The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is Australia's federal revenue agency, responsible for collecting more than A$330 billion (US$240 billion) each year from taxpayers. Its 20,000 employees administer tax and superannuation for 26 million customers in Australia and overseas.

Under the Australian Government’s ‘Digital First’ policy, by 2017 all government agencies must use digital channels as their primary avenue for communicating with customers and delivering services. In response to community expectations for digital interactions, the ATO partnered with Accenture to define and deliver digital services. Existing client interactions were inventoried and prioritised for delivery through the ATO’s ‘Contemporary Digital Services’ program.

The Opportunity
Prior to 2015, the ATO had worked with Accenture to introduce an online services application that provided an initial set of functions for individuals to manage their tax obligations. This site was the foundation for myTax, the ATO’s application for online income tax lodgement, which was launched in 2014.

Feedback from the community showed that the majority of clients preferred to use the ATO’s online services portal, ATO Online, over the other channels available. In response, the ATO identified all the interactions and transactions its customers required and prioritised those that did not have a digital offering, or where it could improve an existing digital service. The ATO then launched the Priority Digital Services (PDS) project to deliver its first tranche of contemporary digital services. The project aimed to deliver more personalised online experiences, with improved usability and more digital interactions.
Solution

Accenture worked with the ATO in two distinct areas that supported the delivery of this project:

• The ATO established a Digital Enabling Services agile release train and Accenture provided consultancy services to integrate this delivery capability with the business stakeholders and other technical teams.

• The ATO also partnered with Accenture for the delivery of front-end design, development and testing of the new online services.

The project’s delivery approach was defined using a combination of Agile project management methodologies, including Scrum, the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) and Accenture Delivery Methods (ADM) for Agile Development.

A key task during the project definition and roll-out phase was to identify product managers and owners within the business and give them direct control of the solution and the delivery priorities.

Through a series of workshops, Accenture and the ATO developed and defined a set of required features and functions. These included:

• Having a more personalised homepage and navigation menus
• Enabling clients to lodge activity statements and Pay as You Go Instalments (PAYGI) online
• Enabling customers to voluntarily enter into a PAYGI arrangement and to manage their PAYGI obligations
• Allowing customers to view all accounts and transactions linked to their record
• Improving online payment interactions, including enabling customers to pay multiple tax debts in a single transaction
• Updating the payment arrangement service to improve usability and incorporate business rule changes to increase collection rates
• Refreshing ATO Online’s visual design, to provide a contemporary style and an intuitive user experience
• Extending the services offered for viewing and maintaining client details to include a wider range of accounts and demographic data.

Accenture also worked with the ATO to improve ATO Online’s technology architecture, to enhance agility when implementing legislative or regulatory changes. This included development operation improvements for reliable, rapid packaging and deployment. These improvements were used for PDS and the latest revision of myTax.

The Agile delivery approach provided a dynamic feedback loop that allowed business stakeholders to see product development in real time and adjust the design as the application took shape through an interactive process. Agile methodologies and development operations allowed the team to make changes throughout the delivery phase, to incorporate user feedback without increasing cost or risk.

The Results

The PDS project was successfully delivered in June 2015, on time and under budget.

Today, the ATO offers personalised digital services that save time and are easy to use.

This is an important step in the ATO’s digital services journey. PDS has established the delivery mechanisms and enterprise architecture required to enable a continuous roll-out of digital services with a business-led, user-centric approach. This is a significant step towards achieving the ATO’s digital strategy and meeting the expectations of the government and citizens.

The ATO continues to partner with Accenture to extend the ATO Online platform, including delivering the next release of the myTax application and a range of other initiatives.

About Accenture

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