

Simplifying Procurement for Small Business in NSW

Client

Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner (OSBC)

The OSBC's mission is to help small businesses operate as professionally, as efficiently and as successfully as they can.

Timeframe

January to June 2019

Responsibility

User identification, user research, design, facilitation, alpha testing of the entire project.

Areas of expertise

- business model design
- testing, validation and evaluation
- coaching, development and training

Scale



whole of NSW



129 local councils



Interpreting and translating all statutory requirements for WHS



Putting small businesses at the centre of the procurement process; enabling user-focussed, "agile way" operations.

Outcomes

First agile, user-centred ideation in procurement service design.

Automated assessment of over 1,000 pages compliance requirements into 12 user-targeted indices.

Prototyping and evaluation of the questionnaire and tools.

Questionnaire, online forms, templates, guidance material and journey maps successfully incorporated the needs of all user groups.

Automated assessment of over 1,000 pages of compliance requirements into 12 targeted indices.



Project Description

As part of the "Easy to do business" campaign, our client needed to make local council tenders simpler for small businesses, to diversify opportunity for participation. Each of the 129 local government areas in NSW manages procurement requirements differently. Small business owners need a way to quickly and easily understand their compliance requirements in working for local councils across NSW.

The client's goal was to simplify the way councils assessed work, health and safety (WHS) requirements within the procurement process. The client wanted a simplified WHS assessment that councils could use in tenders to assess a business' ability to comply with WHS requirements.

The procurement process had to be simpler, easier and quicker, but sufficiently comprehensive to ensure the adequacy of a business' practices to meet councils' requirements. The process needed practical, user-focussed materials designed, tested and iterated.

Approach

Cyntropy designed materials for the rapid collection, assessment and notification of user capability and council requirements. We led the user identification, profiling and research. A user journey map was developed, with key actions for each user type (small business owner, local council procurement team, decision maker).

“ Cyntropy turned over 1,000 pages of legislation into practical, usable tools. This allowed us to do walkthroughs and significant ideation, as we worked to balance compliance requirements (council's primary need) with simplifying engagement (business need). ”

Because all types of work, in all the locations under a local council's control were in scope, the user groups were very diverse (particularly around needs and experience).

Cyntropy researched and developed the contents for:

- the simplified WHS questionnaire
- templates, guidance materials for councils
- templates, guidance materials for small businesses
- new procurement process roadmap.

Our deliverables allowed the client to explore and experiment with implementation. This included user profiling, user story development, exploring user-centred cultures and embedding agile principles.

The questionnaire assessed a business's ability to comply. We also had to design ratings and a "behind the scenes" evaluation. Where the business was not yet compliant, targeted actions needed to be pre-filled in a template, to be provided as guidance to the business (to help them comply quicker and more effectively).

An overarching roadmap was developed, that explored the two most "oppositional" user journeys; that of the local council procurement officer and the small business owner.