



customer case study

response

“Many types of pests, rodents for example, require up to three visits by our technicians. The technicians therefore need to be able to quickly access information about previous visits so they can arrange follow-up appointments without delay. Previously, this process was taking far too long, now with the Formic-Xerox solution the information is available instantly, so we can provide a more responsive and pro-active service.”

Trevor Court, Customer Services Manager, Manchester City Council.

solutions in action with Manchester City Council

Manchester City Council's Environmental Health Department is an enforcement agency in food hygiene, health and safety and pollution. In addition, it is responsible for the pest control unit, which deals with infestations of ants, wasps, mice and other vermin. The council's pest control technicians generate hundreds of job sheets a day, the details of which have to be manually keyed into a database by office staff. With each form taking up to five minutes to input, the task created over seven man hours of work every day and resulted in a growing backlog in peak season.

The Need

To eliminate the backlog and help create effective and up-to-date reports, Manchester City Council identified a need to automate its forms processing. The information would be used to update the Geographical Information System, identify problem hotspots and lead to more effective resource planning. The council also required instant access to previous job sheets, so that subsequent visits could be arranged without delay and response times improved.

"The backlog of paperwork was starting to impact our ability to respond to pest control demands. Keeping our records up-to-date was an uphill battle. Without up-to-date data, it's virtually impossible to accurately pinpoint geographic hotspots or plan resources effectively."

Trevor Court, Customer Services Manager, Manchester City Council.

The Solution

Manchester City Council chose an integrated solution comprising multi-function scanning, faxing, printing and copying devices from Xerox, combined with software and services from UK data capture specialist, Formic. The networked Xerox Document Centres are used to scan new job sheets at the end of each day, while the integrated Formic software suite automatically reads and processes the data before feeding it into a bespoke Microsoft Access database and Geographical Information System, from which various analysis reports can be generated.

In addition, Formic's software is being used to design a new, improved job sheet for collecting customer visit information. Each time a customer visit is scheduled, a unique two-sided job sheet will be printed out. The form will include the customer's details and individual reference number, assessment and treatment information from any previous visits, a unique job reference number, and job details specific to that visit with tick boxes relevant to the particular type of pest problem reported by the customer.

The two companies, Formic and Xerox were able to offer me a complete solution that does exactly what I want. Plus, as they are working together, as a single vendor, it alleviates the service issues one encounters when dealing with several separate suppliers.

Trevor Court, Customer Services Manager, Manchester City Council.

The Result

The goal of the pest control unit is for more than 90% of forms to be automatically processed on the day they are completed. Those requiring manual corrections will be edited the following morning; virtually eliminating the backlog and freeing up administrative staff to work on more immediate tasks. The new system ensures that analysis reports now contain the latest, up-to-date and accurate information. The department can, for example, monitor the performance levels of individual officers, the types of services requested and pinpoint areas receiving most visits. This allows the council to plan their resources more effectively and identify problem hotspots and their underlying causes. Job sheets from previous visits are now instantly accessible and follow-up appointments can be arranged without delay. The result is a pro-active department, managing demand and providing a more responsive service to customers.

The system will also help in assessing the potential risks from rodent poisons. Rodenticide data collected by technicians will be automatically printed on follow-up job sheets, minimising the amount of reassessment work necessary and helping the Council to investigate any poison-related accidents or complaints that may occur.

"We are very excited to be pioneering this new system. It will not only help us to enhance staff efficiency and customer service, but will also improve the way important data is documented."

Dave Oldbury, Environmental Health Services Group Manager, Manchester City Council.

Manchester City Council plans to extend use of the combined Formic-Xerox solution to other areas within the pest control service, as well as implementing it in other departments.

Customer details

Trevor Court

Customer Services Manager,
Manchester City Council

Formic user since

2002

Main benefits gained

- Up-to-date and accurate analysis reports
- Pro-active and responsive customer service
- Reduction in manual data entry
- Reassignment of staff to more immediate tasks
- Elimination of forms backlog
- Improved monitoring of performance levels
- More effective resource planning
- Less duplication of effort on repeat visits
- Ability to identify problem hotspots and underlying causes
- More effective investigation of poison-related accidents

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