

Case Study

Recruit Retail Services

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Recruit Retail Services turned to Cobweb for a robust communications and workflow system

Recruit Retail Services turned to cobweb solutions for a robust communications and workflow system. The implementation of cobweb's managed sharepoint services, a team working and collaboration solution, helps recruit retail to track and manage large merchandising and quality control projects and provides a means to collaborate over the internet.

1 Customer Profile

Industry	: Retail
Business Start Date	: 1986
Number of Employees	: 60 Full-time & 1000 Temporary
Services with Cobweb	: SharePoint Services

The company has implemented Cobweb's Managed SharePoint Services, a team working and collaboration solution, to help track and manage large merchandising and quality control

projects for the likes of B&Q, Homebase, Sainsbury's and Tesco. Project managers, store managers and Recruit Retail Services staff can access a secure extranet to view, in detail, how a project (e.g.: store opening or nationwide introduction of a new product range) is progressing and obtain information on the project staff involved. It also provides a means to collaborate over the Internet on confidential reports.

Headquartered in Northampton, Recruit Retail Services has 60 full-time staff, and often manages up to 1000 temporary staff simultaneously to handle the nationwide rollout of projects. Managing this large number of staff and projects required a secure and flexible collaboration solution. Recruit Retail Services Plc provides a UK-wide network of highly specialised teams offering project management, merchandising, shop fitting and reverse logistics services to major retailers and suppliers up and down the country. It also supplies staff to retailers in Ireland and the Channel Islands.

With its highly skilled in-house team, Recruit Retail Services has the capability to meet the exacting needs of its clients; from managing new store openings, closures and refits from inception to completion, to ad hoc range reviews, changes, and regular merchandising calls to provide a complete managed solution.

2 The Challenge

Recruit Retail Services and B&Q creating a project completion form which was placed on a dedicated B&Q extranet site. To obtain final sign-off, store team leaders would then call a special phone number with an automated message repeating the questions on the website.

Requiring only 'yes' and 'no' responses, the information would be retrieved by Recruit Retail Services staff, updated on their systems on a daily basis, and where necessary compiled as a report. Whilst this system worked well in terms of confirming if a project was completed or not, it was very time and labour intensive and did not provide specific details on the projects for later review. The 'yes/no' system also failed to capture detailed problems. This meant if problems occurred, or conversely if a method of working was particularly effective, this could not be easily communicated and shared amongst project managers.

As Recruit Retail Services business grew and more clients meant more extranet sites were required,

Recruit Retail Services realised the need for a more effective and versatile collaboration solution in order to provide a superior service to its customers.

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3 The Solution

Silversands, a company involved in the delivery of content to the B&Q extranet customer site, and a Cobweb partner, recommended Cobweb as the company to handle the hosting and management of Recruit Retail Services project management and collaboration extranet sites.

Recruit Retail Services currently has six Managed SharePoint Services sites, hosted by Cobweb Solutions. These include B&Q, Tesco, ICI, Trade Depot (a concept B&Q store), Laser Key (a B&Q franchise) and an internal Recruit Retail Services site. Whilst most are used for merchandising projects, the Tesco site is also used for staff time keeping and management issues. Using Managed SharePoint Services for staff time keeping means Recruit Retail Services can be confident that it is supplying reliable staff.

With Cobweb's Managed SharePoint Services solution, Recruit Retail Services is now able to manage projects in greater detail and more efficiently. A dedicated call centre takes calls 24 hours a day from project managers and field coordinators, and updates are made on each extranet in real-time.

Steve Dunn, IT and Communications Coordinator at Recruit Retail Services comments, "Since we have been working with Cobweb, our customer service levels have improved dramatically. The Managed SharePoint Services solution provides great versatility and allows all members of our project teams to instantly see how a project is progressing. The ability to view historical data is proving invaluable too as we can see what problems happened along the way, and address them to ensure this doesn't happen again."

Cobweb's Managed SharePoint Services solution is helping Recruit Retail Services and its customers save money by drastically reducing the number of phone calls and emails required to coordinate activities. Communication takes place in real-time online with the sites accessible from any location, at any time. Each customer has its own dedicated site, accessible only by those given individual logon credentials, providing a completely secure environment in which management can liaise, particularly on confidential issues.

The solution is incredibly flexible and when Laser Key required dedicated site to facilitate an urgent project, this was set-up within just a couple of hours. As a result productivity and effectiveness has increased within Recruit Retail Services and within the customer's stores.

Adrian Bleach, Planning and Scheduling Manager for B&Q adds, "Whilst we were happy with the service we were provided with by Recruit Retail Services previously, the new Managed SharePoint Services based solution allows our projects to run smoothly and we can see what is happening at all times. It is a truly effective means for instantly spotting and highlighting issues that may have previously gone unnoticed."

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