

Embracing the Future – Innovative Risk Assessing at Western Environmental

Western Environmental Ltd is a leading legionella control and water treatment company. The growing company is forward thinking and realised that technology could enhance data collection processes for risk assessments and inspections. In early 2009 the decision was made to implement the eSquiggles data collection and risk assessment software. The return on investment in eSquiggles continues to grow and future phases are within sight.

The need for electronic data collection

The range of risk assessments and inspections which Western's technicians perform are varied and complex. The company is effectively meeting water treatment obligations on behalf of clients in areas which are heavily regulated. It is therefore essential that data collected during these risk assessments is recorded and processed both accurately and quickly. Performing risk assessments and gathering the data electronically via PDAs is much more efficient and a more accurate means of capturing the data.

In the past, paper forms would be completed by hand and returned to Head Office for processing. The delay of retyping the data into the finished report was inefficient, carried administrative overhead costs and also meant a delay in the findings being presented to clients. Also, recording data manually on paper and having it retyped always carried an element of risk in that data could be misread or mistyped at any time. Much of the data collected by Western's technicians are water temperatures – any errors in reporting on these temperatures could be disastrous from a legionella control perspective.

These issues are common across the environmental services industry. Western's Director Gary Harrison was pivotal in the decision to invest in technology which would combat these issues, automate the recording / reporting of data and hopefully place them one step ahead within the industry. eSquiggles was selected and the project commenced thereafter.

Using Existing Documentation & Processes

From the outset, the Western management team was clear that existing documentation formats and internal business processes would need to be retained as part of the eSquiggles project.

Tim Jones is Business Development Manager within Western and was involved in the day-to-day management of the project. Tim explains, "Although many forms are short and concise, other documents such as Risk Assessments are long and detailed. In selecting a data collection tool, it was a pre-requisite that the system would manage all existing form types. It was also important that the solution was flexible enough to fit with the way we worked and our current processes. We have been operating for 21 years with a multitude of inspection and survey forms which we wanted to



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continue using – albeit in electronic format. It was essential to us that the move to eSquiggles would incorporate the use of existing documentation formats. The forms we now see on eSquiggles via the PDA exactly mirror the ones we were used to completing on-site. This meant our technicians didn't need to become familiar with a whole new set of forms and documents.

Key Benefits & Deliverables:

- » Enhanced data collection process
- » Improved integrity of data
- » More efficient working through ease of use
- » Electronic risk assessments
- » Reduced costs & increased productivity
- » Improved levels of customer service

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Also, the final reports which we present to clients remain the same. The big difference is that we don't need to type them up each time. The core data is populated into our reports automatically and there is a much shorter turnaround time between doing the inspection and providing the finished results to the client. Previously, many of our technicians were only able to come back to the office once a week to catch up on paperwork and type up reports, which obviously caused a delay for the client. Now using eSquiggles it is quite common for our clients to receive final documentation, risk assessments and certificates back on the same day that the inspection was carried out. Obviously, this makes for a happy client base and ensures our jobs are completed more efficiently, with less chance of documentation remaining incomplete by mistake."

Another requirement of the project was that the introduction of a new system such as eSquiggles would work well with existing technology. Western uses a system called AquaManager which is a specialist web based data logging and communication tool used for the reporting and storage of analytical results from steam generating plants and cooling systems. Both systems are now working in tandem which streamlines working practices for the technicians.

Ease Of Use

One of the main selling points of eSquiggles is its ease of use, even for those with limited technical knowledge.

Tim comments, "All projects involving new IT systems are challenging and we anticipated some teething problems. Although we did encounter some issues

when the project commenced, these were dealt with by the team and we quickly moved onto full implementation. eSquiggles provides our staff with a clear, concise user interface, making it easy to use. This, combined with the fact that we could incorporate the exact wording and layout of our paper based forms, meant that there was a quick transition from manual working to electronic working with eSquiggles. Once we made the decision to invest in the software we were keen to get it implemented quickly. To have found a system which was easy for our technicians to use and get it up and running fairly quickly was great.

Training was provided by the eSquiggles team, but this was minimal due to the intuitive nature of the product. The guys actually using eSquiggles out in the field are pleased they now have a system which makes their job easier. The fact that inspections can be carried out at various locations one after the other without the need to return back with paperwork has saved a lot of time. During inspections and water tests, data is gathered quicker, with less time wasted handwriting results. We estimate that productivity has increased by around 30% which we are very pleased with."

Meeting Legislative Requirements

An important part of Western's business is ensuring their clients are compliant with current legislation, including HSE ACoP L8 for legionella control. Tim explains, "The water tests we perform are to ensure our clients are meeting statutory legionella control requirements. The risk assessments we perform, data we gather during them and the reports we provide back need to be

100% accurate. Using technology such as eSquiggles ensures better accuracy of data, provides a full electronic audit trail and gives us the confidence that we are assisting clients to meet these legal obligations."

Job scheduling and escalation processes within eSquiggles ensures that recurring jobs are allocated automatically. Should any data be identified which gives cause for concern, ie. water temperatures are out-with the required threshold, exception reporting features ensure this is highlighted. Processes are embedded within eSquiggles to escalate these occurrences as appropriate.

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A Cost Effective Solution

The feedback from Western Environmental has been very positive. Tim sums up the project to date, "When we engaged with Pulsion Technology with their eSquiggles product we had high hopes for the project. As the project has progressed we have found eSquiggles to be easy to use and it has really improved the way we complete risk assessment and inspection visits. We decided to buy eSquiggles on a Software as a Service basis, which was ideal as no large up front investment was required. The monthly fee means costs are easy to control and we have already seen a significant reduction in our operating costs. There are other areas where eSquiggles could be used within Western and we are looking forward to putting those plans into action."