

Macro



Background

Macro is a leading facilities management company with a strong presence in the Middle East. The company has a wide range of clients in the region within the following industries: oil & gas, banking, government agencies, residential, retail and commercial.

Many of these clients benefit from the company's market-leading help desk, which saves them the expense and overheads of an in-house solution and gives them access to a comprehensive set of managed maintenance and buildings services.

Macro has been a long-time user of FSI's Concept 500™ enterprise-level CAFM platform but in 2009 the company upgraded it to Concept Evolution™, the web-enabled version of the market-leading software, which has attracted a strong customer base throughout the Gulf region.

"As good as the Concept 500™ was, we needed something fully web-based, which would suit our centralised help desk model and give all our sites access to the system and reports," says Imran Akram, Director of Help Desk at Macro's Dubai office.

"It also had to be easy to deploy, and straightforward for training our staff and contractors. We've always had a very good relationship with FSI and our positive experience with Concept™ meant the upgrade to Evolution™ made perfect sense."

The upgrade was implemented in 2010, with close collaboration between Macro and FSI to ensure that the system would deliver a number of benefits in addition to basic CAFM usage, many of them specific to the needs of individual clients.

The Challenge

The biggest challenge of the implementation, according to Imran, was the collation and capture of data from such a diverse portfolio of properties and assets.

"We engaged with FSI in terms of how we wanted the system to work, but the only way to get the data was to visit the sites and see how the assets were working in their locations," he explains. "It got to the point where we weren't getting the feedback from the sites, so we had to physically go and walk around the buildings and gather the data electronically, so we could enter it in the system, link the assets and log the jobs."

This logistical exercise was crucial to the success of the project, which was focused on the creation of a centralised system that would remove a traditional reliance on hoards of manually-stored data and thousands of PPM job cards at individual sites, which were easily lost in transit.

"Basically, you have to work backwards when you're implementing a CAFM system in this way," says Imran. "Establish what you want to get out of it, then determine how the data is to be configured and loaded. Don't underestimate this data gathering process! Make sure the correct templates are completed, and allocate proper responsibility for tasks. Then, once you are up and running, keep monitoring it so if the goalposts move – which they will, because what a client needs next month or next year might be different – the system can accommodate the change. Don't leave it until someone shouts."

In terms of delivery, Concept Evolution™ was tailored to provide Macro with a standard base system to manage reactive maintenance, define service levels to monitor the performance of contractors who complete outsourced tasks, compile client asset registers and schedule maintenance.

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“On top of what you call ‘normal’ CAFM usage, we have clients with particular requirements,” says Imran. “For example, one of Macro’s clients had a manual room booking service, which was inefficient. We installed the Concept™ room booking module and rolled it out to them with client log-on access – so the system gives us different ways to add value for the client.

“In many of our residential clients’ properties, we are often responsible for maintaining common areas, as well as individual apartments and villas. Following the upgrade to Evolution™ we are using the system’s Resource Planner module to manage this side of the business. From the help desk point of view, it is efficient and means we can schedule a job as soon as we get a call.”

The Benefits

“Macro has worked closely with FSI to make sure the new system and modules have been deployed to maximum effect, both internally and for contractor management,” says Imran. “The use of Concept’s™ workflow module is a good example of how well the software supplier/customer relationship has worked in this case.”

“FSI has done a lot to help us use workflow to make our operation more efficient,” he adds. “We’ve been able to create business processes which allow us to alternate services if an emergency call comes in. And every morning we send a report to the manager at each site to tell them which jobs are still pending. It just makes the process more efficient.

“We don’t do the work ourselves; we outsource to service providers. So Concept Evolution™ allows us to monitor their performance according to pre-determined service levels. It gives us all the information we need to be able to tell them how well they are doing – or to invoke penalties. It’s a wonderful tool.”

Imran says that as a supplier, FSI has always treated Macro as an organisation that wants to get the best out of the system.

“Even when things go wrong, they are always on hand with remote access to identify and correct the problem,” he says. “And they are exceptionally good in terms of providing us with the latest versions of the software, which means we are always at the leading edge of what can be achieved.”

The next step, he says, is to start making more proactive use of the system’s financial aspects to gather information about asset values, lifespan and depreciation values.

“This isn’t something that clients are demanding but it gives us the ability to know, at any given time, the operating cost of an asset,” explains Imran. “So when we are scoping another project, we can say exactly what the cost will be over a period of time. The majority of facilities management companies don’t actually make commercial use of this aspect of CAFM, so we could really use it to get a run on our competitors.”

Imran also expects to expand and make better use of the Concept™ stock module to help control the usage of materials and link them to specific tasks. Again, this will help Macro to build a picture of supply consumption that will allow it to estimate costs and make procurement efficiencies more effectively.

“Concept Evolution™ isn’t currently integrated with our Coda financial package but we are looking to pursue that so that we can flow financial information between the two systems,” says Imran.

“The goal is to identify cost centres and apply cost codes that will allow us to enter values in the system to fix budgets – giving us real-time financial information. In the long run, Concept isn’t just about operational monitoring. It’s also about the financial monitoring of the assets that are the focus of our services.”

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