



CASE STUDY

DLA Piper

Client:

DLA Piper

Project:

To migrate the DLA Piper UK offices from a paper-based system to a complete software solution for PPM, Facilities Helpdesk and Asset Management.

Objectives:

To harmonise the organisation's Facilities Management structure by streamlining the reactive and planned maintenance processes and retaining a comprehensive record of assets to improve traceability and cost control.

Results:

A centralised nationwide FM team and an improved reactive and planned maintenance operation driven by mobile and web based tools that ensure prompt delivery of service issues and improved performance monitoring.

**QFM Software –
Supporting a Leading Law Firm**

With more than 4,200 lawyers in 30 countries and 76 offices throughout Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and the US, DLA Piper is a business law firm representing companies around the world. Its clients include more than 140 of the top 250 companies in the Fortune 500, and nearly half of the FTSE 350 or their subsidiaries.

The UK firm comprises eight offices of varying sizes in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Some of the UK offices are in modern premises whilst others are in older, listed buildings. There is a mix of sole occupancy and multi tenanted facilities and different levels of landlord and FM responsibility in each site.

Partly as a result of these regional differences, and also due to the rapid growth of the firm in recent years, Facilities Management within DLA Piper UK had evolved on a decentralised basis, with Facilities Managers operating to a large extent autonomously. This is now changing strategically to a much more standardised model.

“It used to be the case that each site was managed separately and almost in isolation to the other. Now FM is much more centralised,” explains David Wallace, the Facilities Manager responsible for London office Buildings & Projects.

Part of that journey has been expanding the organisation’s use of its Computer-Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) solution, QFM, from Service Works, from a London-based facilities helpdesk function to a nationwide tool encompassing asset management functionality.

When David Wallace joined DLA Piper in London 14 years ago, there was no UK-wide Facilities department and certainly no FM software in use. “I came in as the understudy for the Facilities Manager. When I arrived there was a very good paper based system but that still meant everything was on different bits of paper in different places.”

Aware that DLA Piper was in need of a more sophisticated method for capturing and recording facilities-related information, Wallace, in co-operation with the newly-appointed Facilities Manager, explored an extensive list of CAFM solutions before choosing QFM to support DLA Piper’s reactive maintenance operation because the system was capable of dealing with both asset and building-related calls, service issues, performance monitoring and produced KPI reports.

➤ Centralised Operation

Wallace initially implemented the software to set up a Facilities Helpdesk in the London office and for the past 12 years all Facilities-related calls for London have been processed through

“QFM enables us to have all the information to hand...
...At the press of a few buttons, the information needed is there”

the Facilities Helpdesk. “So, if for instance, an asset is broken on site, then the call will come into us, and we’ll take down the asset number, the name of the person calling etc. The database will provide all the relevant information for that asset and the location of the person who is calling us, and then we’ll deal with the problem from there.”

The system has enabled the London office of DLA Piper to successfully establish a single number for facilities calls, rather than people ringing different departments. Wallace believes that there are obvious benefits to having one central facilities point of contact for London: “Rather than having the various areas of Facilities Management handled by and spread across different departments, this way, the majority of jobs are handled by accessing one or two screens. Information can be found more quickly, rather than having to ring up every single department to find out who’s done what.”



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► Reporting

From a situation where the right information was on paperwork scattered around different departments to where it is all stored on one system, it obviously made good business sense to have QFM as a focal point. “QFM enables us to have all the information to hand, rather than having to sift through piles of paperwork. At the press of a few buttons, the information needed is there. In addition, since the information is logged electronically, it is much easier to produce reports relating to particular jobs, especially since the reports can be interfaced with third party applications such as Word and Excel.”

The system is also used as a monitoring tool within the London office. “We always have job references where we can go back

over jobs if a problem arises and track their history. Without this structure no one would be able to tell which jobs were carried out three years ago. However by looking on the system we can see the exact date that they were executed and any subsequent follow up actions. If the system had been paper-based, all that information would have been archived many months before.” Wallace adds: “Despite being a very sophisticated piece of software, QFM has proven easy to implement and use. One person uses the software from the London office, taking around 100 - 150 calls each day, and no one has needed a great deal of training.” Over the past 12 years Wallace estimates that the system has processed over 150,000 tasks.

Managing Assets

In 2011, DLA Piper adopted QFM in all eight UK sites to manage its maintenance service schedules. This initially involved conducting an asset discovery, listing a defined selection of facilities assets in phase one with more assets to be added in subsequent phases. The team used PDAs to help with collecting and recording asset details. The information was automatically downloaded to QFM to enable events to be raised and managed from the service schedules.

“Having a complete register of facilities related assets within each DLA Piper UK location will improve traceability of goods and provide an audit trail for financial purposes as well as for insurers in the event of fire or theft,” says Stephen Harrison, Facilities Manager for the Birmingham office who is working on the roll out of QFM to the UK. “As we are now a more centralised nationwide team, it will inform future procurement and avoid us either making duplicate purchases across sites when we could share assets or avoid bad purchasing decisions if, for example, another site has had difficult experiences with an asset or supplier.” It is also essential for audit compliance, and demonstrates to clients that the firm takes asset management seriously.

The organisation is also considering rolling out QFM for reactive maintenance across its sites outside the capital, although there are no plans as yet for a nationwide helpdesk as each site prefers the personal approach. “QFM’s capabilities have grown with DLA Piper, and hopefully will continue to do so in the years to come,” concludes Wallace.



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