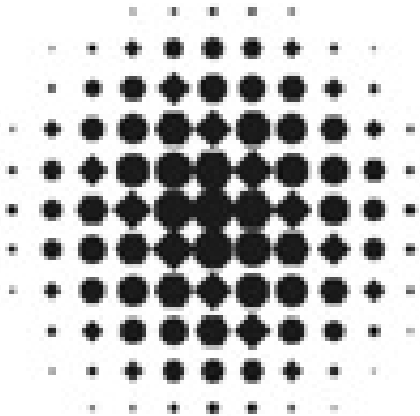


Wales Millennium Centre



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Background

Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff is a national cultural hub, which opened in 2004 and attracts nearly 1.5 million visitors every year. As home of eight other arts organisations, including the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Welsh National Opera and National Dance Company Wales, the Centre is a state-of-the-art complex that houses six performance spaces, as well as retail, exhibition and eating spaces – an estate that represents 35,000m² of property.

In 2008, as part of its 50-year asset strategy, the Centre decided to embark on an ambitious CAFM project that would help it to achieve its goal of understanding how its assets can be prioritised in a scientific manner for replacement, and to assess their potential lifecycles.

“We previously had a Help Desk system in place, a very basic IT system on which we ran our PPMs and reactive tasks, which we adapted when we brought our FM service provision in-house three years after opening,” explains Tony Jay, Deputy Director, Venue Operations.

“It did the job, but it didn’t meet the criteria set out in our strategy. In fact, our journey to CAFM started during an asset management meeting with our Financial Director, who asked how we knew when assets needed replacing and what their lifecycle was. I had to admit that we had no idea! And that led to the creation of a shopping list of requirements – asset management, PPMs, health and safety compliance – all that a CAFM system would enable us to meet.

“As we are partly publicly funded for an element of asset replacement, we had to ensure the system and processes

would be credible and robust. We’d never tested the market. All we knew was that we didn’t need a multi-site system. And as we whittled the possibilities down, we concluded that while all CAFM systems can essentially do the same basic things, what mattered to us was the degree to which we would be supported by the supplier.”

An initial shortlist of six suppliers was reduced to two key contenders. Following extensive visits to operational sites, FSI’s Concept Evolution™ was chosen as the platform for the Centre’s asset management strategy. The potential for a strong working partnership between the Centre and FSI was central to the decision, which was confirmed in April 2010.

“The main requirements were cost, IT functionality, ease of use, support and the potential forming of ‘true’ relationships,” says Tony. “FSI showed that they hadn’t just taken our requirements to heart, they had added value to them and really understood our business needs. They produced a detailed specification, which covered all the key aspects of maintenance and support.

“We knew our budget and there was a phase of protracted negotiation. But we also knew that we wanted a mutually beneficial partnership with the eventual supplier of a system that was so important to our priority of managing and controlling our assets.”

The Challenge

An original timeline of one year for implementation was set. But it soon became clear that the system’s versatility and features would also allow the Centre to refine and develop its requirements. In essence, the project would continue to be ‘live’ and constantly updated.

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“It took a while for us to sift through our requirements before we could build a schedule with FSI,” says Tony. “We had to populate the database with all the correct buildings information, transfer our PPMs from the old system, add soft services and develop a reporting strategy for asset overheads and running costs. Also, as an ISO 14001-accredited organisation, we need Concept™ to help us manage our environmental law compliance. In other words, from the start, we were looking to extend the breadth of the system.”

The Centre initially installed Concept Evolution™ with the reports and stores modules. The reports module is used for running KPIs and printing job cards.

Concept™ now actively manages all the Centre’s FM-related hard and soft services for reactive and planned works. It is integrated into the Centre’s capital asset process and used as an environmental management non-conformance log.

It was important that the project did not detract from the day-to-day operations of the small FM team. Working closely with the IT and Finance departments was essential. The Centre also recruited a dedicated CAFM project leader, Dean Gorman, who received Concept™ training at FSI’s Upminster offices and quickly got up to speed on managing the system.

“The challenges were met by cross-party working – in particular with regard to capital asset management,” says Tony. “Our finance team had important input, basically setting the priorities and goals relating to key introduction elements for the system. And we have a superb IT team, very proactive and forward thinking. It was great to get that level of internal support.”

Concept Evolution™ went live with the Help Desk on 10th October 2010, while the PPMs followed in April 2011. Jobs are now sent direct to the reactive technician’s PDA, and all the Centre’s customers have access to the system via the Help Desk.

The Centre is currently extending the system to manage its stage equipment. It is also looking to expand the system with new modules including integrated services, projects and workflow, with upgrades to Concept Reach™ (a light, web-based interface for non-FM specialist users) and Concept Connect™ (FSI’s sub-contractor interface) anticipated in the near future.

“Our relationship with FSI can be viewed as positive and proactive,” says Tony. “We attend Concept™ user group meetings and Tune in to FM seminars, both of which add

value to our business. Work continues between us as routine, to refine and extend our use of the system. And where there have been teething problems, FSI has always worked effectively to solve them.”

The Benefits

Wales Millennium Centre’s use of Concept™ is still at an embryonic stage compared with what it can achieve in the long term, according to Tony. But already a number of key business benefits are being realised.

“Having a robust and creditable process of asset management – which is also auditable – while understanding true life costs was a primary goal, and we are constantly moving towards that,” says Tony. “We don’t have a full asset repository yet but it is being built all the time. In addition, our KPIs have allowed us to ascertain labour and plant efficiencies and report on plant condition, and we are currently working on improving our commercial processes, such as services to bodies producing income streams.”

If any of the seven arts organisations that occupy the Centre wants to know how much of the FM cost is attributable to them, Concept™ can produce an instant report – something that would have been impossible before. With reactive jobs now passing directly to the technician’s PDA, the Centre has also seen a significant improvement in its six-monthly customer satisfaction survey.

“When you’re publicly funded, it’s very important that you demonstrate non-waste and efficiency across the FM spectrum. We take a risk-based approach to FM and we have to make sure we comply with SFG20 Maintenance Schedules,” says Tony.

“From the financial point of view, in terms of cost overheads, the building is the biggest risk we have, so Concept™ is an essential element of our asset management strategy.

“We also need to make sure our PPMs all meet the legislative requirements. And we’re audited externally on our Capital Asset Management. Thanks to Concept™, our auditors can see that we have process and control in our FM moderation.

“We wanted to put in a system that would allow us, when something goes wrong, to demonstrate and measure the industry standards that we’ve been working to – and we can with Concept™. We’re leading the way in a lot of these aspects and we’re pushing all the time for improvements that will help us deliver our strategy.”

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