



Microsoft Customer Solution Customer & Partner Solution Brief



Fast Facts

Customer: STMC

Web site: <http://www.stmc.co.uk>

Number of Employees: 40

Country: United Kingdom

Industry: Building and Planning

Regulations

Business Issue: Streamlining Internal Processes

Customer Profile

STMC is a Government Approved Inspector of buildings. It provides building control services for new or renovated properties to ensure fire, drainage, and other regulations are met. It operates six branch offices throughout the United Kingdom as well as a variety of mobile workers, such as site inspectors, who need to be able to access a variety of forms and information sources to provide effective support to the company's client base.

Software and Services

n Products

- Microsoft Visual C# .NET
- Microsoft Visual Studio .NET 2003

n Technologies

- Microsoft .NET Framework
- Extensible Markup Language (XML)

Partners

- n Fletcher IT Solutions
- Partner Type\Competency:
- n ISV\ Software Solutions



Buildings Regulations Company Enjoys 60 Per Cent Improvement in Efficiency

"I've been involved with software launches before, but never one where people are so instantly comfortable with the solution."

Paul Heap, Commercial Director, STMC

Business Needs

STMC offers building regulation compliance services across the United Kingdom, operating out of six offices. Its building control surveyors provide their expertise to building and renovation projects to ensure regulatory compliance and prevent project difficulties.

STMC has grown rapidly in recent years, and had bought off-the-shelf technology solutions and tailored them to fit its needs. However, these tools did not seamlessly meet the company's working practices. As a result the company had to change its business processes to fit, rather than the other way around.

The company was also finding that the demands of filling in 30 legal documents and forms for each project was a heavy burden, particularly given that much of the information was highly repetitive.

At best, filling in each of these forms only took five minutes, but in sum that makes up nearly three hours of a project. It also assumes that the person filling in the forms had all the information to hand. Each phone

call or e-mail made to clarify a detail took time out of someone else's schedule while they responded. This added significant costs to each project. STMC needed a solution that would:

- n Reduce the time it takes to complete the administrative elements of the job;
- Offer staff the opportunity to work with a system that was tailor made for the industry vertical;
- Integrate across all of the company's departments, such as accounts, administration and surveying;
- Give mobile workers the ability to access information from wherever they are;
- n Let the company widen its geographic area of influence without setting up new, expensive offices;
- n In the long term, replace physical storage with compliant document archiving.

Solution

After searching for an off-the-shelf customer relationship management solution, STMC soon discovered that the systems available lacked the customisation potential that it needed. The company needed a solution that would be highly specialised, but not prohibitively expensive.





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An existing partner recommended Fletcher IT Solutions, a Microsoft® Certified Partner, to STMC. Fletcher IT designed a bespoke solution for STMC, built on a foundation of Microsoft technologies.

The building block for the solution Fletcher IT created is the Microsoft® .NET Framework, an integral component of Microsoft Windows® that provides a programming model and runtime for Web services, Web applications, and smart client applications.

The .NET Framework is being used in conjunction with Microsoft Visual Studio® .NET 2003, Microsoft Visual C#® .NET 2003, and Extensible Markup Language (XML) to provide a highly scalable, flexible solution.

The solution lets STMC staff access building information where ever they are, reducing the time they spend in an office and maximising the time they spend providing support to building projects.

It also builds all 30 documents needed to achieve compliance from a single base file, so that managers and administrators only have to input the main data once and it populates the other documents. Additionally, Fletcher IT designed the solution so that users have the information that is pertinent to them. They no longer have to look through ten pages of information to get to the document they need.

Future development of the system will see route planning information sent to hand-held devices via the global positioning system (GPS). Field workers will no longer have to use maps or return to the office to get

directions. A pilot of the GPS service will begin by the end of 2005.

Benefits

By working with the Microsoft .NET Framework, STMC gained a flexible solution that significantly improves the company's service to its clients, reduces administration time, and facilitates its growth. As well as the anticipated benefits, the system has also delivered a number of benefits that were not originally envisioned. Benefits include:

- The number of projects STMC can take on each year has risen by 40 per cent due to the introduction of the streamlined data collection and provision system;
- Data accuracy has improved through the automatic population of all 30 legal documents. As a result, administration time has been reduced by 70 per cent and staff do not have to look for data physically filed in other offices. This has improved morale across the business;
- The solution is Web-based, allowing staff to work from the very latest information, irrespective of where they are geographically. Coupled with the reduction in STMC's reliance on physical files, it no longer has to set up a physical office to widen its operations into other UK regions; In the long-term, once compliance with Government storage requirements is met, STMC will be able to eliminate physical storage in favour of electronic archiving, quickly and efficiently;
- Return on investment is already being realised even though the system has only been newly implemented; To gain further return on investment the system has the potential to be white-labeled to other industry players.

