

Centaur Media Plc standardises on C Cube Solutions' eForms to manage company-wide employee expense claims online

- Accounts Payable department saves 10 days processing expense claims every month
- Expense claims project builds on invoice system already successfully installed
- Cash flow improved by better supplier invoice management

September 15, 2010 – C Cube Solutions, a specialist document management and workflow provider, announces that it has completed a project with Centaur Media Plc, one the UK's leading specialist B2B publishing groups, to install its online eForms technology to automate the whole process of employee expense claim management.

Building on an electronic document management system (EDMS) deployed in 2002 to manage purchase invoices, the new system means that Accounts Payable staff are saving 10 days a month to process 250 credit card and cash expense claims – time which is being far better used to run the business. The system delivers 100% correct nominal code costing, improves reporting and has improved organisational effectiveness by making a laborious clerical task quick and easy for staff so they can focus on their core job roles.

Centaur Media employs 650 staff in four office locations. Operating a paper-based expense claims system was inefficient, slow and costly as paperwork had to be couriered between buildings or sent in the internal post which often resulted in delays or lost forms which would then need to be resubmitted.

With a paper system, staff would receive their monthly credit card statements and have to manually enter all items and attached receipts – a laborious process for some who had 60 to 70 purchases to input per month.

Alan Dixie, Centaur Media's head of accountancy services, explains, "We make a direct debit payment to our credit card supplier and things could get quite pressurised before a payment deadline to get expenses back, and items allocated to the right nominal codes."

The business wanted to resolve these issues by introducing an online claims solution to save time and make processing quicker. The project goals were to:

- Improve the efficiency of the whole process;
- Make filling in claims quicker for staff, particularly sales people so they could focus on selling rather than a laborious process of form filling;
- Provide a direct feed into its Microsoft Dynamics SL (Solomon) accounting system to avoid manual input;
- Provide more accurate recording of expenditure by staff – first time - without AP staff involvement.

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Initially, Centaur Media reviewed various online expense solutions on the market but rapidly realised they were expensive and would require extensive modification to make fit in its environment. Jacques Bruyns, Centaur Media's financial system reporting accountant, says, "We decided it would be better if we just built the system ourselves and once we did this, C Cube Solutions was the obvious choice."

This was based on its experience using C Cube Solutions' EDMS solution to index and then automate the approval of over 1,000 supplier invoices received each month - a system implemented in early 2002. Alan Dixie says, "Our invoice approval process is complex because any given invoice may require approval by various users spread across several departments in different physical locations. The system has worked well and means we scan, index and workflow invoices for approval and sign off by publishers and ad managers which are then uploaded into our accounting system."

The invoice system has meant that Centaur Media knows precisely where invoices are in the approval cycle with suppliers paid far more efficiently – the 'knock on' effect being better relationships established with them. Ultimately cash flow has been improved as AP staff can see when direct debit payments will be taken by suppliers – a facility which was previously difficult to do in its accounts package.

C Cube Solutions advised Centaur to utilise its eForms technology for the expense system which sits on top of the existing EDMS solution already in place. The same web-based portal is then used for access. In other words, both expense and invoice systems utilise the same underlying technology and the bespoke built portal front end.

The expense system sits on two HP Proliant servers [one web and one application] running Windows Server 2003 which both share a SCSI-based HP Storageworks RAID storage platform. Staff use Windows-based Dell or HP desktop PCs or Apple's G5 Power Macs to access the system. The three offices are connected via a fully resilient WAN provided by Centaur's voice and data network provider.

C Cube Solutions' eForms technology has provided Centaur Media a cost effective, simple to use solution which is delivering a range of benefits, summarised below:

- The new system has been designed to mimic the old paper process so familiar to staff. It shows date, expense, supplier, category, and amount. Indeed, once expenses are entered into the system, a PDF print out is produced which looks similar to the old form. Staff then attach receipts which have to be physically sent to the AP department for VAT and auditing purposes.
- The solution now automatically allocates the correct nominal code for each expense claim. eForms is populated with credit card statements each month – staff now don't have to rekey this - so that all they have to do is fill in why the expenditure was made, select the country and whether the expense should have VAT applied. This means expenses are allocated correctly, with workflow routing the form to appropriate publishers or managers for approval [and then back to the AP department for loading into the accounting system.
- Accurate cost coding means that at month end, Centaur Media's financial managers don't have to spend much time reviewing nominal codes.

- The new system has freed staff to cope with additional work without the need for additional headcount. For example, Centaur Media purchased a new business, Tax Briefs, in 2010 and the additional expense claims have been easily incorporated.
- Staff have accepted the system because it is intuitive. Alan Dixie says, "On the whole people don't like change and the fact that we've had very few problems or complaints is a good sign."
- Reporting has been improved and is far more accurate which means Centaur Media can now control expense claims far better.
- As the system is available via a VPN connection, it allows finance staff to work from home.

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Note to editors

About Centaur Media PLC

Centaur Media Plc serves a range of vertical markets with a wide portfolio of market leading brands deployed across digital, event and print formats.

These key brands include titles aimed at high value professional communities including Marketing Week, Money Marketing, The Lawyer, New Media Age and Design Week together with a specialist home interest event and magazine portfolio, publishing well known titles such as Period Living, Homebuilding and Renovating and Real Homes.

Founded in 1982, the Group, which has been fully listed on the London Stock Exchange since 2004, employs around 650 staff based in four UK offices – three in London and one in Bromsgrove (Birmingham).

About C Cube Solutions

C Cube Solutions, formerly trading as OITUK, is a specialist provider of electronic document management & workflow solutions that encompass imaging, electronic document and records management, workflow, electronic forms, portal-based business applications and collaboration facilities.

C Cube Solutions has an extensive track record working with organisations in local government, health, financial services and commerce. Visit www.oituk.co.uk for further information.

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