Canton of Zurich (AJB): supporting digital transformation

With more than 1,000 staff dealing with family services and further education, the Office for Youth and Careers (*Amt für Jugend und Berufsberatung,* or AJB) is one of the Canton of Zurich's largest departments. As it digitalises its infrastructure, the AJB has set itself the goal of standardising and developing its services in a customer-focused and forward-looking manner. Ergon has been supporting the department on its digitalisation journey.

The experts at the AJB provide the population of Zurich with information, advice and support in all matters relating to careers, child/adult protection, adoption, child custody and maintenance at no less than 28 different sites. The bulk of their caseload is still submitted in paper form or by email, however, and the master files for both clients and partner organisations are spread across various systems, additionally hampering their work.

With its "nextAJB" vision, the department has set about exploiting the opportunities presented by digitalisation and is developing state-of-the-art, customer-focused infrastructure that guarantees efficient and secure data transfer.

Multi-dimensional structures and a complex environment

The Office for Youth and Careers has complex organisational structures and deploys a wide range of technical applications, presenting a daunting challenge when it comes to digital transformation.

As it embarks on digitalising its services, the AJB must factor in numerous conditions and specifications from the cantonal administration, in particular from the Cantonal Chancellery and the Office for Information Technology. Interfaces, agreements and common denominators must all be defined to ensure that cantonal, departmental and in-house applications can all talk to one another. This is the only way to guarantee that office-specific, silo applications can be avoided, systems are integrated, processes are joined up, and that data can be stored, maintained and used centrally.

To get a handle on this complexity, the AJB decided to elaborate a cross-functional business architecture with the aim of incorporating the bigger picture into individual undertakings, promoting sustainable implementation of projects and accelerating the development of groundbreaking ventures. Ergon has provided the AJB with many years of successful support in addressing these challenges and refining this architecture.

Architecture group as key success factor

The AJB's first step was to convene an architecture group whose responsibility it is to bring transparency to the department's business and IT architecture, identifying hotspots and addressing these with appropriate digital solutions.

Over the course of many sessions and workshops, the architecture group analysed the existing architecture, discussed various options, and ultimately settled on tar-

"Ergon has enabled us to collectively look to the future in designing our architecture. This has definitely knocked our digital transformation up a gear."

Jean-Claude Nüsperli
Head of Application Management, AJB

get parameters for the design they wanted. Objectives and benefits for ongoing management of the architecture were defined in tandem.

The outcome was an architectural roadmap nicknamed the "AJB Mondrian" – an outsize illustration depicting both current and future development of the AJB's business architecture (with all its processes and technical functions) cross-referenced with the range of services it offers and its applications. This roadmap has made it possible to visualise a range of perspectives and derive action points and their consequences for digital transformation.

The architecture has addressed an array of strategic topics over time: e-government (digital access, portals, ZHservices), master data and file management, business administration/GEVER (business oversight, process support, digital record keeping), customer relationship management (CRM) and digital signatures/identity and access management (IAM).

Common ground for discussion – thanks to the architecture roadmap

The architecture roadmap has helped AJB lay the foundations for realising the "nextAJB" vision and its collectively defined future business architecture. A clear starting point with identifiable architecture has been established, defining and clarifying the interfaces for all involved. The AJB can now proceed to the next step in offering its future customers a joined-up experience and providing its employees with modern systems.

Pioneers at cantonal level

In using this architecture-based approach to address complex topics in a coordinated and holistic manner, the AJB is genuinely breaking new ground within the Canton of Zurich's administration and pointing the way towards digitalisation of other areas beyond its core functions.