

Canterbury: Map one company in 3 countries in 6 weeks?

If not 'Mission Impossible' it was at the very least, 'Mission Highly Difficult': document the processes of the various divisions of Canterbury Limited (CL), plus three of its subsidiaries, in three different countries, in the space of six weeks!

CL had been undergoing a period of change for a five to six year period. According to Group Financial Controller, Hamish Ward, the company had undergone a shift in focus from being purely a clothing manufacturer to a wholesaler and marketer of products.

"The policy and procedures hadn't been updated in some time," he explained, "so before we moved forward any further we decided to instigate a major project looking at the systems and processes in place right across the group." That included CL head office in Christchurch New Zealand plus its subsidiary operations in Brisbane, Australia; and Manchester, England (the subsidiaries in Cape Town, South Africa and Hong Kong will be included at a later date).

Utilising their relationship with professional services firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers, CL Chief Operating Officer, Maree Harris, spearheaded a group to undertake the systems audit. "We involved Colin McCloy, Kristen Currie and IT expert Neil Sinclair from PricewaterhouseCoopers, along with independent supply chain management specialist, Liam Cogan," says Hamish Ward.

"While the documentation tools we had available to us, Word, Project, Visio and Excel, could have done the job it would have meant very late nights and a lot of stress – we were on such a tight time frame it would have been a nightmare. Fortunately Neil had been demonstrated *XSOL Mapping* and said he thought it would be the way to go."

According to Hamish Ward the impact of the package was really impressive. "We had a few, very minor, teething problems – as you would expect from such new software - but once we had worked out how we wanted things to be documented it went from strength to strength and was very simple to use. Neil, having had minimal training, was able to handle all of our queries and we all picked it up incredibly quickly – even for a bunch of accountants. "

XSOL Mapping sat on CL's existing hardware without any problem. The project team began with analysing the processes employed by Head Office in Christchurch, as this was the largest and probably most complex to be addressed and it made sense to create this model before adding the layers from offshore. The team were then able to load *XSOL Mapping* onto laptops as they started a tour of CL's global subsidiaries to source the required information.

By this time the project team had a system: “We began by having a brainstorming session with each of the division’s managers – be it finance, marketing or sourcing. We were able to sit down with them as a group to analyze how they did things at present – with Neil entering the data as we went.

After an hour or so, the rest of us had a coffee break while Neil put the model onto a big screen. It was just amazing to be able to confirm everyone understood so quickly what was documented and either get their immediate sign off or make adjustments until consensus was reached.”

At the end of their time with a subsidiary the project team would reconfirm the final documentation with each group – as a process it had taken hours, not days, and resulted in robust, enduring documentation, ready for presentation.

“One of the biggest benefits was being able to present the information in a format that made sense to all employees or board members – it was just so easy to show what was happening. The mapping itself was also made easier, as instead of having to recreate links when you introduce new information, *XSOL Mapping* allows you to add new boxes and the active arrow links just automatically re-configure to allow this.

“Coupled with this, the ability to go to the next screen and view what you had entered as a formatted Word document – it was just great. **We would never have got this all documented and processed in just six weeks without *XSOL Mapping*.**”

The next step was to take the divisional models and unite them to get a complete view of the group’s operational processes. Having met deadline, the process model was presented to the CL Board who set about identifying problem areas and putting changes in place to remedy them. COO Maree Harris, armed with this information is now implementing this new set of procedures in each of the countries and is including these into the established process model – a model that will continue to grow with the company applying the same methodology across its international boundaries.

As a global player, CL was appreciative of being able to take this company wide view while still accommodating the very different ways of doing business in each country. “We want consistency but you have to take differences into account; UK for example, has completely different terms of trade to what we operate under in New Zealand. ”

What began as a seemingly impossible task resulted in a very successful project for a small team in a very, very short space of time. CL is now prepared for future change and is able to view in an instant the way it operates, be it in Christchurch, Manchester or Brisbane. The last word comes from Hamish Ward, **“I have to say it again, we would never have achieved this in six weeks if we didn’t have this product.”**

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