjusting to rule out the negative effects of the change factor.

6. Choose the right technology partner



Remember that you're not just choosing a technology but a transformation partner; even in established shared services, the progression of your digitalization project needs the right solution partner. Your technology service provider will be your partner who sees you through a complex transition, both in terms of technology and people skills. Choose one that has the technical expertise, accepts and embraces your vision, and is committed to seeing you through this process. Choose technology that is flexible enough to keep pace with new post-implementation demands quickly, enables agility and transparency across the environment, and is cost-effective with minimum disruption to customers.



7. Keeping everyone on board

Some of the most expensive shared-service disasters stem from a lack of buy-in or customers. Change must be carefully and sensitively managed, but users should not doubt that the new way of working will be the new way of working – by mandate if incentives and voluntary action are insufficient. Everyone has learned to work differently in recent months; remote working and SaaS have seen a revolution in their adoption. Don't be afraid of mandating change, but do back it up with evidence.

The most successful shared services organizations in the public sector have proven that if you can demonstrate efficiencies and cost savings, organizations will come to you rather than being pushed. This is where positive and committed foundation customers, beacons, are invaluable in ensuring an SSC's success.



8. Strong leadership is the key to successfully transforming shared services



Most failed transformation programs have a common theme – a lack of leadership through the implementation and beyond. Leadership needs to be credible and visible. It must also rise above any organization's needs and look at the bigger picture. Without this leadership, personal agendas will surface and undermine the ability to drive new, standardized processes with enhanced technology.

Although all of these lessons may not seem directly relevant to merging organizations, they are critical for any major change programs when merging services together.

The future of work for shared services



The COVID-19 pandemic created a unique level of urgency for digital transformation projects in the public sector. The future of work mandates a revolution, not only in terms of how and where work is executed but also in how organizations attract and engage with their employees and citizens.

But while it's very easy to say we must all adopt Cloud solutions and switch to working from home, shared services had a lot more work to facilitate remote working in the crisis and even more to get public sector teams to the point where this is considered the norm. It's likely that your organization has been asked to transform at a faster rate than ever. Your team is being called upon to increase performance, create more capacity, or expand its reach, so you must find the resources to fully upgrade technological infrastructure.

It is vital that public sector shared services leverage all the intelligent tools available to manage this new agenda and flourish in an unpredictable new normal. The combination of modern technologies and initiatives like AI-powered ERP is helping shared services streamline their processes and adopt new ways of working to overcome two significant challenges – meeting rising taxpayer expectations and improving services with less funding.



Unit4 ERPx is laser-focused on people-centric organizations, bringing together the capabilities of Financials, Procurement, Project Management, HR, and FP&A onto a unified Cloud platform that shares real-time information and is designed with a powerful, people-centric approach; employees can benefit from better insight and become more effective and increasingly engaged.

As the operational heartbeat for today's organizations, ERPx delivers a range of tools and innovations to support their growth aspirations and helps them thrive as the market begins to regain momentum. It also provides the freedom to connect and extend industry-specific online data services and solutions quickly and easily. It is the digital foundation that ensures that people and organizations achieve their potential.

Read the full report



Thank you for reading

21st-century shared services

for the public sector