

Making room for the rec room: a field service mobile

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Introduction

Within the private sector, Cape Town has been recognised as the tech startup hub of Africa. With a lens on digital disruption and transformation, the city is emerging as a global centre and gateway to the African continent. Within the City of Cape Town municipality, there is a drive towards modernisation and improved digital services to enhance business efficiency and customer service.

The Community Services and Health Directorate, comprising of four departments: Recreation and Parks, Health, Social Development and Early Childhood Development and Library and Information Services, in its draft ICT Strategy, aims to harness new technologies, better leverage data and use digital services to transform the way the Directorate delivers services to the public. Driving IT modernisation, innovation, pursuing system integration, strengthening digital capabilities and resources, enhancing skills and literacy through initiatives and programmes, and improving connectivity and access at facilities is critical in achieving these aims. This includes better managing and utilising data for evidence-based decision-making.

Recreation and Parks department's mobile application

The Recreation and Parks department provides a host of services to the public, including programme delivery, horticultural services and community facility management and maintenance. As part of the broader ICT Strategy, the Recreation and Parks department embarked on the development on an online mobile field-service application. The app aims to provide one centralised, interactive information repository, enable internal communication, empower staff to work towards a digital future and facilitate efficient and effective reporting to all stakeholders.

Rec Room functionality

Together with corporate IS&T, app developed commenced in 2016 and was launched in March 2019. The app contains the ability to

- Schedule programmes and events
- Capture programme attendance
- Upload images
- Complete facility housekeeping checklists to report on minimum maintenance standards
- Report incidents and injuries at facilities, e.g. vandalism,
- Easy-to-use information dashboard and reporting

Other features include an events and programme calendar and locating facilities and staff. An internal community platform exists for staff to communicate with each other. Online newsletters and announcements can be posted, and facility information and contacts (including tariffs) is available on the application.

Rec Room developments are phasic, with phase 2 currently in development. Additional functionalities relate to the streamlining of programme and event scheduling, email notifications, additional reports, and a public facing calendar of programmes and events on the City's website.

Accessibility

Rec Room is accessible from a PC or mobile phone. As this application is a field-service application, mobile devices are supplied to staff to execute the functions. This aims to provide internet connectivity to staff where connectivity may not be provided. 'On-the-ground' staff have the ability to complete forms within the app, which is available in real time as reports and dashboards for management to view and utilise. Over the past two years, staff have received training on how to use the app, and a central team is available to manage devices should devices require repair or replacement.