

MBDA UK ENSURES GREATER ACCURACY WITH CROWN



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Introduction

Pan-European defence company MBDA UK ensures greater accuracy with Crown Computing. European defence contractor MBDA UK has introduced Open Options as part of its drive to keep its UK operating systems at the leading edge and to help manage its labour costs more accurately.

Background

MBDA, was formed by the bringing together of missile systems activities at EADS, BAE Systems and Finmeccanica, and has operations in France, Italy and the UK.

The merger has enabled MBDA to provide a comprehensive range of products, which support both the existing and future needs of the world's armed forces. MBDA offers customers high technology solutions and has unrivalled capability in key defence technologies.

The Task

For MBDA UK, with over 3000 employees located across predominantly three key sites in the UK, management of labour costs is obviously a critical part of protecting the Company's profitability.

Personnel within such disciplines as research, design, manufacture, engineering and commercial management are expected to record attendance and to complete timesheet bookings to apportion their attended hours against the projects supported.

The previous time & attendance and time sheet booking systems had performed well, but were based on old technology and were becoming cumbersome to use and maintain. Newer technologies could provide greater functionality with improved data accuracy and control. A project team was set up, including representation from CSC, to look at replacement systems that would deliver four key business objectives:

- A fully integrated, cost effective application to support time and attendance administration, timesheet booking and shop floor data collection (SFDC)
- Reduce administration costs through web-based Employee Self Service (ESS) functionality
- Provide seamless integration to SAP (PP, PS & HR modules)
- Support MBDA UK business processes

Open Options

Open Options was selected by MBDA UK as the replacement system, following demonstrations and workshops that showed that Open Options offered the functionality required by MBDA UK, as well as the capability for modification and the development of software in areas that were key to the Business. The fact that Open Options was already deployed across other BAE Systems business units and the strong working relationships MBDA UK and Crown had developed over many years were also factors in the decision-making process. Significant benefits were also identified through the use of the Open Options integrated system including: greater synergy of data, efficient operation and ease of use.



The Solution

Crown worked with MBDA UK to scope and develop the software necessary to deliver the ESS functionality and also the SFDC module, which allows shop floor operatives to clock on and off jobs, through use of touch screens and bar code readers, as necessary.

The deployment of Open Options throughout MBDA UK was a phased approach. First, the SFDC element was introduced to coincide with the introduction within MBDA UK of SAP Manufacturing.

Then a pilot scheme was introduced to assess the time and attendance, including the ESS functionality, and time booking systems modules. The ESS module empowered employees to administer their own Open Options accounts with the need for very little management authorisation.

The Benefits

The pilot was successfully completed early in 2003. The formal system deployment then commenced across the Stevenage and Lostock sites and culminated with the deployment to the Filton site by the middle of 2004. Open Options is used throughout the workforce regardless of position or grade or the particular shift pattern worked. Those employed by MBDA UK as contractors also use the system.

Unlike its antecedents, Open Options avoids the need to fill out forms, because employees carry out their own on-line time sheet entries, as well as time & attendance enquiries and administration, on desktop computers. Although a small number of people who provide day-to-day support have received more detailed instruction, most users have been able to use the system with a minimum of training. "Although the functionality of the system makes it straightforward to operate, Open Options has been designed to replicate the familiar processes from the various predecessor systems," explains Open Options Project Manager, Andy Bounsall. "As all these processes are now incorporated into one real-time application, data entry anomalies are immediately obvious and can swiftly be resolved."

Open Options has provided MBDA UK with greater scope to monitor and control costs more effectively with the data provided forming a critical part of MBDA UK's reporting structure.

Not surprisingly, there were a small number of minor teething problems, particularly when considering the significant culture change that was brought about by Open Options. However, it was possible to swiftly implement modifications to eradicate these. "At the beginning, employees had to climb the learning curve, but the more they used the system, the more the benefits became apparent to them and the feedback has been very positive," says Andy Bounsall.



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