

IFS Partner Case Study

Clancy Docwra brings business systems into the 21st century with IFS

Clancy Docwra, a leading national utility and construction company based in the UK, has overhauled its business IT systems to improve visibility and increase efficiency with the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) suite IFS.



In 2008 Clancy Docwra embarked on an extensive overhaul of its operational systems, utilising IFS' broad product portfolio and industry expertise to implement a new ERP application capable of delivering twenty-first century business results.

The challenge: pressing requirements for data integration

In 2007, Clancy Docwra found itself operating with approximately 30 legacy business systems, all processing separate business functions and divisions. This was the effect of a series of acquisitions and growth prior to the amalgamation of M J Clancy & Sons, R.E. Docwra, Rees Pipeline Services and Westwick Construction into the single company, Clancy Docwra Limited, in 2001. The potential of technology to streamline business practices was becoming increasingly clear to the construction company, and when Nikki Charles joined as Group Information Services Manager, she identified many issues that she felt could be addressed by an ERP system.

"The complex evolution of Clancy Docwra, from its roots in the 1950's as a small construction company in Wembley to an industry-leading national business, meant that by 2007 the company was relying on an amalgamation of legacy systems unable to communicate fully with each other," explained Nikki. "We had a litany of spreadsheets filled with duplicated, outdated or inaccessible data, the existing finance system was at the end of its lifecycle, and simple management reports were taking seven weeks to finalise, meaning we were always playing catch-up."

About Clancy Docwra

Originally formed in London in 1958, Clancy Docwra Ltd is well established as one of the UK's leading national construction companies. It operates principally in the utility, transportation, power and infrastructure sectors, and now directly employs over 1,800 staff. With offices throughout the UK, from Livingston in Scotland to Longham in the South of England, the company has a strong base in the water sector, as well as a significant presence in the gas, electricity, rail, highways, new build and refurbishment sectors.

Mobile capacity becomes a must

Another pressing problem area for Clancy Docwra was that it had no foundation to develop mobile technology. “Increasingly, we were finding that existing clients and new business prospects wanted to see evidence of mobile technology in the company. This ability fast became a must-have, and we realised we quickly needed the right platform in place that would enable full integration with the business. This would increase job productivity and help us to become more efficient. For instance, we could support field workers better by allowing them to raise jobs, re-order stock and make other updates that feed into the main business system, progressing work activity without having to wait until coming back to the office. For these reasons, it became evident that we would struggle to maintain the company’s growth without the right platform to enable a mobile capability,” acknowledged Nikki.

The IFS system allowed for the most user-friendly configuration of data and was the most intuitive, allaying any fears regarding usability and adoption.

Nikki Charles, Group Information Services
Manager, Clancy Docwra

The tender process: finding the best fitting solution

Soon after joining Clancy Docwra, Nikki produced a business case for ERP, focusing on the need for increased visibility across the multi-sited business and the potential cost savings of streamlined processes. Having implemented an ERP solution in her previous employment, Nikki knew what she wanted from a provider: “I was looking for full integration to eliminate the inefficient use of data Clancy Docwra was experiencing, and I wanted a system that would provide a single view across the business. Essentially, we wanted one system to hold all of the business’s data and that everyone had access to: no more nightmares looking for the most recent client contact details in the office, and no stock control surprises after a worker returns from a week on the road.”

Clancy Docwra approached four ERP providers and invited IFS to tender on the basis of IFS’ simplicity and modular design. Nikki confirmed: “After careful deliberation, we selected IFS as Clancy Docwra’s ERP provider.



IFS offered an out-of-the-box solution that we could run with, where we didn't need to change any functionality, without being too niche or overly complex. What's more, with a new ERP system proving a big step-change for the business, we wanted to ensure the implementation would be as smooth as possible and ensure the ease of use of the system. The IFS system allowed for the most user-friendly configuration of data and was the most intuitive, allaying any fears regarding usability and adoption."

The IFS solution: an extensive implementation

To replace existing legacy systems, Clancy Docwra contracted IFS to undertake an entire overhaul of its operational systems. In April 2008, the two companies embarked on a significant project to create a standard ERP system capable of bringing visibility and integration to Clancy Docwra's sites across the country. Currently, it is running the IFS document management application, plus modules for mobile, finance, procurement, sub-contract, stock inventory, service management, training and development, HR and payroll. In addition, the construction company has been involved in workshops to assist in the development of a plant-hire module, and is also in the process of rolling out further project management applications, case management and Risk Management.

"The modular implementation of IFS has enabled the business to function throughout the project implementation. Having a modular system means our legacy systems can be replaced one by one instead of taking a big bang approach, which can be disruptive to business. It also means we can add more modules as the business evolves," said Matt Mussell, Financial Director. "And with regards to Clancy Docwra's employees and the roll-out, we found that once we addressed the cultural change of a new business system, the implementation could run smoothly and effectively."

Matt goes on, "we agreed that this would be a Business Change Programme, not an IS-led project and as such we have an Operations associate director leading with support from an external Implementation Manager. This has enabled us to engage our users in a more proactive way"

The benefits: productivity, visibility, and cost efficiency

Now that full implementation is nearing completion, Clancy Docwra is already realising tangible benefits from using IFS. These are, primarily, increased job productivity, enhanced visibility, and measurable cost efficiency. Nikki cited the example of mobile fitters to illustrate improved productivity:

Benefits

- Increased job productivity
- Enhanced visibility
- Measurable cost efficiency
- New mobile capabilities to support field workers
- Controlling and monitoring subcontracting activity



“The IFS system provides the platform we need to develop and integrate other technology to support our field workers. Our mobile fitters, for instance, are now equipped with digital pens and software that integrates with the IFS system. We can now centrally raise tasks, such as necessary repairs to plant, and delegate them directly to our staff out on the roads who work to maintain the fleet.

“Using the mobile capabilities IFS has enabled, these mobile fitters can then report back to the office immediately with details of the task status and stock inventory updates. Fitters can be out on the road for a week at a time, so before the implementation of the IFS mobile infrastructure, paperwork was regularly delayed in reaching the office, or even lost.”

In terms of improved visibility, Nikki commented: “Following our operations overhaul with IFS, Clancy Docwra now have access to comprehensive reporting options which has certainly been a big plus for us.”

Furthermore, Clancy Docwra expects tangible benefits once the project management (job scheduling) and plant-hire modules go live. The business has had a plant-hire division since 1968, and with the imminent introduction of IFS’ newly created module, the company is looking forward to increasing visibility and productivity, plus identifiable financial benefits. “The plant hire module will enable us to run searches for the items that our teams most regularly hire,” said Mike Revell, Clancy Plant Hire Director, “and therefore the plant department will be able to put forward business cases for plant purchases instead. The module will enable integration of a wide range of plant information, from hiring schedules and return dates to legislative requirement checks and maintenance reminders. This full visibility will benefit contract managers, the plant team, and the wider business as a whole, on both financial and planning levels.”

In addition, Clancy Docwra has been able to streamline back office processes as a result of increased data intelligence. Matt continues, “With immediate access to data across the business, the processing time for management accounts has been dramatically reduced from seven to three weeks. Ultimately, the operational overhaul has enabled us to resource more efficiently; IFS has brought Clancy Docwra’s business processes and reporting systems up to date.”

Continuing development

The extensive IFS implementation is scheduled to finish in August 2011. Clancy Docwra has determined its strategy for continuing its solid business growth, and Seamus Keogh, Chief Operating Officer believes that the business now has the operational infrastructure in place to action it. “From our current position, Clancy Docwra is well placed to expand into new areas and continue our steady growth. Once the final functions, such as the plant hire module and project management (job scheduling) are up and running, Clancy Docwra will have integrated all of its business assets into the IFS solution, offering us unparalleled integration and future opportunities.”

Find out more

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

