WHY DIGITAL TOOLS DELIVER GREAT RESULTS FOR FACILITIES MANAGEMENT COMPANY PROFIX

Becoming a data driven business has streamlined internal business processes and enhanced customer experience at Profix Maintenance Services, a Cork based provider of maintenance services to commercial clients.

"We're a problem solver for facilities management," explains founder Stephen Hartnett.

"Our background is in building maintenance but we've established ourselves so that if any of our clients come into work in the morning and have any problem related to their building or facilities management, whether it's to move, build, fix, to provide access or help in any emergency situations they call Profix. There is nothing our team can't do in relation to buildings."

To maximise its service offering, Profix needs good systems internally. Increasingly that means digital.

"When we started out in 2007 we were not digitally savvy," says Hartnett. "I did everything in pen and paper because I'm just not tech savvy at all. It was only when I was put

in touch with a digital mentor through my Local Enterprise Office that everything changed."

DON'T LOSE TIME, OR MONEY

Hartnett's digital journey started with a desire to improve the way job hours were collected and analysed. If hours aren't captured, they can't be billed for, to the detriment of any business.

Hartnett had looked at a number of off-the-shelf job hours solutions but couldn't find one that suited Profix's business model.

Working with his digital mentor introduced by his Local Enterprise Office he devised a mobile data collection system that works perfectly for his business. "It has had a massive impact on our business. We now know exactly how long each job takes which helps us with job efficiency analysis and scheduling too," he explains.

The introduction of a digital note app now allows Hartnett to collect job details and generate work instructions with ease. All job details can be taken using a mobile phone, including photos taken and annotated, which are distributed as a work

instruction," he explains. He also introduced a web-based communications app which allows the team to significantly reduce phone calls and emails, plus a web-based quotes tracking system which has improved quotes process efficiency.

FASTER, EASIER AND MORE PROFESSIONAL

"Our most recent project involved converting our surveying system from Excel and paper to a web-based system which allows us to complete our site surveys on mobile phones. The workflow is all handled online. It's faster, easier to use and provides more professional reports for our clients," he adds.

The new time sheet app is particularly useful. "We are on the go all the time, in different places. Previously sometimes the guys would only be getting to do their hours at 10pm at night," he says. With the new system, the risk of billable hours being lost through human error has been minimised.

The new bespoke solution allows staff to give the relevant information for billing. New jobs are automatically entered into the system, allocated, and put into a workflow sheet.

ENHANCED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

The introduction of new digital processes helps free up time for Hartnett and also helps to ensure that Profix's newest customers get the same gold standard customer service levels as his earliest customers, he says. That helps to maintain the company's high customer retention figures.

None of these improvements came about because he is tech savvy, he points out. "I don't touch computers. I have good ideas but I'd have no idea how to get them done without the good relationship I have with my digital mentor," he explains.

"IT'S FASTER, EASIER TO USE AND PROVIDES MORE PROFESSIONAL REPORTS FOR OUR CLIENTS"

The benefits of that relationship are apparent throughout the organisation and it's not just customers that have an enhanced experience as a result of them, but staff too, he adds. In a sector typified by competition for labour, they help him win the war for talent too.

"We've great camaraderie among the team and a lot of that is down to all the little digital processes we have developed," says Hartnett.

Clear information means a job might take six hours instead of eight, which means happier clients too, "because they know the price is reasonable," he says.

"Good systems also allow me to run my business more efficiently," he adds. "And that helps with retention of staff too."

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