



Client:
Central Trains

Project:
To implement CAFM software to increase efficiency of managing a large geographical area and retain complete control of in-house facilities management.

Objectives:
Logging and managing a wide variety of faults (from lighting faults, health and safety issues to reporting vandalism) as well as combining planned and reactive maintenance tasks so that cost savings could be achieved.

Results:
Clear fault resolution, well managed sub-contractor performance, advance job costing and comprehensive reporting (including the capability to report on annual station expenditure). Achieved efficiencies and cost savings, with the ability to generate further cost savings by implementing new hand-held devices.



Central Trains

One of Britain's major rail operators

Every week, around half a million people choose Central Trains to travel to over 300 destinations. With 2,000 staff dedicated to the safe operation of 7,200 trains, Central Trains is one of Britain's major rail operators. They have been using CAFM (Computer Aided Facilities Management) software, QFM, to manage their facilities since 2001 and believe they are the only train operator to exercise direction of FM operations in the way that they do – others tend to engage FM providers. But Central Trains was not content to go along with the crowd. They have always used a mix of subcontractors and a bank of directly employed electricians, joiners and plumbers, and by installing QFM hoped to retain complete control of facilities management in-house regardless of who carried out the work. "This," says facilities manager Michelle Chambers "has been achieved with complete success."

Case Study
In Depth

Central Trains



At the top of the company's agenda was the capture of events – that is faults and completed work – at their 200 stations across the Midlands from Stoke to Lincoln and Skegness and down as far as Norwich. And today this is seen as an important achievement in itself. “Events can be anything from lighting faults, or vandalism and health and safety problems, to refurbishments and new installations,” explains Chambers. Vandalism - a problem for all public service operators - can vary from nuisance graffiti tagging or more offensive graffiti, to smashed windows, damage to shelters, bins being set on fire, benches being ripped up or break-ins.

Managing Vandalism

Chambers continues, “Sometimes a member of the public will report vandalism to our customer relations department and they in turn inform the Helpdesk at our head office in Birmingham. Normally though it will be station staff who phone, fax or e-mail the Helpdesk. The system is so straightforward that we only need one Helpdesk operator. They will do a quick check to see if the event has already been recorded (although the system does identify repeat calls) then enter the details and give the station staff a log number. The job will then be allocated where possible to a member of the FM team, or otherwise to an external contractor.”

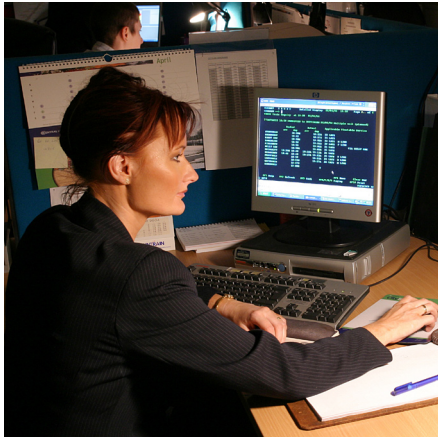
Hazards on station premises have been risk assessed and response already prioritised on the system. So for instance a broken panel on a staircase will receive a higher priority than a broken panel in an area where the public cannot easily reach. One of the most common health and safety events recorded on QFM is broken glass. A quick response is crucial here so that everything can be cleaned up promptly and spaces boarded-up to minimise any risk to the public, and indeed to staff, as swiftly as possible.

Central Trains is not responsible for the entire infrastructure at their stations; for instance platform surfaces, footbridges and elements of the building structure are the responsibility of Network Rail. But all these types of event are still reported and recorded through the QFM system. A log number is generated in the same way and the job passed on to Network Rail's own helpdesk, and the QFM operator will keep track of these alongside events being managed in-house.

Proactive maintenance is also managed via QFM, with schedules produced for the in-house maintenance people. But Chambers has also been keen to ensure that planned preventive maintenance (PPM) is always carried out in conjunction with reactive tasks, which the system successfully manages, this means that when one of the team is about to visit a station for, say a repair, the system will flag up any imminent PPM work so that all the work can be completed on the one visit.

Central Trains Case Study

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Central Trains

With such a large geographical area to cover, avoiding unnecessary time and transport in this way is an important element of cost savings.

Reporting

A key benefit of the QFM system for Central Trains is the day-to-day management of live jobs and the ability to maintain an overview of fault resolution and the performance of subcontractors. "We can generate reports," adds Chambers, "and keep a close eye on costs. All our incoming invoices are recorded on QFM so we know exactly how much each job is costing us. Some reports were set up for us at the start, and Service Works Group was very good in showing us how to adapt these to give us extra information.

"For me the great thing about QFM is that it is such an easy system to use without compromising on functionality. Some of the other systems I have looked at can get very complicated, giving you reams and reams of unnecessary information. But sometimes all you want is a snapshot. With QFM I can easily get this, and then if I want to drill deeper I can get more information. For example before we had QFM we had no way of easily recording vandalism, or how much we spent on each station per year. Now we can get a snapshot of each station and identify which stations and which areas suffer most from particular problems. Then we can check how much we have invested in security at those stations and compare that with crime levels and vandalism costs. This provides us with the necessary information to make decisions on further investment in CCTV, station alarms, additional gates or fencing."

Recently the QFM Event Director module was installed. This is a management tool which provides a 'traffic light' system showing instant warning count down for jobs. In addition, it shows at a glance which contractors have been given jobs and how long they have had them, therefore providing fast and accurate work order optimisation and job escalation management. "It collates information to give us an overview on contractors' performance," explains Chambers. "And again it's an easy system to use. With one click of a button we can bring up a quick report of a contractor's performance and this really saves us time."

Chambers is a member of Service Works Group's user group and attends regular meetings and workshops both to give feedback to the company and to hear about new modules. Currently her FM team are allocated jobs by phone, but she is keen to make time and cost savings, and is exploring the possibility of using hand-held devices to contact them and give out jobs. "I have attended a workshop on PDAs, and at the moment we are discussing which devices will be best for us," she says. "The great thing is that Service Works Group is always working on something new, so I know that if we need additional functionality in the future, we can be confident that we'll be able to get it."

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