JobFlow wins business for TGC!

The Generator Company is a leading supplier, installer, and service provider for industrial generators throughout the world. Based in Rochester, Kent, the company has been built on tenets of innovation and design excellence as well as high quality product and customer care.

Jayson Stickings and Sharon Allen, directors of TGC, have maintained these values and a family working atmosphere as the company has grown.

THE GENERATOR COMPANY
A Division of TGC International Ltd

Moving from a cumbersome system

Before JobFlow, TGC used computers to register and monitor their work but, like many other service companies, used disparate spreadsheets for different functions. Each job had its own folder on the server and this contained photographs as well as scans of job sheets, certificates, purchase orders and invoices. Microsoft Outlook was used to record service contract renewals and appointments, which were then transferred to a manual diary as they approached.

This 'system' worked, but was slow and laborious, with no continuity between files. There was no easy way of tracing how much time or money was spent on each job so costing was a long process and invoices were often slow to be raised.

Sage compatibility important

As the company grew, it became apparent that the in-house job processing methods had reached their limit and a professional workflow system was needed. The accounts department was familiar with Sage, so Sage options were examined first. At the time, Sage was phasing out job costing and its more expensive 'Construct' package was not suitable for TGC's project and service needs.

No retraining for engineers

In the process of investigating Sage, Jayson (Managing Director) was introduced to JobFlow as a Sage compatible solution. A further two packages were also considered, with JobFlow winning the day "We saw JobFlow in action at Flowrite, a nearby refrigeration contractor", says Jayson. "Nothing else was as comprehensive, and the DataScriber digital pen option meant our engineers could continue with their existing work sheet format with no retraining for PDAs which the other options favoured."

Smooth Installation

JobFlow was installed on a single day at TGC, plus training. Jayson was pleased with the smoothness of the operation and the willingness of the JobFlow team to adjust the system to tailor it to TGC's exact requirements.

Information feedback

"JobFlow brought us out of the dark ages" says Sharon (Sales Director). Just in time too, because we are now running far too many contracts to be continuing with disparate and largely paper based systems. It's a vast improvement on our old spreadsheets because it feeds us with information. It flags up when stock is low, shows us what the status of each job is and alerts us when one of our guys wants to spend beyond their pre-set limit. This feedback is invaluable as it helps us run the business efficiently. We never have too much or too little stock and it's easier to plan cash flow if big purchases are needed.

No change for engineers

TGC was pleased that the JobFlow solution meant no change for their engineers; they fill out the same form format as before, but with a digital pen, feeding the data straight into JobFlow for analysis. Getting worksheets back from engineers is a challenge at the best of times, but working in different continents increased the delay and the opportunity for loss. "Now we get worksheets back from the Caribbean, Tanzania and other locations", says Jayson, "Just as if they were in the south of England! If an engineer loses the form, we have it in JobFlow and the client has an original hard copy too - something we could not have offered with a PDA system."

Project

The project side of the business which deals with new orders can now raise a job in JobFlow with quotes, spreadsheets and plans linked to the job record. This has simplified a long winded and cumbersome process where information was not always readily accessible because of staff member's different working methods.

Service

Geoff Hewitt runs the service side of the company and appreciates the consolidating power of JobFlow. "JobFlow makes it so easy to trace work because it keeps everything in the same place. It has reduced the paperwork we keep too. Work sheets arrive on JobFlow via DataScriber and supplier invoice details are recorded, so the forms no longer need to be scanned in."

JobFlow wins new business

As Sales Director, Sharon works closely with Geoff in the sales process of new service contracts. "JobFlow makes it easy for me to set up the new contracts" says Sharon "once they are on the system, the allocation and work process is easy to follow and track at any time. JobFlow helps us to win business in the first place too. I will often demonstrate the system to prospects as part of the sales pitch, to let them see how we plan and manage our work. It gives them confidence to know how much we are in control of the business and how quickly we can respond to their requirements and any queries. It encourages them to know we are investing in systems to provide a better service to them and that soon they will be able to log in remotely and see the progress of their job(s) at any time."

Client benefits

Sharon is pleased that TGC's clients now get a slicker service when they phone in; "Anyone in the office can go to JobFlow and select the client and any of their jobs, passing on progress information. To further enhance client service, especially as we grow, we are looking at the Client Access Module for JobFlow which will allow clients to log in over a secure internet connection from anywhere to see their jobs. This will also allow them to print off copies of work sheets and invoices, which is often the reason for their call".

Parts

Having purchase orders as part of the system is something that Geoff embraces "Now we can see easily which parts have been used for which job, making job measuring and invoicing easier. And, because we can search by PO number on JobFlow, when parts arrive in stock, we know what job they are for."

Powerful reporting

Previously, all TGC's reporting was done in Sage *after* the job information was entered. Requests for reports would be passed through the accounts team to process and provide results in hours or days according to their workload. With JobFlow, there is an *instant response*, with authorised users able to run reports on demand, to analyse any aspect of the business from their desktop. "We can see how much time and money has been spent on each job and who has done what, when" says Geoff, "the reporting in JobFlow is making a huge contribution to our working practices and forward planning".

Preventive maintenance

TGC uses JobFlow's PPM Module which schedules preventive maintenance work. "Once installed, our generators are on stand-by in case of a master power failure, so we get very few call outs" says Geoff. "Our work is mostly inspections and checks to make sure that our generators will perform when called upon. JobFlow plans these visits for us, any number evenly spread over a set period, and they all appear on the calendar".

Unlocking the future

Jayson believes that in JobFlow he has found the perfect partner for growing his company. "Before JobFlow, I felt that growth was going to be difficult because of the extra administration and paperwork that each new client and project generated. Also, because more work information to input meant slower management reporting. JobFlow lets me take on new clients and jobs with no fear. Existing staff can handle much more work in a more organised, less stressful way with more control and less paperwork, putting the information I need to plan the future at my fingertips."

Complete wiring installation

As well as providing JobFlow, D&M Systems was involved in much of the wiring infrastructure for the TGC building. DMS engineers ran all the wiring for the data (over 100 points on two floors), power and lighting and installed the fire alarm and door entry system. DMS also installed a CCTV server and eight cameras to monitor the building and protect it from unwanted visitors. TGC's broadband is from DMS too, who also installed dado trunking, patch panels and a new rack to house the company's server.