



More products, less time, fewer mistakes, more sales

Customer Profile

The client, RS Components, is a high service level electronic and electromechanical distributor that supplies a wide range of products to customers around the world. RS Components employs more than 5,500 employees across the world with an operating revenue of £877.5m. E-commerce accounts for over 33% of the company's sales enabled by websites in 17 languages across 70 countries. Their current product portfolio consists of over 350,000 products.

The Challenge

With their product portfolio growing rapidly, RS Components needed to reduce the time taken to bring new products to market. To achieve this target, they needed to reduce data entry errors, allow staff to have greater visibility of their workload, and help managers to identify bottlenecks at a glance.

The Solution

Crimson were approached by RS to implement a solution. Beginning with the rationalisation of the user's requirements and following a review of their current systems Crimson tailored a SharePoint solution to suit the business needs.

Initially Crimson produced a Proof of Concept which demonstrated what SharePoint would be able to deliver in the client's environment. The agreed solution allowed Product Managers to upload data into a custom SharePoint list using a custom Web Part. A clear diagram illustrated the path the product took through 8 different departments. The IT solution was based around the diagram and allowed staff and managers to easily visualise and identify bottlenecks in the business process. A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were built that allowed Business Managers to gain an overview of the progress of each product.

Managers could 'drill down' into the data to ascertain bottlenecks in the system when necessary and, using SharePoint, enable them to see their team workloads at a glance.

James Farquhar, Enabling Applications Manager commented: "Speeding up New Product Introduction is a key strategic focus for RS Components and an area that Group IS were asked to get involved with to quickly improve productivity. The Crimson team quickly got up to speed with the business processes and understood the key areas that needed to be addressed – visibility and the ability to collaboratively work on product introductions in parallel rather than sequentially. Their high level of engagement with the business users established buy-in early on and ensured that pragmatic decisions were made collectively rather than imposed later in the project. The iterative build approach based on the MOSS platform meant that value was delivered to all 8 involved departments in a matter of weeks rather than the months that would have been required of a solution built from the ground up."

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