

# Case Study



## Background

Lakesmere is a building envelope specialist based in Winchester providing a design, installation and management service for roofs, walls and glazing systems. With a host of industry awards under its belt, Lakesmere's projects include Heathrow Airport's new T2a terminal building and the London Olympics Aquatic Centre. The company's current turnover is in the region of £50 million and, with over 200 members of staff spread across 20 offices at any one time, the need for organised information is paramount.

### Company

Lakesmere

### Business

Specialist Contractor

### Number of staff

210

### Solution

Union Square for Construction

## Problem

During an office refurbishment Lakesmere was forced to clear out an entire room full of paper and it became obvious that greater control of documentation was required. It was estimated that processing paper documents was costing the business between £300,000 and £400,000 each year, at a time when the industry was starting to shift from paper based to electronic communication. Lakesmere knew it needed to cut out the inefficiencies in its processes and find a better solution better solution to not only reduce time and cost but allow increased control.

## Solution

Lakesmere began the search for a document management system that would eliminate much of its paper handling and integrate core databases with the company's existing finance system. Many systems on the market were perceived to be glorified filing systems, that failed to offer the required level of integration with contact and project databases, but this changed when Lakesmere was introduced to Union Square for Construction.

Union Square for Construction provides businesses with a central point of access to contacts, enquiries, projects and documents and can integrate with existing systems and databases. Increased management control and a reduction in administrative activities generate time and cost savings as well as increasing the efficiency of the organisation.

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## Implementation

To ensure a smooth transition, Lakesmere employed an IMS Manager to oversee the implementation of the project and ensure minimum disruption to other employees. Lakesmere also appointed a Business Systems Trainer to ensure everyone was up to speed with the system from day one and to maximise the system's use across the business.



Initial implementation focused on providing all staff with a central access point for contacts, enquiries, projects and documents. Once this was all up and running the business continued to develop the system to address the specific needs of its different departments. The Skills and Training module, now offered to all Union Square clients, was pioneered by Lakesmere, saving weeks previously spent compiling qualification and skills reports for audits. Key people at Lakesmere are able to see a training matrix, showing at a glance who holds what qualification and when they expire, ensuring everyone has the necessary qualifications for their role.

## Benefits

Some of the benefits Lakesmere has realised since implementing Union Square:

- **Improved quality** – transforming Lakesmere's non-conformance procedures from a paper based process that took weeks to complete to the instant submission of NCRs that are stored centrally and can't get lost.
- **Greater control of assets** – providing a full asset register that tracks everything from mobile phone and vehicle allocation to the cost and return dates of plant hire.
- **Reduced risk** – enforcing standard streamlined operating procedures across all areas of the business.
- **Reduced costs** – eliminating the requirement for paper documentation and administrative support has generated savings of hundreds of thousands of pounds each year.
- **One single view** – providing access to business systems regardless of the user's location to ensure:
  - a central enquiry and tender management function showing all future regional, national and international opportunities.
  - streamlined resource utilisation and management leading to increased performance and profitability.
  - the ability to track all correspondence and communication from initial contact through to final account.
  - better project management through simplified invoicing and site diaries detailing attendance.

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## A Q&A with Robert Stearne, Business Improvement Manager

### How has Union Square helped growth or added value?

When we implemented Union Square in 2004 we had a turnover of around £18 million and now we're up to around £50 million. It's also enabled us to expand internationally much more quickly and easily than we would have been able to without the system. As a sub-contractor we are regularly audited by main contractors. They are always impressed with our level of organisation and our rigorous quality systems.



### Are there any new ways of working?

I would say that 99% of our documentation is electronic, saving us large sums of money. We've also had some bespoke development work carried out to link the Union Square site diary to a hand scanner so we know exactly who is where and when.

### What challenges did you face along the way?

Implementing the system across all users provided a challenge, particularly getting access on site. This was mainly down to the nature of IT infrastructure in general rather than Union Square. We also appointed our Business Systems Trainer to ensure all of our employees were adequately trained.

### What was the main reason for choosing Union Square over other products?

Union Square is market leading and fully construction focused. Also, the database structure was able to integrate with our existing finance system – something which pays great dividends.

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