

Dairy Crest maintains product integrity with Event Management Approval Workflow from Kelros.



As the UK's leading chilled dairy foods company Dairy Crest boasts an impressive array of top selling brands across a wide range of sectors. The company is focused on strengthening and developing its portfolio of brands and delivering excellent value to its stakeholders; including shareholders, customers, suppliers and employees. This has led Dairy Crest to invest in efficient production and distribution facilities maximising the company's return on investment.

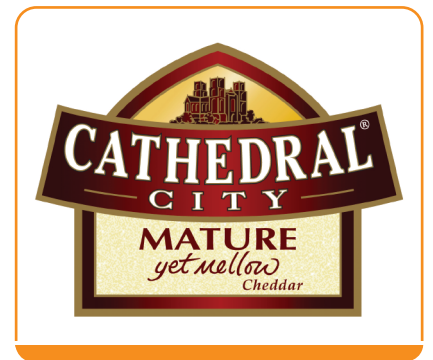
Dairy Crest manufactures, packs, distributes and markets some of the UK's most popular products and brands, including Clover, Utterly Butterly and Frij as well as leading cheese brands, Cathedral City, Davidstow and Wexford. Many of the company's products are subject to 'events' aimed at maximising their sale. These 'events' can include the introduction of a new product, a promotion, a significant change in the volumes of product going to a particular customer, a price or packaging change. In fact, every activity that has an impact on, or changes an aspect of any product has to be recorded and managed. Typically Dairy Crest receives in the region of 2,500 to 3,000 requests for changes each year, for the cheese and spreads products and brands alone.

The Business Need

The workflow for approving events was previously managed by Dairy Crest via a series of spreadsheets. The process was becoming unmanageable and it was difficult to collect meaningful data. Information was often in different formats and almost impossible to control as the spreadsheets were emailed between people. Often changes and updates were delayed for want of the latest version, with information occasionally being lost along the way. The problems of managing the workflow of events meant that changes were sometimes late being updated into the core systems. This could, for example, result in credit notes being issued to correct invoices issued at the wrong price. Clearly, a robust and easy to use system for managing such a high volume of change requests had to be found.

The Solution

The issue of the event workflow approval system came to a head when Dairy Crest identified requirements for a forecasting and supply chain project. As a Project Manager within Dairy Crest's Business Systems department, Martin Dent explains, "If the information at the heart of the system isn't right, it has an impact on other parts of the business. We realised that we needed a more robust and manageable event workflow system. "The team looked at a number of alternatives before deciding to out-source the development. "We sent details of the application to six or seven companies in a fairly close geographic area," he says, "and invited companies to register their interest in the project." From these responses Dairy Crest drew up a shortlist of two to give presentations showing



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experience of similar work and their approach. Of these Swindon based Kelros was selected to build the solution. Martin Dent explains, "Kelros seemed to understand our issues well and quickly. They presented a credible development methodology and we had confidence in their ability to develop the right solution."

After analysing the company's requirements, Kelros was able to develop a Lotus Notes application that would handle the extremely large and complex events as well as fast-track the smaller events that did not need to

undergo the full approval process. The application leveraged Dairy Crest's existing Lotus Notes environment and users' familiarity with Lotus Notes to provide a solid, robust and controlled workflow approval system. The sixty users of the system would then benefit from being able to access the system offline, from home in the case of the sales users, and from seven of the Dairy Crest offices around the UK, and return changes to a centralised Lotus Notes database at head office.

Today, Dairy Crest's National Account Managers, sales users and marketeers are able to raise their promotion within the familiar Lotus Notes environment, and enter financial and volume data as required. This work-flow is securely deployed around the business until the promotion is either rejected or accepted. The exact route of each promotion is flexible, but once set is rigid.

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Working Together

Due to the fact that Dairy Crest's Business Systems team had invested time writing up a detailed requirements specification the development took just two months. It was implemented in a three-phase delivery: Phase One was a pre-prototype proof of concept, Phase Two consisted of a real prototype, which underwent testing and any problems were identified and solved prior to Phase Three, which was the final delivery and roll-out across the company. As Martin Dent explains, "Interaction between our people and Kelros was very good, people were in close contact and we got some helpful ideas for the implementation from Kelros."

User training was carried out by Dairy Crest to embed the new solution with the user base. According to Martin Dent, "Reception was very positive. As with any new way of working there was some initial resistance, but that soon went as people recognised the value of the solution."

Following the implementation and handover the team at Dairy Crest has become fully self-sufficient with any changes to the application dealt with in-house.

The Benefits

Thanks to the attention that Dairy Crest paid to their requirements specification, and to the development work carried out by their chosen partner Kelros, Dairy Crest now benefits from a robust Event Management Approval Workflow system that maintains the integrity of the approval process.

The system now:

- Prevents spreadsheet formulae from being changed by sales users.
- Maintains a consistent format, look and feel at every stage.
- Allows flexible routing around the business, providing access where and when required.
- Provides full visibility to management and decision makers across the entire organisation.

Martin Dent concludes: "We now have a robust, working solution that was implemented without any surprises or dramas. That is itself testament to Kelros' development strengths and the comprehensive handover of the system." He continues, "Kelros would certainly be the leading contender in any future implementation."

Built with IBM technology, Kelros solutions are easy to deploy, customise and use. Currently accessible from the IBM Lotus Notes client and the Web, ongoing initiatives will take the Kelros modules onto both IBM WebSphere Portal and IBM DB2 to provide customers with greater choice. Kelros' application licensing model ensures all solutions are sold on a per company basis rather than a per seat basis. Kelros applications are certified to run on Linux.

Kelros is an IBM Premier business partner, provided with technical and marketing support to help meet information technology needs of SMB companies. Kelros is an Optimised member of IBM's PartnerWorld Industry Networks (PWIN) for ISVs providing solutions that integrate enterprises, customers and supply chains. The PWIN initiatives accelerate teaming between Kelros and IBM to provide leadership in this growth arena.

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