

Case Study: ACR Commercial Property

“Planet helps us ‘Wave the Flag’ for Facilities Management at ACR Commercial Property.”

Mark Smith,
ACR Commercial Property

ACR commercial property provides second-to-none facilities for shopping centres across the uk.

ACR Commercial Property is one of the most successful managing agents of retail property in the UK. Their vision is to be the most highly regarded property management company in the UK retail sector. To meet this vision, one aspect of its business is its reliance on its facilities management team to ensure that the assets within the retail shopping centres it manages are maintained properly. Faced with the prospect of a rapid increase in the number of shopping centres they manage, it became clear that they needed the best tools to help them manage the buildings more effectively and above all efficiently. Key to this strategy was the initiation of a facility Help Desk to manage the logging and resolution of reactive maintenance issues as soon as they came to light.

ACR Commercial Property chose Planet facilities management system for its advanced help desk functionality along with its flexibility and extensive reporting capabilities. Since deploying the system, ACR Commercial Property have seen a marked increase in the number of issues that are reported and resolved, and have increased their ability to manage and track the various contractors and agencies that perform planned maintenance and statutory checks of the site assets.

ACR Commercial Property, based out of Old Bond Street, London has seen their portfolio of managed shopping centres increase exponentially over the past few years. They provide a service uniquely focused in the retail market where complex ownership arrangements or extensive outside interested exist.

Their work is designed to deliver business performance, cost efficiency and increased profitability by maximising asset value and improving cash-flow. Clearly the efficient management of facilities through the Group Services technical team is essential to achieving these aims.

ACR’s portfolio of managed retail and leisure sites runs to around 20 – and continues to grow at a rapid rate. Their major partners include Standard Life and Merrill Lynch. Qube Global Software have supplied ACR Commercial Management with Planet for many of these locations and future plans include extending the system across further sites in the coming months.



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SOLUTION OVERVIEW

ACR Commercial Property

The property group with unique ideas and focused teams

Industry

Retail

Geographies

United Kingdom

Business Challenges

- Outdated systems limited the company's ability to provide a consistent, reactive service
- Paper-based maintenance inefficient and slow
- Requirement to maximise value of assets
- Need to increase visibility of services provided by facilities team.

Solution

Deployed Planet in various sites

Need to Improve Building Maintenance Response

Although ACR Commercial Property had installed and was using Planet at their flagship shopping centres, it was apparent to the management team that they could make more use of the system. In mid 2003, they appointed a new Assistant Group Services Technical Manager, Mark Smith, who came to the job with experience of Planet and lots of ideas to contribute. Mark had previously worked at Axima, running building services at Gatwick Airport's baggage handling centre. He quickly took Planet into a new orbit at the Churchill Square Shopping Centre in Brighton.

A number of issues were recognised as areas that the company could improve on. There was a slow and cumbersome paper trail of responsive maintenance jobs that resulted in a slow resolution of issues and meant that fewer jobs were reported in the first place. The process was time-consuming and offered no essential reporting information to ACR Commercial Property or Landlords. The management team knew that they were providing a good service, but were confident it could be improved. In addition they were determined to be able to clearly demonstrate the high quality of this facilities management service – essential to differentiating ACR Commercial Property from its competitors.

The Path to Perfection!

The first task was to improve the logging of reactive maintenance tasks. A help desk was established in the management offices to log all calls. This was accompanied by a drive to create a significant culture change amongst all the staff within the centres. All the staff are encouraged to note any maintenance issues as they moved around the centres. Security staff and duty managers are particularly involved in this aspect. As issues were identified the population of the database via the help desk took place.

Overnight security staff were trained in the use of Planet so that faults can be logged 24 hours a day and resolved immediately the next day. The result? Buildings were maintained to a higher standard and kept in a better state of repair. With millions of customers passing through each shopping centre every year, the quality of their surroundings is essential to ensure repeat visits are maintained. What gets logged? Everything! Broken doors, re-lamping, inactive lifts and escalators, graffiti, heating and promotional activity at each given Centre.

ACR Commercial Property uses contractors for planned and reactive repair of the assets. They collect their jobs from the system daily and make decisions about the order of resolution. It was essential for Mark Smith that the control and monitoring of the speed and quality of their work could still be managed effectively, but without the layers of bureaucracy. Planet has enabled Smith to easily monitor jobs and sign them off. The software has brought simple management control alongside staff empowerment.

The management of planned maintenance at the shopping centres with Planet installed has also visibly improved. Mark Smith is now able to use Planet to ensure the maintenance is carried out on time and is able to clearly demonstrate this through the management reporting Planet offers. Cost savings can be made combining maintenance visits on particular assets with repairs on others. Smith is also able to use the system as a diary for M&E – for the inspection of tenant premises, to track and plan for external inspections by Health and Safety, insurance companies and the buildings owners.

Fast Implementation of Planet

So successful has been the use of Planet in its contribution to the development of facilities management within ACR Commercial Property that Churchill Square Shopping Centre in Brighton has been established as a "Centre of Excellence" for the group. The business processes put in place there are now being mirrored by ACR Commercial Property across other centre.

Key to the success of Planet at each new site is a fast implementation with key asset data entered into the system as soon as possible. ACR Commercial Property and Planet work with Evolved Solutions who populate the system with data for each new implementation. ACR Commercial Property provide the asset list to Evolved Solutions who populate the system with locations and the asset register and enter in procedures for the maintenance of the assets. On completion of this process ACR then have a fully operating system, providing tangible benefits very quickly. Another key benefit is that management do not have to move internal staff away from other duties to perform this task over a longer period of time.

Business Challenges

- Demonstrably high asset maintenance standards
- Easy system means more jobs are raised and resolved quicker
- Comprehensive tracking and preparation for statutory inspections from external bodies
- Increased value of estate
- Whole organisation brought onboard and committed

Solution Components

- Structures and Management
- Help Desk
- Planned Maintenance



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Future Plans

ACR Commercial Property intends to gradually roll Planet out to all their shopping centres as well as expanding the use of the extensive functionality within Planet. Future plans include using the system for lifecycle reporting to help manage the financial and implementation planning for replacement of assets. Mark Smith also intends to build a digital library of assets and attach each image and maintenance instructions to the relevant asset within Planet.

Building in Value

Qube Global Software have worked closely with ACR Commercial Property with every new implementation of Planet. Smith is extremely complimentary about the support he gets from our customer services team in their roles of problem solvers, trainers and consultants. He also found the system to be extremely reliable.

Lasting Benefits

ACR are satisfied that they have managed to significantly improve their reactive maintenance, and control the planned maintenance in a way that has raised the profile of the facilities team. They can now clearly demonstrate their role in making a significant contribution towards the company achieving its objectives and have overseen an increase in the value of the portfolio they manage well above industry expectations.

And Smith is pretty happy too. "I'm in a great position – and much of the success is down to Planet" he said. Well, we think it was also due to his innovative, dynamic approach to the job and his experience in the FM industry – but we're happy to take some of the credit too!

Qube Global Software

Centennium House Pyrford Road
West Byfleet Surrey KT14 6LD
tel: +44 (0) 1932 334700 fax: +44 (0) 1932 355654
www.qubeglobal.com planet@qubeglobal.com

