Background

BSkyB is the UK’s largest independent broadcast operation, supplying a constantly evolving range of programmes, channels and services to a customer-base of more than eight million people – one in every three households throughout the UK and Ireland. Beyond that, its content reaches a global audience via a network of cable and satellite partners.

Sky currently carries almost 600 television and audio channels on its platform. In a truly multimedia world, its programmes and services are accessed through television, broadband, portable wireless audio and telephony. It continues to push the boundaries of home entertainment delivery with its broadband services and innovations like Sky HD (High Definition), which provides customers with a cinema-like audio/visual experience in their own homes.

Sky content – everything from films, drama and documentaries to news and sport – is broadcast from its studios in London. Sky premises in the UK are run and operated by some 9000+ staff and supported by more than 1500 other employees and engineers in the field.

As Martin Wright, customer services manager for Sky’s FM operation explains, there is nothing mysterious about maintaining broadcasting premises. “We might have studios and edit suites in addition to office space and warehousing that are more typical for the general FM services customer, but the demands are basically the same,” he says. “They still have floors and walls that need repairing, Meeting rooms still need to be booked, and they still have to be managed like any other business of property.”

Challenge

Sky recently decided to re-evaluate its use of Computer Aided Facilities Management (CAFM). With 17 buildings in West London – including more than 10 studios – as well as its Scottish premises, the company operates two FM customer service centres for its employees. There could be anything up to 5000 people on site on any given working day, and any one of them might have reason to contact the help desk about building maintenance heating, air con or cleaning issues.
“The product we were using wasn’t really delivering in the way we wanted,” explains Martin. “We run a small help desk and it was just generating standard reports for faults and buildings management. We started to look at upgrading to a software package that could take us to the next level and link in with other potential modules: property and real estate management, for example, moves and space planning, and room booking."

After careful and extensive research, Sky chose FSI’s Concept™ 500 CAFM system. “We liked the look of the product, and the way it was flexible and modular,” says Martin. “It clearly had the capacity to expand from the standard help desk implementation into the other areas we wanted to automate, which have tended to be run in isolation, on manual and paper-based systems. We wanted to invest in a single product that could potentially handle them all.”

Solution

Sky installed Concept™ 500 in May 2006, and Martin says the benefits soon became clear.

“As soon as the customer was able to log straight on and request an action, we started to see what a difference the automated response would make,” he says. “If anybody has a problem anywhere on site – whether it’s a light bulb that needs replacing or a damaged door – they log their request, and the job is emailed to our business partners who proceed to carry out the repair, fix or maintenance task."

The main challenge for Martin and his team was to make sure that everyone who needed training in the new system received it, and that the FM operation’s business partners were fully engaged in the project and supported it through the rollout process.

“Rollout was deliberately phased,” he continues. “We didn’t want to risk a big bang implementation. Our job is to try and fix our customers’ problems as quickly and efficiently as possible, and Concept™ 500 was procured to make the help desk agents’ and our lives easier, and to improve our customer service. And that’s what it’s done.

“In terms of customer delivery, they know exactly when a task has been logged. They can see the job number and they can follow it right through to completion. The system gives us far more meaningful information about what is going on across the site as far as buildings, plant and equipment are concerned. And we’ve certainly scored some points with our customers thanks to the automated response. It should help to raise the profile of FM as we look at exploiting additional modules.”

Martin says the next phase will take advantage of the room-booking module. “We currently have a rather bland access database and we’d like to enable that in Concept™ with its self-help and self-monitoring capabilities so that our customers benefit from another layer of automation,” he adds.

Martin says the project has benefited greatly from FSI’s levels of support and the supplier’s understanding of Sky’s business requirements.

“FSI did carry out some customisation for us. But we didn’t want to change very much about the system: despite the nature of our business, our buildings maintenance and management needs are very similar to other FM operations! “It’s fair to say that FSI have assisted us with anything we’ve wanted, when we’ve asked for help. They’ve been more than willing to listen to us and I’m pleased about that – it was one of the reasons we decided to work with them in the first place. We got on well with our first point of contact, and that’s always a key test. Those are the important questions: Can you work with these people? Do you like them? Do they understand exactly how your business works? The answer on all fronts was, “Yes,” and we’ve continued to make very good progress from that point.”