

Case Study: Serco Give the Green Light for Planet



“Planet offers the right balance between complexity and simplicity.”

Mike Wheatley, Serco

Serco Transport Technology Services selects Planet. Most of us take it for granted that the traffic lights on our daily commute into work will function correctly or that the emergency roadside telephones on the motorway will be working if we have the misfortune of breaking down. Serco’s Transport Technology Services division manages numerous major contracts all over UK that ensure that this technology is functioning 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, providing effective maintenance and repairs around the clock.

Mike Wheatley was responsible for implementing an asset management system within Serco Transport Technology Services. Initially, the system was to be implemented on two contracts – the Highways Agency being one of them; local government being the other – with a view to consequently implementing the system on other Serco contracts following the successful implementation on the first two.

Two key contracts

The Highways Agency contract covers the management of motorway technology for South and South West England incorporating CCTV cameras and motorway matrix signals for major motorways including the M4 and the M5; the other contract covers local government in the South West – looking after roadside technology such as pelican crossings and traffic lights across the region.

Planet

Serco Transport Technology Services had no comparable asset management system in place to manage the planned and reactive maintenance for this technology. However, it was apparent that a suitable system was required as a matter of priority. A system needed to be found – and implemented quickly. Serco had previously seen a demonstration of Planet software and believed that it was certainly capable of fulfilling their requirements as well as being user friendly. They approached Qube Global Software for a demonstration of the recently launched Planet, having asked them to confirm that the system was capable of meeting their specification.

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Serco had several key requirements of the system – one of which was the ability to store details of each contract separately yet hold all the information within the same central database. Planet, with its enterprise architecture and regionalised databases, offered the perfect solution. Data from different contracts or regions can be stored within Planet yet share common resources such as staff or spare parts and reports can be produced at a regional or global level.

Planning engineers' workload

Another requirement was the ability to manage the mobile workforce effectively. With a team of some 20 mobile engineers, Serco needed to be able to plan their workload and allocate jobs via handheld technology. They also needed to record relevant details in order to generate reports. Qube Global Software offered a mobile solution that could manage these requirements. After reviewing Planet in detail, Serco concluded that it offered “the right amount of functionality, usability and value for money”.

Tight deadlines

Qube Global Software was able to accommodate Serco's tight deadlines and the entire system was selected, implemented and live within 2 months. This included customised development work for fault forwarding software. Because of the Highways Agency's strict service level agreements, faults have to be logged and actioned within agreed response times. Specialist software now enables faults to be sent directly from the Police to the engineers' handheld units, ensuring that engineers receive notice of these jobs and can action them quickly.

Existing data

Serco had existing data that needed to be transferred across into Planet. Of the data transfer process, Mike commented “Data transfer from the old system into Planet was handled efficiently. The Excel spreadsheets you supplied made transferring data into the new system so easy”. The system was up and running in no time.

Managing a mobile workforce

Several months on, Serco is using Planet to manage their mobile workforce and the planned and reactive maintenance on both contracts. Each of Serco's engineers uses handheld technology to log faults and carry out repairs. Relevant data can be recorded via PDA directly into the system. As part of the Highways Agency contract, Serco is required to log each and every hour worked by its engineers and then submit a summary of this information. Planet has a sophisticated appointments scheduler which simplifies this process. All activity data is captured in real time increasing data accuracy and reducing administration workload of the engineer.

Maintaining roadside technology

Maintaining roadside technology involves routine maintenance and inspections as well as reactive maintenance – responding to faults within strict deadlines set by the Highways Agency. Planet's Planned Maintenance module has enabled Serco to set up PM schedules for several thousand assets ranging from weekly right through to 5-yearly. Data collected generates figures which aid Serco to plan future resource allocation and contract bidding procedures. All maintenance information is then stored for analysis.

Looking to the future

Serco is winning contracts all the time, opening up opportunities to roll Planet out across other regions of the UK. Mike is already increasing the number of engineers using the system over the next few months. Although still early days Mike believes that "Planet offers the right balance between complexity and simplicity."

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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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