Untangling immigration red tape with public service solutions in Finland
Helping to design and develop a new immigration eService

Business Challenge

Immigration is one of the most impactful trends affecting the modern world. Since 2010, on average 22,000 people have applied for their first residence permit in Finland annually—around half of them to study or work. With immigration services often creating “first impressions” of a country, the Finnish Immigration Service, known as Migri, wanted to make the process of immigration as intuitive as possible and offer concrete support to people dealing with immigration complexities.

How Accenture helped

Teaming with Accenture and Fjord (Accenture’s interactive design and innovation consultancy), Migri began the project with a workshop to identify current challenges and difficulties. User tests included developing several identities to understand the overall experience in filling out different application types, creative exercises to explore the vision for the service, and a review of customer feedback.

Finland is no stranger to the use of digital technologies to improve public service solutions. Today, it is easy to purchase a tram ticket in Finland via a mobile. In thinking about the new immigration service, the team wanted to extend this type reliability and flexibility to applying for a residence permit.

Clearly, such a user-friendly and intuitive design would not affect the stringent criteria required to obtain a visa or citizenship, but there were adaptations that could be made to help the application process flow more smoothly for everyone.

The new eService, known as EnterFinland, is an electronic case management system designed to put the user first. The service required rethinking and reimagining the best way to provide online digital services for customers, from the front end through to final completion of the immigration application. It aims to be straightforward to enable a user to finish the application in one sitting without being overwhelmed by information. Using a simple step-by-step structure, the service suggests the next logical step, clearly displaying which part of the application the user is currently working on and helping users to keep an eye on progress. There are also safeguards to prevent users from accidentally sending an incomplete application.

High Performance Delivered

EnterFinland helps the Finnish Immigration Service to provide a better, more efficient user-oriented service to immigrants and their families. And since the applications can be mainly processed by the immigrants themselves, there are significantly shortened time lines and less work for the officials in processing the applications.

The design of any effective system or process requires constant collaboration and reviews. Immigration, legislation and the nature and number of immigrants themselves are constantly changing. The eService EnterFinland needs to adapt accordingly. As the existing service is continuously improved, EnterFinland welcomes new people into the country by offering them an easy immigration process that reduces the time and resource demands on Finland’s public service agencies.

The benefits of the redesign are already evident. Six months after EnterFinland was launched, results include:

- 49 percent of all citizenship applications are made using the EnterFinland eService
- 85 percent of students used EnterFinland to file their residence applications, with handling times 30 percent shorter—reduced from 33 days to 23 days
- 37 percent shorter processing time, on average, using EnterFinland for a residence permit application for an employed person—reduced from 137 days to 87 days

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About Delivering Public Service for the Future

What does it take to deliver public service for the future? Public service leaders must embrace four structural shifts—advancing toward personalized services, insight-driven operations, a public entrepreneurship mind-set and a cross-agency commitment to mission productivity. By making these shifts, leaders can support flourishing societies, safe, secure nations and economic vitality for citizens in a digital world—delivering public service for the future.

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