

Boosting city services by empowering employees

The City of Pittsburgh conducts user research and gives employees a strong voice in choosing the Dell Technologies device solutions that best meet their needs.



Customer profile



State & Local Government | United States



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Santiago Garces

Former CIO and Director,
Department of Innovation & Performance,
City of Pittsburgh

Business needs

The City of Pittsburgh needed to quickly replace a large number of laptop and desktop computers that were no longer going to be supported. At the same time, municipal technology managers realized that they did not know city employees' actual computing needs, and set about closing that gap.

Business results

- Meets real-life technology needs based on city employees' input.
- Offers multiple options to address any user requirement.
- Enables immediate transition to working from home during the pandemic.
- Enhances constituent services.
- Ensures timely completion of 800-device technology.
- Simplifies technology management.

Solutions at a glance

Device Solutions

- Diverse selection across the Dell Latitude, Precision and Rugged portfolios
- Dell Monitors and peripherals

Services

- Dell ProDeploy Plus
- Dell ProSupport Plus

Endpoint Security

- Dell Encryption



“Responding rapidly, Dell Technologies was never at a loss for an excellent, high-end laptop solution when desktops were no longer a viable option.”

Gwendolyn Moorer

Assistant Director of Technology,
Department of Innovation & Performance,
City of Pittsburgh

The City of Pittsburgh’s Department of Innovation & Performance (I&P) manages technology to realize the mayor’s vision for more efficient city departments and continuous improvement of constituent services. Transcending the status quo through citizen-focused innovation is part of I&P’s mission.

Across city departments, employees were using older hardware that was prone to breakdowns and performance degradation. Many computers still ran on Windows 7 as Microsoft support was coming to an end. Because these machines could not support Windows 10, I&P had to replace 60 percent of the device fleet on a deadline.

Just as critical, I&P lacked first-hand insight into departmental computing requirements or employee satisfaction with their desktops and laptops. That made it difficult to think through and plan new hardware purchases.

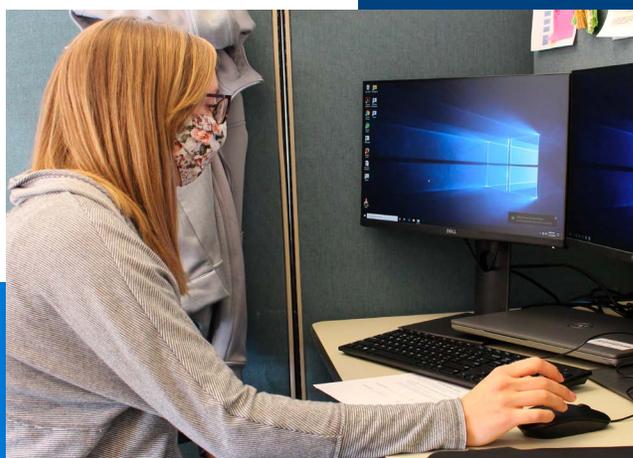
Understanding real-life technology needs

I&P performed research to understand the technology needs of city employees across a diverse set of 19 departments, from finance to general services—something the city had not done before. I&P team members interviewed department employees and documented their activities and challenges. They then developed interdepartmental personas to document their findings. Such details as usage environments, application access, connectivity, mobility, processing power, screen resolution and size, weight, battery life, keyboard configuration, interfaces and ports figured into the personas.

At the same time, I&P looked for a technology partner to provide a robust portfolio of commercial devices. Santiago Garces, former I&P director and CIO, says, “We found common ground with Dell Technologies in discussing how I&P could elevate the work of the city departments. Our idea of devices as an enabling service for city workers resonated with the Dell Technologies team.”

Giving city employees voice and choice in technology decisions

While persona research continued, I&P reorganized to serve the city better. On a newly founded Innovation Team, the business relationship managers (BRM) liaised with departments to align everybody’s understanding of user needs, deadlines and policy goals. BRMs quickly reached consensus for I&P’s approach to ensuring that technology empowered employees and met with their satisfaction.





“We can focus on serving our internal customers more strategically because Dell Technologies takes care of any device issues.”

Christine Rice

Devices Manager,
Department of Innovation & Performance,
City of Pittsburgh

Dell Technologies provided multiple options for every persona. To arrive at the best possible choices, I&P invited department leads and employees to test the devices and provide feedback. “When we shared our personas and their needs with Dell Technologies, they promptly matched them with a variety of smart-device options,” says Garces.

Matching personas and device solutions

Personas documented by I&P included the inspector, who needs a mobile, robust, lightweight device with internet and network connectivity for use in the field. The best-fit device for the inspector was the Dell Latitude 7200 laptop. The administrative-clerk persona requires a fast, versatile, dependable computer to use with typical business applications. City employees and I&P chose the Dell Latitude 3410 for the administrator.

Snow-plow operators use the Dell Latitude 7220 ruggedized laptop built for the harshest environments to manage their routes without having to stop at city offices during the day. Describing the selection process, BRM Elizabeth O’Neill says, “Employees piloted several solutions, including ruggedized tablets and laptops. They told us that the Latitude 7220 laptop was the best choice, and Dell Technologies helped us lengthen the battery life. The Latitude 7220 is a great device that will benefit the supervisors and foremen of the snow-plow drivers for years.”

City departments use several other Dell Technologies solutions. For example, the assistant director and BRMs use the Dell Latitude 3510 2-in-1 laptop, and project managers and other

employees in the Department of Public Works, Office of Municipal Investigation, and the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure have adopted the Dell Precision 3541 mobile workstation.

Extending technology access to constituents

By empowering city employees with role-specific computers, I&P brought department operations closer to the mayor’s vision. That became even clearer when I&P used its new insight to serve residents directly, making laptops on carts available for computing and coding classes for the Rec2Tec program in parks-department facilities. BRM Jeffrey Hovis explains, “Our ability to furnish Pittsburgh residents with laptops allows us to partner with business partners and community organizations to roll out new programs and offer constituents a new pathway to the benefits of technology.”

Pivoting quickly during the pandemic

COVID-19 forced I&P to quickly change course as city employees could no longer work at their offices and needed laptops instead of desktop computers. Close to 600 laptops were already on order, and the city purchased 200 more to support these workers and meet any sudden needs. It took less than two weeks to enable more than 200 city employees to work from home on new laptops. Gwendolyn Moorer, I&P’s assistant director of technology, says, “Responding rapidly, Dell Technologies was never at a loss for an excellent, high-end laptop solution when desktops were no longer a viable option.”



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Services ensure the right results from hardware purchases

So far, I&P has replaced 60 percent of the Windows 7 devices and is on track to complete the project by the end of 2020. Dell Technologies service consultants play an important role in this undertaking. “We would never have been able to replace a fleet of over 800 computers without the ProDeploy Plus service,” comments Garces. Moorer adds, “Our deployment consultants were tirelessly on focus during the entire effort, and Dell Technologies made the right resources available.”

Every new computer is shipped with the proper persona profile. I&P Devices Manager Christine Rice explains, “Handing off configuration to Dell Technologies and using profiles consistently across departments keep our process efficient. Making things even easier, they also helped us arrive at a consistent BIOS setting.”

I&P relies on ProSupport Plus to keep users working. “We can focus on serving our internal customers more strategically because Dell Technologies takes care of any device issues,” says Rice.

Continuing the momentum

While personas in some city departments are still being refined, I&P is already planning on rolling out four-year refresh cycles to avoid issues to do with aging hardware. Technology managers plan to simplify device management with VMware Workspace ONE and are about to implement Dell Encryption to protect computers and data. “Dell Encryption is easy to manage and will make a big difference in our security, especially now that everybody is mobile,” says Garces. “It will be part of our standard deployment process.”

Summarizing his experience with Dell Technologies, Garces says, “It takes a strong partner with the right roadmap, relationships, devices and services to help us meet the needs of city departments. Dell Technologies is that partner for us.”

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