



Case Study Wessex Water

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...You need AGRASSO





Wessex Water benefitting from business system

Businesses today face constant pressure to increase efficiency but achieving that can depend on the quality of the information an organisation has about its operations and performance.

Wessex Water is one company which is starting to reap the rewards of a £750,000 investment in a fully integrated web enabled business information system covering its core functions from finance to fixed assets, project management and requisitioning through to human resources and payroll.

The company, which provides water to 500,000 properties and deals with waste from 2.5 million people across 10,000 sq.km of the south west of England, chose the AGRESSO Business World system in 2001 as part of a programme to replace all its mainframe based applications.

Information

Steve Long, Wessex water's Agresso project manager, said: "The critical drivers when we were selecting a replacement finance package was for it to provide much better management information and flexible reporting."

Wessex Water has a strong focus on e-enabling its core business functions so web enablement was another key issue. Long said: "We have a lot of non office based people and we wanted them to be able to submit timesheets and expenses remotely and to requisition goods from on site."

The system also needed to be easy to use because Wessex Water wanted to push information out into the business to help it devolve responsibility downwards and away from central administrative functions.

During the implementation Wessex Water soon realised that AGRESSO went far beyond the finance function. The breadth of the system and the tight integration between modules, meant the company could move towards having a single system which met the vast majority of its business analysis needs with interfaces to its specialist applications such as customer billing.

As a result Wessex Water continues to roll AGRESSO out to other parts of the business. There are already some 800 people within the company who use the system, ranging from site workers logging timesheets to managers for reporting and the finance, procurement and payments teams. With the implementation of web requisitioning and then web HR later in 2003 all 1,500 employees will have some access to the system.

AGRESSO has quickly become so embedded at the heart of Wessex Water's operations that when the company was looking to replace its HR and payroll system early in 2003 it did not even evaluate any other system. As Long said: "If AGRESSO has the functionality, it would need a very strong business case to go outside it."

Benefits

According to Wessex Water, the most significant and visible difference since its implementation of AGRESSO Business World is the quality and breadth of management information available which is easy to retrieve, drill down to get the detail and report against.

"Flexibility of reporting has made life a great deal easier. The way AGRESSO is structured means you can hold any information you like within the system and get it out very easily. Managers are largely self sufficient and pass far fewer enquiries back to finance"



"AGRESSO is invaluable because it's allowed us to restructure the company whenever required without losing any data or the ability to use information"

The result is much tighter financial control. Wessex Water can now analyse, for example, the precise cost of operating each of its sites against any criteria from the cost of the assets to the cost of running any individual piece of equipment.

Long explained: "When an incident comes into the call centre involving say a burst main, a job number is raised against which all time and material costs are logged. That information is fed into AGRESSO and the manager can review who worked on the job, for how long and what parts were used or ordered."

Flexible

AGRESSO has a unique architecture designed to make the system as flexible as possible and allow it to be changed quickly and easily, as often as needed.

Lee Derrick added: "AGRESSO has been invaluable because it's allowed us to restructure the company whenever required without losing any of the data or the ability to use the information. For example, if we want, for comparison purposes, we're able to report against both the new and previous structures by using AGRESSO's data trees."

AGRESSO has also enabled the company to achieve a difficult balancing act between maximising profits for its Malaysian owners, YTL, while still complying with the industry's regulator OFWAT which limits both the amount of profit the company is allowed to make and what it can charge.

"That would be almost impossible to achieve without access to the right information which allows us to make the right decisions at the right time" said Derrick.

In addition, the flexibility of AGRESSO has helped to significantly reduce the time taken to produce the large



"AGRESSO has turned what was a very long-winded process into a straightforward one"

Lee Derrick, Wessex Water's senior management accountant, said: "The flexibility of reporting has made life a great deal easier. The way AGRESSO is structured with relations and attributes means you can hold any information you like within the system and, more importantly, get it out very easily. This means managers are largely self sufficient and pass far fewer enquiries back to finance."

Wessex Water has around 400 different specialist systems from major ones which run the incident room to minor applications managing the company's mobile phones. The company has built interfaces to feed any financial information held in those systems into AGRESSO so that it has one set of figures and one version of the truth.

number of bespoke reports required by OFWAT. Derrick explained: "We are very highly regulated and have to produce a separate set of reports and financial accounts for OFWAT with different headings and groupings. AGRESSO has turned what was a very long-winded process into a straightforward one."

Requisitions

Wessex Water has a £150 million per annum capital expenditure programme to maintain and improve its complex water distribution and treatment network and AGRESSO is a key element in helping it manage, track and control its expenditure.

The company already maps requisitions using AGRESSO but the introduction of web requisitioning is expected to create a quicker and more controlled way of purchasing as well as save time and money.

Wessex Water has set up an electronic catalogue in AGRESSO of around 8,000 products from pipes and wellington boots to digital cameras and consumables. The requisition will be entered over the web and passed electronically to the requisition desk to check and source and to the relevant manager for approval. The order will then be sent back to the requisitioner who is responsible for logging a goods received number on delivery which will be matched against the invoice and the payment processed.

Long said: "This will make the whole purchasing process much slicker. Passing control back to the requisitioner will cut errors because they have an interest in using the right codes and inputting their goods received numbers. It will equally reduce the number of parts or goods which are ordered wrongly."

It will also enable the company again to keep tighter control. "Managers will now be able to track quickly and in

detail who has bought what, when and why" said Derrick. "Prior to AGRESSO there would simply have been a lump sum logged monthly, for example as protective clothing, with no breakdown available."

Ownership

Wessex Water decided to take ownership of AGRESSO from the outset and has set the system up and done the majority of development work in-house with support from Agresso.

Long said: "We felt it was very important that we had control and make the system work the way we need it to. Because Agresso believes in transferring knowledge we've been able to develop a partnership approach, using their engineers for specific technical support and to help us get the best out of the system."



Wessex Water technical information

- › Server Operating System = Microsoft Windows 2003 / 2000 / NT4 / Solaris 8 / Red Hat Linux 7
- › Server architectures used to host RDBMS = Windows / Unix / Linux
- › XML Web Services have been implemented using Microsoft .NET development platform
- › RDBMS = Microsoft SQL Server, Progress, Oracle
- › Client Operating System environments = Microsoft Windows XP / 2000 / NT4 / 98

“Managers will now be able to track quickly and in detail who has bought what, when and why.”

AGRESSO was chosen from an initial shortlist of eight European vendors after detailed evaluation involving a team of users from all the company's operational areas.

“If you're going to get the buy-in from the people who will use the system, you need their input from the outset” commented Long.

Wessex Water took the opportunity to change a lot of its work processes when it set AGRESSO up to get maximum benefit from the system's capabilities.

Long explained: “The business wanted a very high level of reporting from the system and to get the detailed management information we had to do a lot of new coding and restructure the chart of accounts.”

According to Long, the culture change has been remarkable: “The managers are asking for this level of detail and because they see the benefits they are helping to drive through the changes in the way we work. People are taking responsibility and are far more involved and accountable”, he said.

The sense of the whole business owning the information that is held in

AGRESSO is maintained by regular review meetings between Wessex Water's IT department and its user group. The forum is used to find out what the users want from the system, what IT can deliver and by when and, in turn, what everyone's responsibilities are to make it all work.

Future

Wessex Water is a dynamic company and a dynamic user of AGRESSO. Initially a finance project, the system has been growing ever since it was implemented in January 2002 and, said Long, there's a lot more to come: “Web requisitioning will be a good test and web HR should make a major difference. The employees have a much greater interest than an administrator in keeping their own personal details up to date, entering absences and holidays correctly and booking training courses.”

The company is also facing far reaching consequences as a result of changing competition legislation which will open up additional new markets across the UK.

“The level and quality of the business information we have will be critical in

enabling the company to make the right decisions and take real advantage of the expansion and diversification opportunities,” concluded Derrick.

Benefits

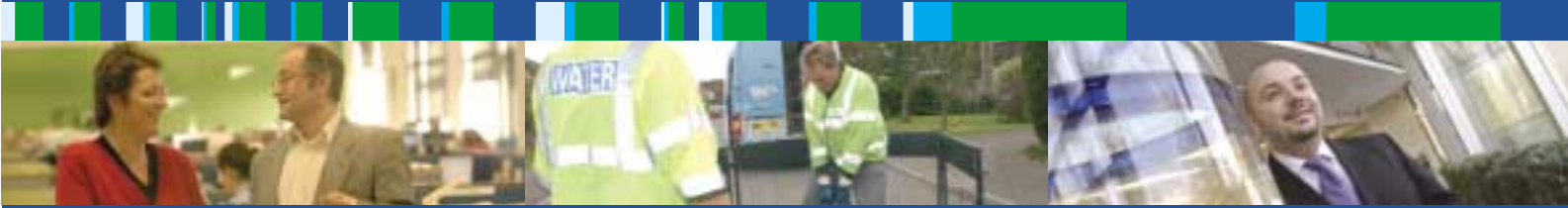
- › Having information that is easy to retrieve, drill down to and get the detail and report against
- › Much tighter financial control
- › One set of figures, providing one version of the truth
- › Significantly reduce the time taken to produce the large number of bespoke reports required by OFWAT
- › Make the whole purchasing process much slicker in both time and errors made
- › Enable managers to be largely self sufficient, so passing fewer enquiries back to finance.

Every day more organisations are discovering the Agresso advantage.

Organisations like Wessex Water, Halcrow, AEA Technology, and Logica Plc are using our business information system to empower their people to perform more effectively.

For fast accurate information delivery with the ability to change with your organisation, AGRESSO Business World is the fully integrated e-business system for successful organisations world wide.





AGRESSO Business World – turning business information into an advantage

AGRESSO Business World

includes Financials, Project Costing
and Billing, Procurement,
Human Resources, Payroll,
Resource Planning and
Information Management.

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