

# DVLA and IBM create an Innovation Facility to transform business thinking



## Overview

### ■ Customer Challenge

- To find new ways to deliver quality, low cost service
- To identify innovative solutions to key problem areas

### ■ IBM Solution

- IBM Business Consulting Services Physical Asset Management - strategic estates advice, funding and procurement
- Innovation Team to encourage and progress new ideas

### ■ Customer Benefit

- Rapid adoption of new ways of working
- Staff encouraged to innovate and collaborate
- Understanding and identifying end user priorities

UK government departments face tough challenges in delivering better quality services at lower cost. One government agency taking a radical and progressive approach is the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

With a budget of £300m, DVLA is the largest executive agency in the UK Department for Transport (DfT). DVLA holds records for 39 million drivers and 32 million vehicles. Its data and operations contribute to improved road safety, crime reduction and improved environment. The Agency is also responsible for the collection and enforcement of vehicle excise duty (VED), which last year was £4.9bn, and contributes to the Government's e-services agenda.

The Agency has an ambitious business development agenda and chose IBM as its 10-year business transformation partner.

### Partners Achieving Change Together

DVLA formed a strategic partnership with IBM and Fujitsu, called Partners Achieving Change Together (PACT), to encourage innovation and accelerate change.

IBM was selected for its proven business transformation capability, approach to innovation, collaborative style of working and value for money solutions. Specifically the Agency was impressed with IBM's understanding of the DVLA vision.

This vision included business and systems integration, new channels to market, improved processes and a re-invigorated workforce. IBM impressed the selection panel with a 'show not tell' philosophy at every stage of the procurement, and by placing specific emphasis on a new and unique style of partnership.

"PACT helps us think and do things differently, but our main focus is on the practical results innovation can deliver," says Clive Bennett, Chief Executive Officer of DVLA. "We've benefited greatly from the imagination and skills of IBM, and its people are instrumental in helping us adopt new approaches to key issues such as road safety, reducing vehicle crime, improving the environment and delivering efficient customer service."

“These are big issues that require creative thinking and often radical approaches,” adds Bennett. “That’s why we worked with IBM to build a dedicated Innovation Facility and create a specialist Innovation Services Team. It has been hugely successful and we’ve already seen some impressive results.”

The Innovation Services Team is made up of IBM consultants working alongside DVLA staff to identify the key issues and areas of opportunity that will have the greatest impact on the Agency’s objectives. The biggest challenge is to devise creative and innovative ways to address those issues.

### **The Innovation Facility**

The Innovation Facility is just one example of the significant changes in demand for space that have been met by the Agency’s Estates Strategy developed by specialist estates consultants from the IBM Physical Asset Management Group. Forecasting future demand for space is complex and at times challenging, since the Agency is taking on new responsibilities and projects which push up demand for workspace, whilst efficiency initiatives are driving

demand down. To cope with this uncertainty the Estates Strategy has established a mix of leasehold and freehold buildings on two campuses in Swansea. This has already proven to be the highly flexible approach the Agency needs.

“To create the right environment for innovation and radical thinking, we needed to take people out of their normal job situation into a creative environment,” says Lynn Watts, Development Centre Manager, DVLA. “With the help of IBM we constructed a completely new building designed to make people think and act differently.”

IBM specialist estates consultants worked with DVLA to secure funding, plan and procure the Innovation Facility.

A key area of the Facility is a dedicated space for brainstorming new ideas. It has an atmosphere that positively encourages people to stand up, interact with one another and generate innovative thinking.

The Facility has eight development laboratories used to design prototype solutions, model office environments, develop IT solutions and run workshops. There is space for sixty staff to visit the Facility for periods of between a day and several months, and a fully equipped, high-technology digital theatre seating up to 240 people.

“Working in the Innovation Facility provides a fantastic opportunity to encourage people to practise inspired creativity in their day-to-day work,” says Kevin Fisher, DVLA Innovation Services Manager. “We have a world-class venue to help facilitate new proposals, mobilise new projects and support design and development.”

### **Thinking differently**

All DVLA staff are encouraged to submit ideas and participate in projects. Ideas initially come into an ‘incubator’, where the Innovation Services Team work with small project teams to take a concept through to a firm proposition.

Once a proposition has been defined, the joint IBM and DVLA Innovation Services Team assists in project definition workshops, teambuilding events and project planning sessions, and ultimately mobilises a project team to give the initiative a fast start.

The Innovation Services Team is keen to facilitate a culture in DVLA where thinking differently (not just about today but the future) is embedded in everyone’s psyche, wherever they work. It was while thinking about organisations that had gone through traumatic change that the Team came up with the idea for the “DVLA Great Innovation Debate”.

The Team wanted DVLA staff to feel challenged and to be exposed to a debate where discontinuities are presented as becoming very real - where the seemingly improbable becomes the certainty. By facing these issues and debating them, staff become better informed and more adept at thinking, both as individuals and in teams, about the changing nature not just of technology but of society as a whole.

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*Kevin Fisher, DVLA Innovation Services Manager*

## Practical innovation projects

In the Government's efforts to crack down on uninsured driving, the Agency was asked to investigate ways DVLA data and capabilities could be used to help. DVLA's Crime Reduction Group used the Innovation Facility and the Innovation Services Team to mobilise a core team and develop ways to combat the problem. Within two months, a series of proposals was submitted to the Government and obtained the support of Ministers. Innovation Services continues to actively support the development of the DVLA solution while the required legislation is drafted.

The Innovation Facility is also an inspirational unit in which DVLA presents new ideas and technologies to external organisations. As part of a Motor Industry Services Project, DVLA proposed introducing a voting system, but needed feedback from the motor industry on a number of questions. Working with the Innovation Services Team, the Agency produced a demonstration and invited delegates to attend a workshop. The feedback enabled the project to progress rapidly to implementation, improving understanding and identifying end user priorities and how to communicate in the future.

Project workshops held at the Facility have produced positive outcomes. The Fixed Penalty Processing team produced a number of short-term actions and proposals for scoping more detailed work including a Fixed Penalty Administration Centre. A team supported by Innovation Services is preparing a model of how this might work and this will become part of a Home Office White Paper.

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The Drivers' Medical Team reviewed options identified in an external Risk Assessment study and approximately 25 proposals were put forward for improving the Drivers' Medical area. Work is under way to refine these proposals and provide feedback.

“The successful projects completed at the Innovation Facility prove just how a dedicated facility encourages new thought, new processes and new ways of working,” concludes Bennett. “IBM has been invaluable to us in setting up the Innovation Facility, and its specialists have encouraged fresh thinking in the way we do things here at DVLA.”

## Looking forward

The Innovation Facility will host the second 'DVLA Great Innovation Debate' before an invited audience from DVLA and other local organisations. The theme is 'It's all about technology' and speakers from IBM, Henley Management College, Manchester University and Durham University will address the social and personal aspects of technology-led change.

A new practical project being undertaken by DVLA and the Innovation Services Team concerns the Government's plan to create a national road charging scheme aimed at avoiding gridlock across the country over the next two decades. DVLA will work with the Innovation Services Team to look at how the Agency will deal with this plan and what role it will play.

## For more information

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