



Case Study

Business Solution Company Information

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Solution group	Business Solutions
Solution offering	Web Application
Project name or title	iHub MetroSigns

Client profile

Client name	MetroSigns
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City, state, ZIP Code	Melbourne VIC 3076
Phone number	03 94221200
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Web site address	www.metrosigns.com.au

Industry	Manufacturing
Number of employees	35

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Client Company profile

MetroSigns was established in 1991 and is a well respected quality signage manufacturer supplying and installing all forms of signage to the Australian and New Zealand Corporate Business Sector.

At MetroSigns, their dynamic team of designers, engineers and craftsmen create and maintain a vast array of powerful signage that communicates effectively right around the clock.

Corporations rely on their expertise to project manage the entire process - from design, manufacture, electrical engineering and permit approval - through to installation and maintenance of the finest quality illuminated signs.

Determined to provide the highest standards in their industry, they have accreditation to the international standard ISO9002 and authorisation to use the prestigious Quality Assurance mark.

You are invited to visit www.metrosigns.com.au to learn more about this dynamic company.

Business situation

MetroSigns had numerous manual systems and processes that were not providing the quality and accuracy of information required to more efficiently manage and enhance the business.

This was reinforced in 2011 when the incremental growth the business was experiencing highlighted that there was a need to replace the existing project / form based management system and manual processes in the business with a solution that would provide both up to date information and reporting and give Management real time information to make informed decisions on.

A review of the business identified 5 key areas that needed to be rectified / enhanced and they were as follows;

1. Shift and Job Time Tracking
 - Timecards were completed manually and personnel were able to enter any shift start and end times and allocate work time to any project. On top of the time required for manual entry, this required a large administration overhead in additional time for the office personnel to sit down daily with the Factory Foreman to clarify information manually entered and correct where necessary.
2. Inventory usage was captured on an 'ad hoc' basis
 - Inventory information was regularly only 60-70% correct requiring stock takes to be carried out on a monthly basis to correct the financial records. On top of the additional time spent performing stock takes, excess inventory was required to be ordered and stocked to ensure availability.
3. Staff productivity was unable to be accurately measured
 - Due to the manual time entry, an environment existed where it was easy to expend unnecessary additional overtime hours on jobs and staffing levels / requirements were not able to be forecast.
4. Manufacturing costs vs Budget unknown until job completion
 - Management did not have the information available to them on a daily basis to manage each project within budget. It was difficult to manage variations in scope and customer's expectations. The Estimating area were unable to readily identify specific operational areas that had exceeded their budgeted time or costs.

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5. Weekly Work in Progress (WIP) meetings, required to discuss all facets of every job
 - Representatives from each area of the company were required to meet each week to review every area of every job. WIP meetings were very reactive and planning was difficult as information was not available until in the meeting. This resulted in delays in activities being undertaken and incurred a large administration overhead.

MetroSigns uses MYOB as their financial system and this meets their requirements so there was no need to replace the functionality provided by MYOB as part of the review.

MetroSigns evaluated a number of “off the shelf” applications against their requirements only to find that these applications would not provide the desired results, or would require MetroSigns to modify a large part of their own business processes to allow them to function. The majority of the applications would also require Capital Investment in infrastructure to operate them and ongoing licensing costs for the software.

Solution

With many years of business experience Huxxer worked with MetroSigns to map out their business processes, enabling the design, development and implementation of a Web Based Application tailored to meet their requirements and address the areas of concern.

With the Business Processes documented Huxxer provided a fixed price quote and commenced development of iHub MetroSigns. Using their Agile framework Huxxer is able to perform Rapid Application Development and Deployment, bringing solutions to fruition exponentially faster than other organisations, allowing their customers to realize greater returns on investment.



Being Web based iHub MetroSigns is accessible from any device and location with internet coverage, with multi-level user access enabling users to only access areas applicable or allocated to them. It is hosted in the cloud and as such does not require additional infrastructure.

Following the business processes from initiation through to completion, it is a task based application, meaning that when a user logs in they are informed of the number of tasks / activities they are required to perform based on their department and role. Every job is tracked and only proceeds once personnel have completed the tasks required from them. This allows visibility and reporting of the status of a job in real time.



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The implementation of Tablet technology meant that Huxxer was able to implement terminals in the production facility, allowing MetroSigns personnel to “Clock on”, “Clock off” request leave and Allocate time / materials to specific departments / tasks in jobs in real time.



iHub MetroSigns is built on an open platform enabling modifications / enhancements to be easily and quickly implemented, without incurring application downtime.

Benefits

- ‘Tablet Technology’ is also used in the production area allowing individual personnel to select the Start / Finish time for each the job they are to work on together with selecting the budgeted Materials that they have used whilst carrying out the work. Daily reports provide job specific labour and material information for inputting into MYOB.
 - *Estimated time saved in above tasks 8-10 man hours per week.*
- Performance to the Labour and Material budgets prepared for all jobs is easily managed by way of a live ‘Dashboard’ and ‘Summary Reports’ allowing management flexibility in managing costs.
- Information now available has enabled Staff Productivity to be better managed.
 - *Achieved reduction of 3 x FTE, throughput increased with productivity consistently running at 85%+.*
- Scheduling for both manufacture and installation of jobs carried out with ‘Calendar’ providing live information.
 - *Job completion information able to be accurately communicated to clients.*
- With the production personnel using the ‘Tablet Technology’ to clock in and clock out daily accurate up to date reports are available from the system as and when required removing the requirement for administration personnel to spend unproductive time clarifying handwritten information.
 - *Ease of use by employees enabling correct pay and employee advocacy on implementation.*
- Live reports available provide information for management on the state of all jobs allowing decisions to be proactive and removing the need for costly weekly staff meetings.
 - *Meetings now held for targeted small groups saving an estimated 15 man hours per week.*
- More efficient tracking of stock usage, removing the requirement to order and carry excess stock and the reduction of the amount of adhoc stock takes required.
 - *20 - 25% reduction in inventory held with emphasis on ‘Just in Time’ purchasing.*
- Ability to effectively set, track and manage sales budgets and targets.
 - *KPI performance measurement.*
- ‘iHub MetroSigns’ live information is available to management at any time when out of office.
 - *Stakeholders have complete visibility of the business from anywhere in the world.*