Sheffield Hallam University

Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) has the 4th largest student population in the UK with over 34,000 students. This number has grown significantly over the past decade and the Facilities Directorate have invested £100m in the estate over this period and a further £110m is being invested over the next 3 years.

Managing the estate has always presented challenges but as Mark Swales (Director of the Facilities Directorate) explains, it also provides great opportunity for investing in sustainable solutions that help drive efficiency and create an environment that will influence greatly why students would choose to study at SHU.

"I am a big believer in investing in new technologies and systems that can help deliver medium and long term management objectives"

Mark Swales, Director of the SHU Facilities Directorate

THE NEED FOR SYSTEMS Like many organisations with a large portfolio of contrasting buildings, the University historically serviced several estate management disciplines in siloes.

Much of the technology we used was out of date, expensive to maintain and didn't talk to each other.

This scenario is still common place in many institutions as it is often perceived that rationalisation of systems is too hard or disruptive to the business, therefore many struggle on with the inefficiency this brings.
I am a big believer in investing in new technologies and systems that can help deliver medium and long term management objectives.

It is uneconomical to invest vast sums of money into the estate without providing a proportionate investment in systems that can assist and help maximize the long term value to be made from the estate.

During the initial stages of the major capital investment, we went to the market and reviewed several estate management systems.
We recognised that in order to manage the ever changing nature of the estate that we

had to base our decision on a platform that respected a common space management policy.

Our historical, fragmented, non-web based systems were often run in isolation and with differing space records, this meant linking and reporting data from multiple systems was

Sheffield Hallam University Campus

Why micad

Micad was one of the few systems we considered that drove the system via CAD space records. This approach was strategically aligned with our philosophy of how we wanted to maintain space records for the estate going forward. We had to understand what our built environment consisted of before we could affect changes on how to manage it better.

The Micad option also provided us with a platform from which we could add other modular applications to manage: Asbestos, Condition Surveys, Leases, and much more recently, Facilities Maintenance.

This interoperability was highly attractive to us as it would enable the Facilities Directorate to work collaboratively on a common platform where multiple datasets could be managed.

Implementing Micad for the University was not without risk

The benefits of promoting a single solution to cover a range of estate management disciplines can be restrictive in terms of putting all the eggs in one basket. This is why it is important to assess and understand the efficiency gain and benefits a single solution delivers verses any risk.

We considered Micad's culture of working collaboratively and financial strength to ensure risk was minimised.

Once we had completed the first step of getting our drawings up to date, it provided us with the bedrock from which we added the departmental use and room function data so we had an up-to-date space database that would assist us with our EMR reporting and other internal reporting requirements.

As with most Universities, asbestos is an issue. We wanted to approach the implementation of Micad as an opportunity to up our game and become a leader for demonstrating best practice.

Micad enables us to link our asbestos register information directly to the space records, drawings and more recently the Maintenance HelpDesk.

This increases the reliability of the register and enables other useful information such as the plans to be shared with those that need it most i.e. our maintenance staff & external contractors.

We now have total visibility regarding our compliance levels and are able to disseminate

After our success with the asbestos module, we implemented the Property Appraisal and Lease Modules, again to further rationalise the separate systems that were restricting our efficiency.

At this stage Micad had not developed a Maintenance solution so we were still managing our Reactive and PPM works via a well-established non-connected system. This gave us the ongoing problem of maintaining accurate space records in two separate systems which, in a fast evolving estate, created an efficiency drain.

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In 2011 Micad announced they were working on a new Maintenance System that would be fully interoperable with their core IPR facilities management platform.

After consulting with the team we decided to view the system to try and understand the benefits any potential switch may provide us.

Having viewed the system we could see that there were some limitations due to its infancy but the benefits in terms of connecting directly to the Micad IPR space database, asbestos and drawings were clear.

After some consultation with Micad and working with them collaboratively on the development plan we made the commitment to migrate to the new integrated solution.

"The net result is that we now take for granted a unified interoperable system that many organisations can only dream of".

As you might expect this was not an easy task and the journey for my team was challenging at times, as I suspect it was for Micad. However, with commitment and a proactive professional working relationship, both parties focused on the end game with a successful implementation being achieved.

Working closely with Micad meant we were able to extend the product remit beyond the traditional HelpDesk use of Reactive and Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) to that of Soft Services including, but not limited to, multi-skilled labour requests and reactive cleaning.

The net result is that we now take for granted unified, interoperable system that many organisations can only dream of. In fact our team awarded Micad our supplier of the year Award in 2012 for the success of the project.

We continue to work closely with Micad on the development plan alongside other clients so that we all get our say in future updates, and we are an active participant in the Micad University User Group (MUUG) that has been set up to champion the system development roadmap for the Higher Education sector.

Finally, I want to mention cultural change. The success of this project has only been realised with the commitment and dedication shown by my team and key staff at Micad.

Whilst we had a clear strategic view of what we wanted to achieve, the upheaval, planning, and execution of the highly successful implementation has only been realised through the partnership and team effort of both client and supplier.

Mark Swales, Director SHU Facilities Directorate

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