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## SharePoint helps engineers manage large volumes of documentation

GBM is an independent firm of engineering consultants specialising in mining projects. Engineers and project staff work with large volumes of documentation and data; each project generates numerous revisions of CAD drawings, technical specifications, reports, calculations, operating costs, and project schedules.

Company documents were held on a shared network drive, and a fairly complicated directory structure had developed over time. An Access database registered document revision numbers and transmittals to clients. “It was up to individuals to be vigilant about recording revision numbers, but it wasn’t easy to sustain,” says Project Manager, Joe Russell. “We also tried to use the database to search for things but it didn’t work very well because it was just a database and not linked into the file share.”

### Better business systems

For a long time, staff had been requesting a document management system that would make it easier to organise, find and access files. Rapid business growth made this need even more pressing.

Russell was tasked with finding the right solution. He says: “We urgently needed to improve our business systems, so I went on a hunt for a tool that we could use to build an intranet and, more specifically, to manage document control and communication with our clients. With engineers on site, often at remote locations and reliant on dial-up connections, we needed a relatively robust online application.”

GBM’s technical support provider introduced Russell to PointBeyond for advice and guidance on using Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server (MOSS). After some initial exploratory meetings, Russell selected MOSS for a corporate intranet, extranet and document management solution.

### Minimise costs

He says: “We had been looking around for someone who could help us decide which technology to go with. Although SharePoint was one of our options, it wasn’t an automatic choice. There were a number of other systems that we could have used, but we wanted to be sure, as a business, that we weren’t tied into something that could change in ways we didn’t want and end up costing us even more.”

#### Customer:

GBM Minerals Engineering Consultants

#### Location:

Middlesex, UK

#### Industry:

Mining

#### Services

SharePoint Consultancy

#### Company Challenge

- Large volumes of documentation
- Complicated directory structure
- Unreliable search
- Reliance on dial-up connections

#### Solution Summary

- MOSS consultancy
- MOSS implementation
- Technical architecture guidance

#### Key Technology

- Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007 (MOSS)

#### Benefits

- Minimised implementation costs
- Confidence in reliability and longevity
- Immediate business benefit
- Simplified document management
- Improved communication

“SharePoint was the first product to give us the comfort we needed. We knew that Microsoft wasn’t going to go away and that SharePoint had been well developed.”

Russell adds: “PointBeyond gave us a lot of confidence both in SharePoint and in their technical skills. A major benefit was that, as a mostly Microsoft house, we could keep costs down by doing a lot of development ourselves, with PointBeyond providing technical architecture expertise.”

## Approval processes and sophisticated search

PointBeyond deployed MOSS and helped GBM develop its corporate intranet and document management capability. One of the major benefits for GBM was the level of functionality available ‘out of the box’; GBM could get MOSS up and running fairly swiftly and then build on the solution over time.

The project team created a structured, hierarchical set of sites for project and document management. MOSS provides built in version control and approval processes, as well as the ability to search across documents and information using captured metadata. Content types and centrally maintained document templates make it easier for authors to create new documents, and Wiki functionality gives GBM a quick and effective way to build its knowledgebase.

## Immediate benefit

With PointBeyond’s assistance, GBM ensured that MOSS provided immediate business benefit, as well as the promise of future enhancements and roll-out across the growing business. Document and project management was simplified, and communications improved within and beyond the company.

Russell says of SharePoint: “It’s doing what we need and it’s working well.” Of PointBeyond he says: “They listen to what you say. They actually respond to what you want rather than insisting on what they think might be the best idea. They made sure that SharePoint does what we need.”

## For more information

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