



Causeway talks to Kier Group

Causeway for Kier Group

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Causeway talks to
Terry Walker
IT Director

Business: Building & Civil Engineering Contractor

Turnover: £1.47bn

Total Offices: 70

Staff: 7,500

Solution: Causeway ECM

Terry explains why Kier choose to implement an Enterprise Content Management system and offers some key advice

Q1.

Why did Kier Group feel it was important to invest in a solution of this nature?

“We have been aware of the importance of this for a number of years and knew it was time to invest. The group as a whole had many overlapping requirements, some of which we had addressed in part, others we had yet to solve. Areas such as the intranet, collaboration, project control, e-mail and knowledge management, archiving, drawings, corporate compliance, document management and scanning. In addressing these issues in isolation, we realised that there was a great danger for duplication of effort and cost so we decided to adopt a unified approach to a single solution. Fortunately for us, we found a system that encompassed all of our needs.”

Q2. How did Kier decide on the most suitable solution for its entire business?

"Well, it was a challenge to say the least, realising there were over 150 products on the market it was a very daunting prospect indeed! Kier has 70 offices across 150 – 200 sites so supporting this type of infrastructure is crucial. We had to be confident that the chosen supplier could handle this and it became key to our final decision. We started off by undertaking an internal review to understand what systems were already in place, we found over a hundred products covering the broad enterprise content management (ECM) spectrum. We sent out a pre-qualification questionnaire to over thirty companies and from this a list of eight companies were invited to tender. Three were short-listed and eventually the Causeway system was selected. I must admit, the process was lengthy, it took 2 years including a 12 month pilot process."

Q3. What will be the biggest benefits of this solution to Kier?

"As Kier group is growing it is becoming increasingly difficult to communicate news and information to everyone and for the staff to find what they need, however, the ECM system will allow 3500 users to gain access to the solution to resolve both these problems. By storing everything in a central repository, with a search facility similar to that of Google, staff will no longer need to waste vast amounts of time looking for what they require and some cases not finding it."

In our business, the importance of document management is increasing in order to minimise risk and maintain legislative information for compliance reasons. Documents can now be managed easily with items being stored once, and then archived, with full version control. The user is now always presented with the most recent versions so we are confident that the most up to date information is worked on.

Even drawings can be uploaded on to the system. Historically these have been managed separately from other project documentation.

E-mails have always been hard to control which as you may appreciate potentially increases the risk to each project. All e-mails are now captured automatically within the ECM system which as with all documents means they become fully searchable and auditable. If documents should be required for legal reasons we are now entirely confident we have the ability to produce the information in the required timescales. This goes hand in hand with the Freedom of Information Act.

In addition, we have always struggled to capture and use "tacit" knowledge to the benefit of our business. What I mean by this, is the experience and expertise of our people. It's priceless. The ECM system allows us to identify common issues, subject matter experts and common authors allowing us to benefit from lessons learned and previous experience therefore embracing the Kier vision of Best Practice."

Q4. What are the biggest drivers for companies to adopt this technology in the future?

"Firstly, the explosion of information which has been compounded over recent years of modern electronic systems including e-mail which has created vast amounts of 'unstructured' data which needs to be managed. Secondly, the evolving contractual relationships we are experiencing with the construction industry have emphasised the need to partner, collaborate and share information in an open format. Finally, legal, legislative and compliance pressures, all of which require documents to be stored, managed and searched quickly and easily."

Q5. Any words of advice?

"Yes of course. I would definitely advise companies who are looking for a single solution, to consider all of the requirements very carefully. There are many products available in the market however while they may appear functional on the face of it, not all will be suitable. In truth very few were able to meet our full requirements within a single system. Also, buy-in has to be obtained from the top down; this was and will always be essential at Kier. And finally, don't underestimate the size of the task, this is not just an IT solution, it is a business solution."

To find out how Causeway
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