

CASE STUDY: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR PROPERTY SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF MAJOR UK RETAILER

Organisation

The Property Services department of the UK's number 1 supermarket chain. With a budget of almost £2 billion, the department is responsible for building new stores, extending and re-fitting existing stores and managing all maintenance issues across the estate.

Project Background

Based on the findings from a project to review and simplify working practices, plus staff and supplier feedback, a project was initiated within the organisation as numerous issues, relating to information management, had become apparent:

- Demand from staff for better and more accessible information.
- Demand from the supply chain for better, shared information.
- Duplication, variations, gaps and delays in information within the organisation, and between the organisation and external users.
- A high volume of unstructured and uncoordinated information within the organisation.
- Lack of data management within the organisation, yielding high wastage, duplication and gaps in knowledge.
- The need to save time on data upkeep and management.
- The need to ensure compliance with statutory legislation.

The aims of the project were to:

- Review and simplify the sources of, and access to, information.
- Establish the organisation's information needs and its management, distribution, accuracy and timeliness.
- Establish and implement the technology and systems required to support the organisation's information and business requirements.

The solution was to acquire and implement a system which would allow the organisation to manage its information more effectively.

The solution we chose met our selection criteria as it was one of the few property-specific knowledge management systems available in the marketplace. The solution could be classed as a document management system, a project management system or even an extranet solution, but was actually promoted internally as a Knowledge Management System that is available via the internet (thus allowing the sharing of information both internally and with the supply chain).

Key Deliverables

We adopted a phased approach to implementing the solution. The first 3 phases are highlighted below:

Phase 1

Focused on delivering the 'foundations' of the system. This is the core information that is required for all future system development, namely:

- Store records
- Internal and external contact records
- Supplier organisation records
- Document / drawings repository
- News / communications portal
- Design projects portal

Phase 2

Focused on delivering a mix of core business functions along with some smaller pieces of work. The core business functions were deemed as necessities by the business. The smaller pieces of work were quick wins, to maintain interest in the system by meeting the needs of a wide number of users in a short timeframe:

- Project records
- Development programme
- Buying plan (including bulk allocations and supplier allocation reporting)
- 'One Touch' project records
- H&S accident reporting
- H&S risk assessment
- Enhanced drawing management
- MIS reporting

Phase 3

Focused on delivering further key business functions ensuring that the system became embedded in the organisation's ways of working.

- Supplier performance measurement
- Design standards
- Initiatives records
- Project timeline management
- Integration of outstanding projects
- H&S asbestos register
- Distribution centre records

Benefits

The benefits delivered by implementing the system were:

- The most up-to-date information is available to anyone who needs it.
- Improved project delivery process - faster and cheaper.
- Accurate and consistent management information.
- Greater co-ordination of project work.
- Accurate, timely and secure information.
- More informed decision-making.
- A central repository for all information.
- Standardised and structured approach to information management.
- Duplication and non-value reports removed.
- Information maintained and recycled for future business use and value.