

IBM and Kelros design perfect software solution for Lodge Cottrell



Prompted by a change of ownership, Lodge Cottrell – a leading international designer, supplier and installer of large-scale industrial air pollution control equipment – decided to revise its IT strategy across the company.

The company has its centre of technology in Birmingham, and operates internationally through a network of associates, partners, agents and licensees and has installed more than 4,500 air pollution plants worldwide. The nature of its business means that the company has relatively few customers and hundreds of suppliers – almost the reverse of a traditional business model – and this requires a rather unconventional IT structure.

Overview

Customer challenge

Lodge Cottrell had been successfully using IBM's Lotus Notes® version 6 software but, prompted by a change of ownership, was seeking a far more advanced system capable of supporting its rapidly-changing business model. In addition, the system had to be capable of integrating a specialist accounting package from a third-party supplier.

Solution

Kelros Professional Services installed, configured, and implemented bespoke IBM Lotus technology providing a single end-to-end business support process.

The solution included Domino® Collaboration Express, Domino Designer, Sametime® Authorised User, Lotus Enterprise Integrator®, Quickr™, Lotus 8.01, and a full-function relationship management solution

Customer benefits

- Direct communication with remote workers.
- Historical data, drawings and documents available on demand by customers and employees.
- Central storage of emails by project.
- Greater scalability.
- Simplicity of use.

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– John Westbury, IT Manager, Lodge Cottrell

Built on



offerings



Lodge Cottrell had been successfully using IBM's Lotus Notes (version 6) software as a compulsory element of the previous owner's legacy system, but was now looking for a far more advanced system capable of supporting its rapidly-changing business model.

The company was seeking a five-tier system which would integrate customer relations; supplier relations; proposal management; project management; and accounts. In particular, the system had to be capable of integrating a specialist accounting package from a third-party supplier.

During a highly focused nine-month search, Lodge Cottrell explored the marketplace for providers of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, also comparing the full range of suppliers providing integrated offerings, and even considered writing some bridging applications in Visual Basic over SQL.

Collaborative workflow applications

IBM Premier Business Partner Kelros provided information on the full range of IBM's Lotus technology solutions, and demonstrated the benefits of Lotus's integrated collaborative workflow applications on version 7.

Lodge Cottrell's IT Manager John Westbury, says: "We were under no obligation to remain with Lotus Notes but we discovered that although the other products we investigated were customisable they were not configurable enough for our special needs.

"What we wanted was a system that would enable our employees to share information to deliver consistent, efficient customer services, and that's what the IBM solution could provide us.

"In addition, we were extremely keen to control all our leads, names, addresses and sales information from one central location, with the capacity to create and track correspondence, and record documents and conversations.

"Notes version 7 system certainly ticked all the boxes, and that's when we decided to go full steam ahead with the IBM product range – and take advantage not only of Lotus Notes, but also of Sametime and the Quickr system – in fact the complete package."

Kelros Professional Services installed, configured, and implemented bespoke IBM Lotus technology, providing Lodge Cottrell with a single end-to-end business support process. The solution included Domino Collaboration Express, Domino Designer, Sametime Authorised User, Lotus Enterprise Integrator, Quickr, Lotus 8.01 and a full-function relationship management solution.

Westbury says: "We were not just buying a piece of software, we wanted to develop a long-term plan and we were seeking a company that would provide support and consultancy over the coming years.

"We chose the IBM/Kelros partnership because of their flexibility and highly-developed, shrink-wrapped, out-of-the-box applications."

On demand system

Adopting the IBM/Kelros solution has proved to be an outstanding success for Lodge Cottrell.

More than 40% of the company's employees work in remote locations such as Kazakhstan, and the solution is enabling the company to communicate directly with these remote workers for the first time.

Information on all the company's projects is now easily accessible via the new customer database, and the central storage facility enables remote workers to access all emails relating to specific projects, rather than having them stored only in individual's mailfiles.

Westbury says: "I think that the key benefit of the new IBM version 7 solution is collaboration. Prior to this, most communications were made via telephone conversations or by emails with attachments. Our remote users could not access any of our suppliers' information, or customer details, and this was less than ideal, as we are an extremely customer- and supplier-focused company."

Lodge Cottrell's projects also rely heavily on historical data, drawings and associated documents and – as a direct result of the new system – data is now easily accessed by employees and customers, on demand.

"Data is only useful if it's timely and relevant," adds Westbury. "You can get to the situation where you might have all the data in the world but, if you can't access it, then it's absolutely no use to you."

Step-by-step

Westbury adds: "It's really important in any type of IT strategic move to adopt a step-by-step approach. And working with IBM's software allows us to develop the database systems, and introduce the hardware and software systems, at the right pace to suit our strategy.

"We're on the first step of our journey and, with IBM, we can fine-tune our systems to meet any eventuality that we face."

Lodge Cottrell will shortly be introducing the final phase of Sametime which will provide audio and visual conferencing to further enhance the infrastructure of its internal communication.

Westbury concludes: "We recently installed a brand new email server built on IBM technology, and in under four hours we took the old one off line, put the new one online, and it all worked beautifully.

"I'm extremely impressed, both with IBM's software and with the quality of Kelros' consultancy. It's a perfect partnership!"

For more information

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– John Westbury, IT Manager, Lodge Cottrell



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