How Allied Bakeries discovered assyst, the perfect IT recipe

The Challenge

The company's existing Help Desk tool was found to be unsatisfactory in terms of functionality and a lack of management information. It did not have an integrated Change Management module, which the management team considered a priority.

Building bridges between the existing Help Desk system and the in-house asset database was cumbersome and it was determined that it was not an ideal solution for Allied Bakeries.

The Solution

When Dave Rowland joined Allied Bakeries from another senior IT role with a leading automotive parts manufacturer, it did not take him long to realize that a new integrated IT Service Management solution was essential.

He chose the product, assyst, was already successfully in use at two of Allied Bakeries' sister companies, while it also had been voted the UK's top ITSM software vendor three times in a row by the Help Desk Institute (HDI).

According to Rowland and Hashmi, the new solution rapidly yielded huge benefits for the company and its staff.

Monitoring of external hardware maintenance contractors has improved radically. Rowland estimates that the annual cost of one major third-party maintenance contract was trimmed by 10 percent attributed to the system's ability to identify obsolete equipment which no longer needed to be covered.

Attention can be drawn to an asset or group of assets that have caused particular problems, allowing IT management to work out the true Total Cost of Ownership.

Buying a more expensive PC with a longer warranty can be more cost-effective in the long run than purchasing a model which initially costs less, because maintenance and other support charges are lower.

About Allied Bakeries

Allied Bakeries commands one-third of the UK's bread market, baking some of Britain's most popular brands such as Kingsmill, Allinson and Sunblest. It also provides a wide range of morning goods, rolls and partbaked bread for bake-off in retail stores.

Allied Bakeries, one of the country's top EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) users, delivers to 16,000 stores once, and sometimes twice, daily.

Incidents are linked to assets as well as users, so a history of each asset can be built. "The key to effective Incident Management is that we can now log the call properly by logging it against the asset as well as the user," Rowland says. "When the call is logged the Service Desk not only has the user's details, but also all the machine details, including what software it contains."

Further cost savings are achieved because assyst keeps track of software installed on computers and ensures that the company does not buy more licenses than it needs.

Another major advantage of assyst is the compilation of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) including the monitoring of Service Level Agreements (SLAs). "The business wants to see what is happening, acknowledge trends and get a sense of whether things are working properly," Rowland comments. assyst offers a number of graphical reports, including key data such as Calls by Asset Type and Third-party. These reports go to the senior management team, while a sub-set is sent to the board members. "There is a lot more visibility into the kinds of problems we experience than before, therefore we can now take action accordingly," Rowland says. Trends are analyzed and management can focus on the major issues.

> We were looking for a flexible system which encompassed all our activities and tied them to Asset Management. Realistically, we wouldn't have been able to do that without assyst.

Dave Rowland
Head of IT Infrastructure

The Benefits

"The biggest benefit for them is the way assyst works – it is much easier to track the calls and understand their status, whether they are about to breach an SLA or are waiting for someone to do something," Rowland says. "Before, if you assigned a call to a supplier, you did not know you had assigned it unless you went and looked at the call. There has been a tremendous improvement in efficiency." When staff logs calls, they can spot any discrepancy in the asset database and can make a correction immediately.

Status on critical issues such as main server failure is e-mailed automatically to senior managers' mobile phones via a Short Messaging System (SMS) gateway.

"The staff has taken to assyst well because it is easy to use," he adds.

Customers are happier because communication has improved; they automatically receive an e-mail when they log a call and again when the Incident has been closed.

Summary

- Increased visibility of IT infrastructure.

- Introduction of integrated Change Management.

- Monitoring of hardware maintenance leading to reduced costs.

- SLAs can be effectively monitored leading to better value.

- Compilation of Key Performance Indicators for effective Trend Analysis.

- Improved communication resulting in increased staff satisfaction.

Find out more

Further information, e-mail info@ifs.com, contact your local IFS office or visit our web site, ifs.com