

Serving citizens



CASE STUDY

Fredericia Kommune dramatically boosts efficiency

With IBM Global Business Services® and Nuance SpeechMagic®

Overview

The Challenge

Danish municipality Fredericia Kommune is continually looking for ways to drive down costs while maintaining a superb level of service to citizens. The organization realized its employees were spending too much time managing paperwork, cutting into more productive tasks.

The Solution

Working with IBM Global Business Services, Fredericia Kommune deployed Nuance SpeechMagic – a robust, multi-user, multi-network speech recognition platform.

The Benefits

Overall, Fredericia Kommune estimates that it records 205 words per minute with the new solution, compared to just 59 words typed per minute – an improvement of 250 percent. A preliminary employee survey revealed that 52 percent say the solution has improved the workplace environment while 39 percent think it has enhanced quality of the municipality's work.

About Fredericia Kommune

The city and municipality of Fredericia (Fredericia Kommune) are located on the eastern coast of the Jutland peninsula in the Region of Southern Denmark. The municipality covers an area of 134 square kilometers and has a total population of over 48,000 people. The municipality's 4,500 employees help provide a range of services to citizens, including support for care of children and the elderly, recycling programs and libraries.

Handling paperwork more efficiently

Fredericia Kommune constantly seeks ways to boost efficiency as part of its commitment to offer the best possible service to citizens. One way for the municipality to achieve greater efficiency is by maximizing productivity among its employees. Assessing the everyday tasks handled by its employees, Fredericia Kommune discovered that a major part of their day was spent on essential but time-consuming paperwork. If this time could be reduced the municipality's employees would be free to focus on tasks that more directly benefited the citizens of Fredericia.



Peter Tscherning Moller, Project Manager at Fredericia Kommune explains, “As a municipal government, it is one of our ongoing aims to boost operational efficiency, as this enables us to move resources where it matters to our citizens. Our employees deal with numerous cases every day, each involving vital paperwork. If we could find a way for staff to process their paperwork more quickly, they would be able to handle more cases per day – resulting in a faster service to citizens, with no impact on the quality.”

Equipping the municipality for the future

With several key employees approaching retirement age, it was more important than ever for Fredericia Kommune to ensure it was well-prepared for the coming years.

“It is vital for Fredericia Kommune to move with the times, and by taking advantage of the latest technology we can make it easier for employees to work more efficiently,” says Moller. “By empowering staff members to do more within the same time without adjusting effort levels, they can be more productive without affecting their day-to-day work satisfaction. Achieving this would also minimize the negative impact of experienced employees retiring.”

Setting a target for the new solution

Fredericia Kommune set a target of increasing productivity of the time spent recording data by 45 percent. A speech recognition tool that could convert dictated words into typed words presented an ideal solution to help achieve this. The municipality would also need an experienced partner to help implement the technology.

Moller comments, “We were looking for an implementation partner we could trust to propose the solution best tailored to our needs. IBM immediately impressed us due to their professional and knowledgeable approach from the very first contact with them – we felt confident they would deliver in terms of in-depth technical expertise and working to tight deadlines.”

Selecting a solution from IBM® based on Nuance technology

A team from IBM Global Business Services – Application Services proposed a speech recognition solution that met Fredericia Kommune’s three main requirements: performance, reliability and an attractive price point. Based on Nuance SpeechMagic, the solution offered the robust, multi-user, multi-network technology required by the municipality. It incorporates professional speech recognition vocabularies, advanced learning algorithms and state-of-the-art technology to deliver exceptional performance out of the box.

“We were immediately impressed by the solution brought to us by IBM,” says Moller. “With Nuance SpeechMagic, speech recognition is accomplished in real time. Users are able to validate and sign the text at any point, which makes the editing process incredibly simple.”

IBM Global Business Services developed and presented Fredericia Kommune with a comprehensive project plan, including all details on the installation and specific configurations required by the municipality. All deadlines were met and close cooperation between the IBM team and the municipality’s staff ensured that users were able to use the solution to its full potential within a very short timeframe.

“The solution uses highly sensitive microphones that effectively filter out noise from the surroundings to capture employees’ speech, which means that it can even be used in open-plan offices, something we were not sure would be possible,” comments Moller. “IBM worked hard to define the needs of our employees to ensure that the solution was configured to meet their requirements as closely as possible.”

Boosting efficiency and productivity

Since deploying Nuance SpeechMagic, Fredericia Kommune has carried out a detailed evaluation to determine just how much difference it has made to each employee’s workday – the findings were very impressive.

“The comparisons between a number of before and after scenarios have really shown us the impact made by adopting the IBM / Nuance solution,” says Moller. “For example, journal notes that took on average 30 minutes to type up could be completed in just five minutes – an 83 percent reduction. Similarly, 40-page resource profiles that previously took eight hours to put together could now be compiled in approximately two hours, or 75 percent less time.

“Overall, we calculated that while previously employees at Fredericia Kommune were typing 59 words per minute in an average working day, the new solution enables us to record up to 205 words per minute, a massive improvement of 250 percent. Since our target was just to increase this number by 45 percent, we were extremely pleased with the results.”

Increasing user satisfaction

The evaluation also included a preliminary staff survey to investigate how the municipality employees felt about the solution – again, the results were encouraging.

“Our preliminary survey found that 52 percent of the employees using the IBM / Nuance solution felt it had improved the workplace environment,” explains Moller. “A significant proportion – 76 percent – state that efficiency has improved, while 39 percent believe the quality of the municipality’s work has been enhanced as a direct result of the project.”

Delivering a better service to citizens

By making it possible for Fredericia Kommune’s employees to work more efficiently and handle more cases per day, waiting times have decreased for citizens, translating into a quicker service.

“The IBM / Nuance solution helps us provide a more rapid and effective service to citizens. Instead of tying up employees with time-consuming typing, they can instead quickly deal with the essential task of recording information before moving onto tasks that more directly benefit the citizens of Fredericia.”

Moller concludes, “The IBM / Nuance solution helps us provide a more rapid and effective service to citizens. Instead of tying up employees with time-consuming typing, they can instead quickly deal with the essential task of recording information before moving onto tasks that more directly benefit the citizens of Fredericia. Ultimately, working with IBM and Nuance, we have succeeded in increasing satisfaction amongst both our employees and the citizens we seek to serve.”



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New Orchard Road
Armonk, New York 10504
USA

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Nuance Communications, Inc.
One Wayside Road
Burlington, MA 01803
781.565.5000

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