

# case study



CLIENT:

**ATKINS**

BENEFITS:

- CAB-i-NET allows us to work seamlessly on projects from any of our office locations throughout the world.
- The implementation of new corporate document standards and CAD procedures has been easily deployed using CAB-i-NET.

KEY QUOTES:

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“Dudding recognised that Atkins already had a potential solution to hand in the form of their existing CAB-i-NET installation.”

“There has been interest shown by other Atkins businesses including Aerospace (Bristol) and Highways & Transport (Scotland) in using CAB-i-NET in major document control projects.”

Document management systems can sometimes appear to offer a confusing array of functionality, much of which is rarely used in most organisations as Atkins’ Rail have discovered. They have achieved visible and measurable benefits from adopting a “slow and steady wins the race” approach to the technology

Atkins’ Rail business is the focus within the global Atkins group for all rail vehicle, infrastructure, property and transport activities. With unrivalled expertise in the mass transit (including metro and light rail) and heavy rail markets, Atkins enables railway clients worldwide to realise their visions from Glasgow to Dubai, from King’s Cross to Hong Kong.

Ray Dudding of Atkins Rail business had already gained significant experience of major Technology projects within the company, so when he was asked to investigate possible document management offerings, he began from an informed starting point: “One lesson I have learnt time and again is to stick to the basics of any new product, at least at first: too much customisation and you can easily paint yourself into a corner!” Dudding recognised the need to start simple and expand and diversify cautiously – getting one function working just the way you need it before focusing on the next stage.

Atkins had spent some time evaluating corporate EDRMS solutions – with over 18,000 employees working for hundreds of clients from aerospace to nuclear energy, it soon became obvious that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach would not work in that environment. Dudding explains: “To try and find one single system that could handle everything from everyday correspondence through to MicroStation drawings was simply an impossible task. We were somewhat surprised to learn from speaking with the big document management vendors that even they don’t claim to offer such a wide-ranging solution in their core products– when you include our requirement for engineering DM functionality, we very quickly realised that the ‘enterprise vendors’ also needed add-ins from specialist suppliers to compete with what we’d already seen from tsaADVET.”

Dudding recognised that Atkins already had a potential solution to hand in the form of their existing CAB-i-NET installation, along with Microsoft SharePoint. With relatively little



work together to provide a solution that could deliver the same benefits as the systems proposed by major vendors.

A number of medium-scale pilot projects were put in place in varying functional areas of the rail business including Signalling Design, Overhead Line Design and Project Delivery and Handover. Ultimately the plan is for all the design and engineering functions to be using the same standard infrastructure for managing documents and files through every step of the project process, across not just different disciplines but even international boundaries. Already though, there has been interest shown by other Atkins businesses including Aerospace (Bristol) and Highways & Transport (Scotland) in using CAB-i-NET in major document control projects.

## KEY QUOTES:

*“You can buy the best software in the world but if you can't manage its delivery, you're wasting your time. This would be a big task for any organisation, and we see tsaADVET CAB-i-NET as being absolutely central to our managing it.”*

*“We need to have a standard in place and know that it's the same whether you're working in Glasgow or Croydon or Dubai. CAB-i-NET gives us the ability to apply those standards, and without it we simply couldn't have done it.”*

*“the decision was made to keep local file stores and CAB-i-NET Workflow Publisher in each major office.”*

*“whatever level you are within the organisation, you can see the information – real, live information - that is important to you in order to help you do your job.”*



“The single most important thing that happened to make this work was that the Atkins' Rail board all bought into the new system 100%,” comments Dudding, “They all realise how important it was to make this work. Without that top-level support it would have been impossible to make this happen across such a diverse organisation. At the same time it was crucial that we didn't try to push it forward too far, too fast.”

Equally important for a successful implementation was the recognition that any technology changes had to be strategically aligned with the Atkins' Rail business strategy. Dudding's team has to ensure that several diverse strands could come together to create a single integrated project control environment that would support future growth plans: the project management systems themselves, including management information 'dashboards'; management of the project deliverables (i.e. CAB-i-NET); and collaboration between teams and business units, primarily achieved via SharePoint. All of this disparate information is cross-referenced so that workers can access it easily and transparently from one point.

“Beneath that project control environment, it is essential that we have governance, delivery and support mechanisms in place within the business and the IT function that will enable it all to happen,” continues Dudding. “You can buy the best software in the world but if you can't manage its delivery, you're wasting your time. This would be a big task for any organisation, and we see tsaADVET CAB-i-NET as being absolutely central to our managing it.”

The initial pilots are taking in not just the CAD function but also the Transmittals and Client Deliverables, i.e. all the documentation that comes in or goes out related to clients. At the

same time there has been a focus on implementing new CAD standards to enable more efficient cross-discipline working within Atkins' Rail business, as Dudding explains: “CAD standards are notoriously difficult to apply, even within a single project, let alone across different functions and different offices! We need to have a standard in place and know that it's the same whether you're working in Glasgow or Croydon or Dubai. CAB-i-NET gives us the ability to apply those standards, and without it we simply couldn't have done it.”

The central CAB-i-NET SQL database is located in Atkins' Docklands data centre, allowing universal access from anywhere in the business, from the UK to the Middle East, via the company's WAN. At the same time, the decision was made to keep local file stores and CAB-i-NET Workflow Publisher in each major office. Dudding explains why: “It is vital to keep that level of management local. If you don't have someone on site who knows what to do when something goes wrong then you are going to have real problems.”



Future developments at Atkins focus on even greater integration with SharePoint as the business implements the new systems across more divisions and locations: “We've made a massive commitment to using SharePoint right across Atkins,” concludes Dudding, “So it's critical for us that anything that a user does in CAB-i-NET is visible through SharePoint. It all comes down to one simple business requirement: that whatever level you are within the organisation, you can see the information – real, live information - that is important to you in order to help you do your job.”



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