

Case Study

Penny Lane Builders

Background

Penny Lane Builders (PLB) is a well-established contractor, specialising in repairs and refurbishment for social housing. As a reliable partner for housing associations throughout the Liverpool City Region, Penny Lane Builders sought to modernise its internal processes, boost customer engagement, and leverage data more effectively to facilitate informed decision-making and enhance service delivery.

Challenge

Penny Lane Builders faced operational challenges that affected productivity and communication across their various sites, including office staff and housing partners. To tackle these issues, Penny Lane Builders partnered with the Horizons team at LJMU to complete an internal assessment, developing a roadmap for their bespoke digital transformation project.

The LJMU teams identified several critical challenges that could significantly impact business efficiency and effectiveness.

Delivery Partner



Ineffective customer communication can lead to delays in project timelines, which ultimately impacts client satisfaction rates and business reputation.

The company was also demonstrating a reliance on manual scheduling, which is not only time-consuming but can also increase the likelihood of errors and inefficiencies, potentially resulting in costly project delays.

Additionally, limited automation of in-house databases can hinder the company's ability to quickly access and update essential information, slowing down decision-making processes. The lack of focused data insights prevents businesses from leveraging valuable information to make strategic decisions, putting them at a competitive disadvantage.

Solution

The Horizons team undertook a detailed review of Penny Lane Builders' operational processes, digital systems, and existing use of their social housing trackers and software platforms. This analysis identified clear opportunities to streamline communication, automate routine tasks, and integrate AI-driven tools into daily workflows.

The operational process review involved mapping current workflows to identify bottlenecks and areas where digital tools could enhance efficiency and reduce manual effort. A demonstration of AI and automation tools showcased AI-driven scheduling, automated reporting, and workflow automation solutions, aiming to modernise void management and planned works processes.

An AI implementation roadmap was then developed in collaboration with Penny Lane Builders staff, providing a step-by-step guide for integrating digital tools into customer communication, scheduling, and reporting functions.

Additionally, practical guidance and demonstrations were provided to enhance digital capability, helping employees build confidence in adopting new technologies while improving operational consistency and transparency.

Impact

The collaboration has enabled Penny Lane Builders to evolve into a more digitally capable and data-driven organisation, delivering tangible improvements across their operations and client services.

The implementation of automated workflows will not only reduce administrative tasks but also enable staff to concentrate on higher-value activities. This results in more efficient scheduling, faster turnaround times, and enhanced service quality.

Additionally, stronger data insights to aid decision-making and planning will support the business in streamlining processes with confidence, preparing the teams for greater readiness for ongoing digital innovation.

Overall, the programme has positioned Penny Lane Builders for sustained growth, enhanced service delivery, and long-term digital resilience within the social housing sector.