

Case Study

SPD CAD Services

Delivery Partner



Background

Founded in 2009, SPD CAD Services is a telecommunications design consultancy based in Liverpool, Merseyside. In their 15 years of trading, they have established themselves as one of the country's leading telecommunications design consultancies. Working closely with their customers, their professional staff continuously strive for quality and efficiency in this fast-paced industry.

They provide a "one-stop-shop" for Tier 1 Cellular Network providers, including EE, O2, Vodafone and Three, with services such as:

- Site Surveys including EMF scans
- Computer-Aided Design
- Utilities Services
- Structural Analysis
- Civil Engineering Services
- Electrical Design

These services help to identify and install Cellular Network Infrastructure Civil Assets, primarily Telecommunications Masts and associated services and equipment.

Challenge

The company faced challenges associated with the digitalisation of several processes, including job workflow, information transparency, job costing, invoicing, and the management of future business growth.

SPD have a mix of physical and digital documents, receiving information and data, including job/site specifications, in an array of formats from their clients. Therefore, the company wanted to consolidate this information into a cloud-based location to enable transparency and easy access to all required job data and related documentation.

The company has also investigated the use of popular CRM tools, such as Salesforce and Monday.com, but concluded that these are too complex and unsuitable for their type of workflow.

Currently, the company utilise Microsoft 365 packages, including Excel to manage the progress of projects. However, customer billing and invoicing is managed via a standalone Sage product, but with no integration or interface with other systems or project and job data.

SPD were interested in exploring how they could implement digital tools to improve the following:

- Workflow management of jobs
- Workflow Status (automated flags of deviations and variances from schedules and progress)
- Improved transparency of job timescales and schedule control
- Progress monitoring
- Universal real-time access to all job data and documentation
- Workflow mapping

Solution

The Horizons team at LJMU worked with the SPD to analyse the existing workflow management processes and create a realistic mapping of job progress and workflow, from initial meetings through to the conclusive hand-over meeting.

Following the initial analysis, diagnostics and detailed discussions, a Site Design Process Flowchart and Invoice Process Flowchart were created.

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The teams also investigated the options for integrating an Application Programming Interface (API) with their Sage Line 50 accounting system to improve and streamline the creation of invoices and management process.

Discussions took place concerning the best routes for undertaking research and the development of an application to measure and design the radiation profile for a particular mast tower location to accurately meet IKNA Radiation Protection requirements.

Impact

Following significant research into potential solutions, the Horizons teams demonstrated the Swiftcase Workflow Management System to SPD. This will enable the company to add AI capabilities to the analysis of data, offering real-time reporting with extensive API capabilities for integrating with additional systems, such as the company's existing Sage accounting system.

The Swiftcase Application can offer the type of workflow process management system SPD initially wanted to invest in for increasing productivity by automating day-to-day tasks and operations. By providing automated tracking of job scheduling, progress and the production of financial tasks, accurate reporting can become integrated into their current systems, including Sage and Microsoft 365.

By introducing these bespoke and digital solutions, SPD predict a cost saving and minimum 20% rate improvement in productivity by reducing non-value activities.

SPD have now identified potential solution providers to significantly improve their growing ability to manage and control their job workflow and associated financial processes. These will see tasks such as invoicing become better integrated with their existing accounting system whilst meeting their functionality and affordability requirements.

The Horizons teams at LJMU have also committed to supporting SPD to develop the Cellular Communications Tower Radiation Application whilst investigating potential funding options such as a UKRI-funded KTP.

“Working with Horizons team at LJMU offered us an opportunity to tap into a wider network of businesses that could help our needs with a more focused and streamlined approach. We consolidated our ideas around workflow and discussed in detail how these could be improved, taking into consideration common issues. With ongoing support, we have started to develop ideas that may enhance our current model and keep ourselves ahead of the competition using new technology.”

- SPD CAD Services

