

## BAE EXTENDS AIR SYSTEMS INTO NIMROD



### Introduction

When BAE Systems replaced an ageing time and attendance system at its Woodford site in Cheshire, the company adopted a solution already used at its Warton and Samlesbury sites in Lancashire. Crown Computing's Open Options advanced time and attendance system was extended to cover another 750 staff. This has saved administration time, increased management information, and helped comply with the European working time regulations.

BAE Systems has a number of business groups including Military Air Solutions. With over 14,000 employees around the world, BAE Systems Military Air Solutions works closely with its customers to define solutions, create new military capabilities, and to deliver and support effective systems throughout their service lives.

In 2002, BAE Systems' IBM-based time and attendance system at Warton and Salmesbury was replaced by Crown Computing's Open Options. Employees use either a web browser or swipe card to clock in and the fully-configurable rules-based solution allows a 'shared services' approach with centralised staff support. The move helped reduce administration overheads as well as providing greater management information.

"Open Options is seen as a very useful tool by employees and managers alike. Not only does it deliver the right solution but it's proved its value to BAE Systems," said Elleray. "Everybody I've met from Crown Computing is very professional and helpful."

### Minimal administration

According to Diane Elleray, Open Options operational manager at BAE Systems, the new system proved a remarkable success. Employees became more self-reliant when clocking time, booking holidays, or querying the system - saving considerable administration. The number of unqualified hours quickly fell to negligible levels.

"We now have three central administrators to manage 9,000 people's time and attendance at our main sites at Warton and Samlesbury," said Elleray.

The system's deployment to Woodford is more recent. 750 people working on the RAF's Nimrod maritime reconnaissance aircraft previously used an ageing ICL based solution for recording overtime. Finance employees sent out paper-based overtime reports to departmental managers - a time-consuming process.

Faced with rising costs and hardware reliability issues, managers decided to seek more accurate and timely information. Sharing Crown Computing's Open Options time and attendance system with the other two sites seemed the logical choice. This powerful yet flexible solution offered an easy-to-use graphical interface including web browser access.

Although this was administratively convenient and cost-effective, there were some major working differences - shift patterns, overtime rates, and holidays - between each of the sites. But as a rules-based system, Open Options would allow each site to operate autonomously from a single software platform.

### Rapid deployment

To ensure the project met tight timescales, BAE Systems called in Crown Computing to help configure the system quickly. However, the rules engine is normally user-configurable, needing no specialist IT support to make any changes. The Woodford employees were added after setting up the complex rules for overtime rates.



"We have good experience of creating shifts. However, some of the new complex payment rules required help from Crown Computing to configure. As we faced tight timescales, it was more cost-effective and timely for Crown to help us," said Elleray. "You can get an awful lot done in a day with a consultant and Crown Computing proved really helpful."

There were also no difficulties with the HR and payroll interfaces - a standard Open Options module - although the overtime periods were aligned for simplicity. The time and attendance system automatically provides hours worked, rates, and employee identity to two Northgate payroll systems covering the three BAE Systems locations.

Retrospective clocking at Woodford has also been resolved. Previously, any missed clocking periods were paid through a payroll adjustment, leading to discrepancies. The data is now entered into Open Options online before transfer to the payroll - making sure the corrections process is robust. Two separate system calendars handle differences in bank holiday arrangements between the sites.

"Woodford wanted a smooth transition with little disruption to their current working practices. Open Options now quite happily manages two sets of terms and conditions side-by-side," said Elleray.

### **Comprehensive Reporting**

The new system went live at Woodford in March 2006. Matching the Warton-Samlesbury experience, it's added more functionality, saved administration time, and improved data integrity. Data is sent from time clocks at Woodford to the application software running on a Sun Unix server with Oracle database at Warton. An application server supports around 150 desktops and a web server provides the employee self-service functions.

Employees query overtime and holiday through multi-functional time clocks - avoiding the need to contact finance staff. Compliance to the European working time directive is also managed better using standard reports produced automatically from the Open Options database and e-mailed to departmental managers once a month.

In addition, weekly reports detail unqualified hours, absence details, manual clocking adjustments by the finance team, overtime to be paid, and holiday entitlements. Although Open Options does a simple job - calculating pay, managing absence, and monitoring the working time directive - it's proved vital for effective staff management.



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