

Robert mcbride Ltd

Business



Company: Staffware Customer: Robert McBride Ltd Submitted by:

Staffware Robert McBride Ltd is the UK's largest manufacturer of retailer brand household and personal care products. It has six manufacturing sites in the UK and a £300m turnover. It supplies household and personal care products to every major grocery retail chain in the UK." Retailer Brands are all about change which brings massive pressure to the sequencing of work. Workflow has enabled us to change the order in which we do things, bringing enormous reduction in transaction time," Anthony Jordan, Senior Business Systems Developer, Robert McBride Ltd.

The ' Big Bang' Approach

Prior to implementing workflow, a Business Team at Robert McBride analysed its processes to understand exactly how they operated before workflow.

Each process was then broken down and streamlined accordingly. Once convinced of the potential success of the changes, Robert McBride took a ' Big Bang' approach to its pilot implementation, choosing the Staffware workflow solution as the only way to complete a process." Workflow provides discipline and totally guarantees that nothing can be left out of the process – ever," Gary Wilson, Office Applications Manager, Robert McBride Ltd. The pilot workflow applications were initially prepared for Product Launch, Customer Contact reporting and Promotions Management processes, identified as the three most complex activities incorporating many departments and personnel. A key feature was the effective and regular communication with users.

All users were involved in building and streamlining the process and were constantly informed of progress made and the timing of future milestones.” As a user of the system, I had a vested interest in how this technology would affect the way I did my work. Therefore, it was important for me to feel involved and be updated as the project developed. It was managed very successfully and in the end, not only did the business benefit all round but the users also got what they needed,” Graham Souter, Customer Support and Development Controller, Robert McBride Ltd.

Product Launch

The Product Launch process is complex and diverse, in the number of areas of the business which it affects, and inherently the number of people, 150 users at McBride, who could be involved at any point in time.

Originally two key documents involved were the Product Launch Advice Form and Product Brief Amendment Form, which were completed agreement with the customer. Forms can be sent simultaneously to departments involved in the process – for a product launch for example, the start form can be sent to marketing, commercial, and forecasting at the same time. Users only have access to the part of the form relevant for them to approve. They are also given a time frame within which to respond. Previously, this established procedure was often bypassed and difficult to enforce as there was no audit trail or visibility of status resulting in up to 2 days per transaction. An important action was to remove the old forms from circulation.

This was to ensure that it was not possible for users to revert to the manual system, as the new electronic forms had to go through an authorisation process built into the workflow.

Customer Contact Reports

Contact reports are completed when the account managers and account handlers have had contact with the customer. Each report records discussions and actions arising and can include any type of attached document. It also records actions required of individuals resulting from the contract. Its purpose is to keep both a permanent record of all customer contacts, including telephone calls, and to highlight and control actions to be carried out.

Previously records were kept on paper, but not consistently and not in a standard format.

Promotions Process

Robert McBride can have over 400 live promotions at any one time, which requires approval by several departments. Account Managers complete a new promotion form, which is routed to Commercial, Logistics and Sales for authorisation within 21 hours. Once authorised the Account Manager waits for the customer to confirm the promotion and then confirms the new pricing structure with the Sales Order Processing team. Following a promotion, remaining stock and component levels are recorded and this information is passed to the Account Managers, Director of Sales and Commercial Controller, where a decision is then made on how to manage the remaining

stock. Following the success of these initial applications, further processes were completed, all of which are identified below:-

Product Brief

This controls the process of providing the customer with a 'quote' for new business, as well as ensuring that the proposed launch is internally viable.

e. g. the production site may need capital expenditure to enable manufacture of the new product. This process takes place prior to the internal Product Launch process. It takes information about the options considered from the Customer Contacts application. It then controls the process of determining whether the proposed launch is viable in terms of cost, production scheduling, key dates, etc.

It handles technical department review and an approval process involving senior sales management. When approved, information is passed to the Product Launch application.

New Product Introduction (NPI)

This process automates and controls the flow of work required to bring new products to market. A system was required to provide quick and easy access to data relating to the full life cycle of a New Product Introduction, including details from the Product Launch forms and other information relating to it.

The NPI process is a vast process incorporating all activities from the generation of new product ideas to product evaluation 12 months after the launch.

Product Rationalisation

This procedure has been developed to ensure the planned and managed withdrawal of stock keeping units (SKU's) or components, which no longer provide a strategically valid contribution to the business or customer. A report is produced from the ERP system, detailing products that may be suitable for rationalisation. This report is picked up by Staffware, or alternatively can be directly initiated in Staffware, and is routed to the relevant business people. The Account Manager responsible for this product then discusses this with the customer. If rationalisation is agreed the Product Withdrawal process will be initiated.

Authority to Order

This automated process is used for ordering special or unique components required for a particular promotion or product.

For example, the standard caps for washing up bottles are normally bought in millions, but if a special cap is required, volumes may be reduced to 40, 000-50, 000 for exclusive use on one single product variant or for one particular customer. This can have considerable cost and stock control implications. The workflow application has helped to ensure that unique components are only ordered with specific approval from the customer.

Capex

This process is used to seek approval for capital expenditure for new assets and equipment, covering everything from network computers to a new building. The workflow controls the whole process from instigation right

through to final approval. This was previously a paper-based process with limited control and no audit trail.

Customer Samples This process is used when product samples need to be sent out to the customer. Sometimes a sample of a new product, formulation or packaging is required and a number of different variations are required for “ what if?” scenarios. It is a straightforward process that allows an account manager to request samples from a particular manufacturing site.

Pricing Management

This manages the process of maintaining price information for all customers. The company has a specific price list for each product range for each customer.

These change on a regular basis and it is vital that account teams in Sales ; Marketing have the latest prices at all times, especially when speaking to customers. The process also informs the Commercial and Site Accounts departments of every change, to ensure that the customer is invoiced the agreed amount.

Customer and Product Group Plans

These are drawn up annually in respect of each customer and each project group. They set out the types of projects planned over the next twelve months, including new project introductions, re-launches and promotions.” When the systems were in place we began to understand the full power of workflow and the level of control became clear.” Gary Wilson, Office Applications Manager, Robert McBride Ltd.

Future Application Areas

As a result of the above successful workflow implementations, Robert McBride plan to deploy Staffware workflow in the following processes:-

Product Withdrawal· Confidentiality Agreements· Retailer Enquiries

Summary of Staffware Workflow Benefits:

- 50% reduction in time taken from initiation of a product to final production.

Enhanced customer's confidence in the degree of ' guarantee' that Robert

McBride offers to reach a deadline.· Improved speed of response to

Customers in terms of provision of required information, i. e. Quotations,

finished ; raw materials stock· Increased Revenue potential due to staff

focusing on value-add customer activities and new business opportunities.·

Workflow provides a complete audit trail and document visibility so

evaluation is built in to measure process efficiency.

- Achieved reduction in component and finished goods inventory.· Instant

data transfer and improved accuracy as everyone works to one shared

document· Ability to handle increasingly complex processes and additional

workload with the same number of people· The promotions proposal and

approval process has been cut from ten to four days.· Actions completed on

time are now used as a measure of success – currently up to over 90%.·

Recording the allocation of actions provides visibility for management when

resourcing.· Improved accuracy and exchange of information between

supplier and customer as well as management of finished goods stock in the

overall supply chain.

· Shorter lead times mean that more products can be manufactured in the same time.· Productivity of customer-facing staff has increased by 25%. Improved breadth and focus to establishment of category management within the accounts. The Difference – “ Business Led – System Delivered.” The success of Workflow within Robert McBride and the recognised benefits it has provided, means that the company is now looking at introducing Workflow into other areas of the business. It has also envisaged that the supply chain should be further extended to its suppliers and customers.

As part of Staffware’s eProcess Initiative, using the Internet to extend itsWorkflow solutions outside the enterprise, Robert McBride believe this can result in enormous benefits and efficiencies to distributed organisations.” The introduction of Workflow into Robert McBride Ltd has proved essential to our continued success as a customer focused and responsive company. The business processes critical to our continued success were put onto Workflow at an early stage and this ensured that we continued to provide the best possible service to our customers. As each process was rolled out, the benefits were immediate, in terms of control, traceability, visibility, and improved management information. Every process ensured a reduction in man-hours fire fighting and progress chasing, thus allowing personnel to focus more of their time on value adding activities. Workflow has supported the growth of our business in an increasingly complex fmcg environment,” Tim Seaman, Managing Director, Commercial, Robert McBride Ltd.