

Case Study: RYDON PROPERTY MAINTENANCE



“These solutions were largely people and paper based which meant that they were prone to errors when processing information. They also weren’t particularly efficient; certainly not as good as we needed them to be.”

Jason Martin, IT Project Manager for RPML



RYDON GOES MOBILE WITH PLANET CMS AND COGNITO SOLUTION

Rydon Property Maintenance Ltd (RPML), part of the Rydon Group, provides facilities management services to a variety of clients, predominantly within the health and housing association sectors. The company is responsible for 33,000 tenanted units.

Operating from offices across South East England, the company provides a range of services, including planned preventative and repair maintenance, grounds maintenance and a 24-hour on-call breakdown service. Customers include Oxleas NHS Trust, Swale, Broomleigh, Downland & High Weald Housing Associations and several insurance companies.

A field force of some 100 RPML technicians and multiskilled trades people work under the direction of branch managers who process enquiries and plan works through Planet CMS, a repair service management system which has been operational throughout RPML’s offices since April 2003.

Developed and supported by Qube Global Software, Planet CMS, the forerunner to Planet FM Enterprise which was launched in 2005, enables maintenance companies to register all their customer sites and assets – for example, lifts, boilers and HVAC equipment - as well as schedule planned and reactive maintenance and repairs. It automates the generation of sales invoicing according to a set of user-defined charge rules which can be customised for each contract.

Jason Martin, IT Project Manager for RPML explains that prior to implementing Planet CMS, “We were using a number of manual and software application tools, none of which were proven to operate consistently across all areas of operation.

Once in place, Planet CMS greatly improved the company’s ability to log calls and allocate and plan work. However, RPML recognised the potential to generate even greater savings and productivity benefits by taking on a fully managed mobile data solution.

“The overriding business objective was to build a consistent approach to an appointment-led repairs service which would improve the customer’s expectation and experience of our services,” explains Jason.

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“Cognito’s track record was very strong and we could see how the company’s managed mobile solution would fit with our existing investment and systems. Cognito had also worked very successfully with Qube Global Software before which was obviously important to us.”

Jason Martin, IT Project
Manager for RPML

Reviewing its options, RPML resolved to find a mobile data solution that would help the company to achieve a number of business objectives: greater efficiencies, reduced costs, increased productivity, improved customer service and better management information.

Given the existing investment in Planet CMS, the new mobile data system needed to integrate seamlessly with the service management system. RPML also recognised that mobile telephones were no longer the answer – Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) would provide much greater functionality and a range of important tools for the mobile worker.

RPML decided to look for an appropriate supplier and shortlisted four companies for review. One of them was Cognito, which went on to secure the contract for RPML’s managed mobile data service.

Other factors in RPML’s decision included the fact that Cognito’s solution was a fully managed voice and data system.

Now in place, Planet CMS and the Cognito mobile data service has enabled RPML to extend its reach to field operatives, giving them real-time access to job information and other important data services, such as timesheets and inventory.

Transactions completed on the PDA are fully auditable, and stored on Planet CMS. The data entry screens are provided using Cognito’s Formsplus – a mobile device application which enables wireless data transactions to integrate office systems over GPRS via the Cognito service.



The Planet CMS and Cognito integration "... has enabled us to remove manual inputs at every stage of the work completion process," says Jason. "This frees up time for RPML office staff to focus on other areas of the business. It also means that we're moving to more of a paperless environment."

He continues: "The customer and asset data from Planet CMS is now available to field workers through their PDAs. Not only do we have greater visibility of their whereabouts and work schedule, but jobs can be allocated and closed down much faster." This has resulted in the operatives handling more jobs each day, reduced travel time, and enabled better appointment keeping.

Jason continues: "Our staff can now monitor and review the previous day's work every morning, where necessary creating follow on orders or advising clients of potential tenant recharges. KPIs are now up to date daily as the job 'completions' are in true time, updated from the operative's PDA. We are also able to conduct a Customer Satisfaction Survey within minutes of an operative leaving the property." As well as productivity gains, the integrated system has resulted in lower expenditure on fuel and phone calls, a reduction in overtime and less back office administration.

Jason concluded : "Overall, we envisage project payback within two years, but on top of this there is another feature which is about remaining competitive in our market place. " This service is now enabling us to provide levels of customer satisfaction that are unquestionably high. By keeping our existing customers happy and having at our disposal a truly effective enterprise-wide mobile data system, we expect to go on and secure further contracts."

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What is Planet?

Facilities management software which has been implemented in over 300 organisations across industry, commerce, NHS and the public sector. We focus on developing IT solutions that deliver real business benefits and provide the information that facilities managers and FM contractors need to optimize their operations.

If you need to divide your buildings, assets and staff into separate regions or client contracts, Planet simply and efficiently filters your data. Local users work only within the data of their assigned area whilst global users have access to all areas for centralised reporting, help desk functions and state-of-the-art mobile solutions.

Planet will enable you to:

- Provide a responsive facilities help desk
- Manage planned and reactive maintenance
- Keep control of your contractors
- Optimise your use of space
- Provide web-based facilities information to customers
- Ensure a safe working environment
- Quote and invoice clients
- Provide your workforce with mobile data tools



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