

**New Zealand Post
Management Excellence Awards
Technology Innovation Award
Tauranga City Council – ICDL Project**

▪ **The challenge**

Improve core computing skill and competence at Tauranga City Council

One of Tauranga City Council's (TCC) goals is to build a high performance culture through the targeted and structured training and development of our people.

The use of technology at TCC has increased markedly in recent years. It is imperative that staff continually update their skills in order to be able to make the best use of our computer systems.

Recent innovations in the workplace at TCC have seen the implementation of an electronic purchase order system, electronic information management system and desktop phone system. Many others are on the horizon and it was evident that the council had a need for all staff to have a base level of computer knowledge as we move into the future.

The objective for Tauranga City Council was, and is, a higher level of basic competence in the use of computers and computer applications across the organisation. It is a method of lifting the base level skill of Council staff and making staff feel more positive about themselves and Tauranga City Council.

▪ **The solution**

Introduce an organisation-wide computer training system capable of providing staff with relevant skills while meeting the Council's technology needs into the near future

The idea was that staff would be offered the opportunity to obtain an internationally recognised computer qualification while upskilling themselves in the use of technology: A win-win situation for both council and staff.

Tauranga City Council adopted ICDL (International Computer Driving Licence) as a benchmark competency with plans to train all staff over a three-year period. Launched in November 2003 it now has over 240 candidates enrolled on the programme.

The main driving force for introducing ICDL was to provide:

- Best value in training
- To ensure staff were sufficiently skilled to deliver on Council's strategic and long term community plans
- To prepare staff with the skills to access emerging e-learning opportunities



Tauranga City

▪ **International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL)**

ICDL is an internationally recognised qualification that enables people of all ages to demonstrate their competence in computer skills. The syllabus is designed to cover the key concepts of computing, its practical applications and their use in the workplace and society in general.

The course is broken down into seven modules which are tested before the ICDL certificate is awarded.

Through implementing the ICDL in Tauranga City Council and making five of the seven modules mandatory for all permanent staff members ICDL has become a key part of the Council's training and development strategy, linking directly to performance reviews, career development and supporting TCC initiatives such as "SmartGrowth", "Tauranga Tomorrow" and "People First" (outlined below).



Originally intended as a cost effective IT training solution offering large numbers of staff a recognised qualification, the International Computer Driving Licence programme at Tauranga City Council is showing wider organisational benefits in addition to improving IT skills.

▪ **The Benefits of ICDL for Tauranga City Council**

- Higher levels of basic competence of staff using computers and applications
- Best use of the technology investment through more staff actively more application features which in turn enables Tauranga City Council to invest more efficiently in IT
- Reduction in time and cost spent fixing user errors thereby reducing IT support costs
- Increased productivity through staff being able to use systems more efficiently
- Colleagues able to share knowledge and learning with each other
- Better prepares staff for emerging technology
- Improved customer service delivery
- Evidence of learning
- Ensured best practice and quality issues are understood and implemented.
- Supporting TCC initiatives of SmartGrowth, Tauranga Tomorrow and Customer Service

▪ **How the project was managed**

Marketing began with the presentation of the strategy to Council's Executive Management Team. Once agreed, there was an internal publicity campaign using as many mediums as possible to let staff know about the qualification. These included posters, articles, in-house newsletters, e-mail shots and briefing sessions.

Information about ICDL is now included in each letter of offer to new Council staff and is part of the staff induction package. This is then followed up and is part of the performance review. ICDL is part of the organisation's training and development strategy. Every new, permanent staff member at TCC attends a one-hour briefing session which outlines the importance of IT skills to the individual and to the organisation.

The briefing includes an overview of the ICDL qualification, a demonstration of the learning materials and the opportunity for candidates to ask any questions they may have. These sessions are important in setting the 'tone and atmosphere' of the learning. The session also introduces the idea of a new learning culture emerging within the organisation and explores some of the practical issues. In the past staff have been 'spoon fed', instructor-led courses, whereas the ICDL programme has introduced many to the concept of e-learning and the need to be responsible for managing their own learning.

Becoming a test centre and using automated testing was a key factor in the implementation of the project. Without it we would not be able to offer the ICDL qualification with all its benefits to such a large number of staff. The costs of manually marking papers in terms of time and the skills required would have been prohibitive.

▪ **Engaging staff and getting them excited about ICDL**

From the start the project team wanted to demonstrate to staff that the qualification was achievable by everyone. The message was that all staff would participate in the ICDL project, including managers and the HR team.

In the initial pilot two staff were given the opportunity to 'fast-track' the qualification, completing it in six to eight weeks. These staff become advocates for the qualification and interest soon began to build up. The 'feel good factor' that a project like ICDL generates, should not be underestimated.

Tauranga City Council has formed a partnership with the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic in order to keep costs to a minimum. This has meant writing a clause into new staff employment contracts, becoming a test centre and providing a variety of learning methods including tutor-led and online training. Staff are given time to study at their desks and a training room has been provided in house where staff are able to study quietly away from their desks.

Staff can get training from the standard application courses that are on offer but can also take CDs home to study in their own time. Our library has manuals in both the staff and public sections for staff who are not suited to an on line learning style.

Council is confident that this initiative has led to a more competent, confident workforce and we can only reap more rewards in this win-win situation.

▪ **Success on many levels**

The ICDL programme is as much about recognising skills and competence as providing a learning opportunity and it can generate a lot of good will from staff. The visibility of learning in the workplace has created a positive peer-pressure, encouraging more staff to take up ICDL.

Being located within the Human Resources Department has the advantage of helping to strategically tie-in ICDL to other HR initiatives such as People First, Performance Appraisal and Corporate Values.

Other noticeable benefits are improved communication, team support, skills sharing, problem solving, less reliance on the help desk, improved customer service delivery, an improved work culture and the feeling that the employer

takes an interest and generally cares about its staff. Through the ICDL staff up-skill themselves in the use of technology and gain an internationally recognised qualification at the same time. It is about identifying skill gaps and addressing them, but also goes much further than that.

It is strongly felt that the successful introduction of a new desktop phone system in 2005 was enabled by the receptiveness of staff to new technology gained through achievement of the ICDL modules.

An email from a Council manager sums up the reaction to ICDL:

"I think the ICDL programme is an excellent way of up-skilling staff in the work that they do and for their own personal development. Technology is a big part of our organisation now and all areas are required to use systems of some sort. The ICDL programme makes sure that we are working from the same platform no matter what systems we are using.

I have noticed a difference in my team as a result of individuals completing the programme. They are a lot more confident in using technology and are able to solve simple problems themselves, allowing them to get on with the work and therefore more productive.

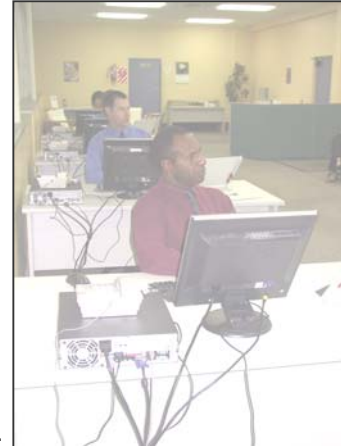
There is a considerable amount of personal satisfaction that arises from completing and passing courses such as this. There is a level of personal development and a certificate at the end that people can take away with them.

Personally, I learnt a few things myself. It has given me a better understanding of the tools that I use daily and which one is best to use for the work that I am doing. I thought I had a pretty good understanding of how computers work and how the applications run, but got caught out on a few questions. The learning experience was well run and set up in a good training environment."

Waid Crockett Manager: Information Management

Through completing the modules staff get a sense of self worth and Council gets a technology-savvy workforce. This not only helps the 240 staff currently doing the ICDL but has a direct spin-off to the TCC ratepayers who obtain a more efficient service.

ICDL has been going for two-and-a-half years in TCC and was born of a need to educate staff in their use of electronic communication and provide quantifiable proof of learning. It is also about providing opportunity for career development and a structured approach to training.



▪ Why the project was a 'good, sensible and right thing to do'

Implementing the large scale ICDL programme has offered wider benefits to individuals and the organisation:

- Improved skills transfer
- Improved team dynamics
- A new learning culture
- A foundation for e-learning
- Improved access to information and knowledge management
- Assistance in cultural change
- A positive attitude towards the organisation

To support improved and more diverse services for the public of Tauranga, TCC is continually upgrading its systems and technology. Unless staff across the organisation can consistently use these tools well, TCC cannot achieve improved service delivery. Investing in staff training with the ICDL qualification is one of the best training initiatives this Council has ever undertaken. It is part of Tauranga City Council's forward thinking; encouraging staff to improve themselves by acquiring new and relevant skills.



▪ **Tauranga City – the Vision explained**

Tauranga Tomorrow

Tauranga Moana Tauranga Tangata (our place our people)

The **Tauranga Tomorrow Vision** is all about Tauranga being a place that is:

- easy to move around
- built to fit our hills harbour and coast

Tauranga will have

- a clean, green, valued environment
- vibrant, healthy and diverse communities
- actively involved people

We will have a

- strong sustainable economy.- while-living well, wasting less.



Tauranga will be

- a great place to grow up.

Tauranga Tomorrow is all about our future. Over 6000 people who live, work and play gave feedback on what they think Tauranga should look like in the future.

Customer Service Strategy

Tauranga City Council has a strategy for improving customer service, which includes the **People First** Strategy and a Human Resources strategic plan. The ICDL is one of the key enablers for the integration of the essential customer service and HR strategies that support the achievement of Council's overall plans, strategies and vision for the city.

SmartGrowth



SmartGrowth is the regional growth management strategy that Tauranga City Council has completed in partnership with Environment Bay of Plenty, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Tangata Whenua. SmartGrowth will ensure that, as the western Bay of Plenty grows, it will continue to be a great place to live, work and play.