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Ricoh IT drives up collaboration, productivity, efficiency for UK training and accreditation provider

In partnership with Ricoh, Lantra – one of the UK's leading training and awarding organisations - has developed technology solutions and tools that are delivering digital transformation, reducing paper-based information, improving workflows and business processes, and enhancing operational productivity.

Executive summary

Name: Lantra
Location: Coventry, Warwickshire
Size: 107 staff
Activity: Training content & accreditation

Challenges
- Deliver business vision for digital transformation
- Improve business operations and efficiency
- Aging, out-dated premise-based IT environment

Solution
- Ricoh IT services and consultation
- Ricoh collaboration and communication solutions
- Ricoh Managed & Production Print Services

Benefits
- Increases productivity & efficiency, streamlines business processes
- Cuts IT process from 3-day SLA to seconds with SharePoint
- Business partner collaboration reduces time-to-market for new products
- Sets foundation for digital transformation & enterprise-wide cloud computing
- Reduces print waste, cost and volume

Challenges

Lantra is a not-for-profit awarding organisation with over 40 years' experience developing quality training and qualifications. Practical classroom and online courses are delivered via a nationwide network of expert providers, instructors and assessors, quality assured to Lantra standards. People repairing motorways, handling agricultural equipment or doing land and forestry jobs may have completed Lantra-accredited training.

Lantra's vision is to provide the best training and quality assurance, and it sees digital transformation as a critical means of achieving that goal. But the legacy IT and business process environment inherited by its IT Manager, Richard Crompton, was outdated and unable to support a modern, collaborative and digital work environment. Change would require a shift from static, on-site data centre and system resources to a cloud computing strategy.

Ricoh was already a Lantra supplier for print equipment and, through consultation around Lantra's business challenges and objectives, the two organisations formed a partnership to develop a pathway for digital transformation.

Solution

The relationship began over ten years ago with a Ricoh Managed Print Service (MPS) and Ricoh Multifunction Products (MFPs). Since then the MPS has evolved to provide a fully secure print, copy and scan solution. Users access services at any location via an MFP with their Lantra key fob. Senior managers get detailed end user and departmental reporting. The solution reduces the printer fleet by 50 percent, cuts print volumes and encourages more mobile and remote working. Lantra also upgraded its reprographics facility – used for printing training materials – with a new

Ricoh production press incorporating bookmaking equipment. Large print jobs are diverted to the print room which frees up the office-based MFPs.

Lantra expanded its collaboration capability with Ricoh Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) in head office and Scotland, with the Welsh office planned for next phase. A portable Ricoh IWB is used for external events. Skype for Business has been integrated with the IWBs to enhance collaboration.

One of the most significant developments along Lantra's digital transformation pathway has been working with Ricoh to deploy Microsoft SharePoint. This has been a step-change in enabling Lantra to deliver a raft of new services and capabilities to further improve collaboration, communication and more agile, productive business processes. Integrated with Lantra's Microsoft Office 365 service, SharePoint acts as a platform for applications like an intranet and media library. Lantra appointed champions from each department to be administrators to train and help their teams use the SharePoint, as well as monitor and approve content.

Lantra is now working with Ricoh to migrate all its on-premise file servers and core business systems to SharePoint to develop an enterprise-wide, cloud computing environment.

Lantra's ongoing partnership with Ricoh provides access to advanced technologies to help Lantra develop new, best-of-breed solutions to further improve operations and customer service.

Benefits

The partnership with Ricoh has helped Lantra develop the technology platforms and tools it needs to move business systems and content to the cloud, reduce reliance on paper-based information, improve workflows and business processes, and enhance collaboration and operational productivity.

Crompton says, "One of the main drivers for developing Lantra's SharePoint platform with Ricoh was more collaboration and better staff communications and it's definitely doing that. We're starting to see more uptake of collaboration tools like Slack, Teams and Planner, and less use of email. It's very encouraging to see people starting to work better and smarter, and in a more communicative way."

Some of the improvements Lantra is starting to realise are better staff and team interaction. They are using the SharePoint intranet to set up functional and process-driven groups to collaborate and communicate on projects and documents. Integrating Microsoft Office 365 with the intranet is also helping new staff identify and communicate with colleagues easily so they can get embedded in the organisation faster.

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The Ricoh solution is also helping Lantra collaborate with its learning provider community. Lantra uses partner expertise to produce courses and certifications. Now content is being developed in collaboration with providers, in real-time, via Microsoft OneDrive and SharePoint. This is speeding up significantly, the time it takes to produce material and get products to market faster.

The SharePoint media library now hosts all of Lantra's images and videos. This content forms a core part of course content. Each item in the library is categorised in multiple ways and licensing rules applied to make searching and using content quick and simple.

Lantra is planning a learner portal which, among other features, will replace printed course certificates with digital ones. Learners will be able to give prospective employers temporary access to their training record and certificates.

Another example of how the Ricoh solution is supporting collaboration and improving productivity is on and off-boarding staff. The IT team has a three-day SLA to manage starters and leavers. Previously, IT was alerted about this by a hand-written paper form which usually arrived the day before action was needed. In extreme cases, IT would hear about a leaver three months after they had left. New workflows and custom forms via SharePoint mean that within seconds of a form being activated, IT is alerted and can get in new kit or lock an account. Crompton says, "It is this kind of capability that is starting to make our lives immensely better and far more secure."

In parallel with SharePoint are other collaboration tools such as the Ricoh IWBs. Instead of three annual company reviews, Lantra holds one presentation at head office and staff from any location using any device can participate via a Ricoh IWB, using Skype for Business.

Lantra's vision for the SharePoint intranet is to increase integrations so that it becomes a virtual office space and the place that everyone goes to everyday. Crompton says, "The enabling solutions and technologies Lantra and Ricoh have built are starting to bust people's jobs a bit. They will see how easy it is and start changing old ways of working like writing a document, sending it to colleagues and getting it criticised. Creating something can be emotional and personal, but with the tools we have in place it becomes something that is collaborative and there is a sense of teamwork and shared ownership."

Ricoh Solution/Products

- Microsoft SharePoint integrated with
- Microsoft Office 365
- Microsoft apps – OneDrive, Teams and Planner
- Slack
- Skype for Business
- Ricoh Interactive Whiteboards
- Ricoh Multifunction Products
- Ricoh production print technology

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Richard Crompton, IT Manager, Lantra

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