

Fujifilm Electronic Imaging maintains its reputation for excellence in support with adaptable and flexible solutions from Kelros.



FUJIFILM ELECTRONIC IMAGING LTD.

FUJIFILM Electronic Imaging Ltd. (FFEI) is Fujifilm's only subsidiary which designs manufactures and markets products for Fujifilm outside Japan. The company, established in 1997, employs over 330 staff within the UK and distributes its portfolio of products worldwide via Fujifilm subsidiaries and third party distributors.

FFEI is dedicated to providing quality, 'open' imaging systems using leading-edge, proven technologies. Providing support for these is the distributor in the front-line reinforced by the Product Quality and Technical Support Team based in Hemel Hempstead, UK.

With overall responsibility for quality of products, as well as the systems and service extended to FFEI's customers, Product Quality & Customer Support Manager Bob Willis's team of fifteen technical engineers provides second and third line support to the company's distributors and acts, Bob explains, "as the voice of the customer back into Fujifilm."

The Business Need

Support organisations add considerably more value to an enterprise than just troubleshooting. The knowledge-base built from interaction with customers provides insight into how products are being used and what future developments might be required. They need a system that records the interaction between customer and technicians, shows the history of a support call and enables information to be used intelligently for the benefit of the whole company.

To manage this process FFEI had inherited an IBM Lotus Notes system developed more than ten years ago. This was becoming unsupportable as it was not feasible to upgrade the system to later versions of IBM Lotus Notes. "We had to adapt our processes to fit the system," said Bob, "The lack of an interactive web interface meant that our engineers were cutting and pasting information from e-mails into the system. Reporting was not adequate and it didn't handle

attachments at all well." He continued, "Too much time was being spent managing the system, rather than getting on with our real task – solving people's technical support issues."

FFEI made a decision to upgrade the system entirely, replacing it with something that would add value to the support organisation, to distributors and would enable technical engineers to focus on their core operations.

The Solution

At the end of 2003 the IT department built a specification for a new system using the Kepner-Tregoe decision making model, as Bob explains, "We determined the strategic requirements (must-haves), operational objectives (wants) and the restraints (limits). Using these principles we researched the different types of solutions available." FFEI found that IBM Lotus Notes was the only effective platform to meet the



requirements. The high quality of training that FFEI provides to its distributor community means that most technical issues can be solved in the field without recourse to the head office support facility. "However those that require

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second or third line support are generally quite complex." explained Bob, "So, we deal with a relatively small number of problems, requiring extensive communication between distributor and support engineers. These can generate long text fields on which a support system would need to be able

to carry out full text searches. IBM Lotus Notes provided that level of capability."

FFEI invited seven companies to complete a questionnaire to assess their suitability as a solution provider. A shortlist of four companies was invited to receive a presentation from FFEI. This unusual step was important to help people understand what FFEI's expectations were, what issues they were facing and how they wanted the suppliers to use their skills and technology to come up with a solution.

The input from Kelros' Paul Mason and Marc Garcia at this point impressed the selection team who liked the presentation and style of Kelros' response. Other solutions offered were effectively "off-the-shelf" with some tailoring. Kelros offered the shrink-wrapped kelros.sales and kelros.support solutions with extensive customisation. "The knowledge and understanding showed by Kelros gave us confidence that they could make significant

changes to their solution to meet our, frankly, untypical needs." Bob continued, "They gave us guidance about which areas of our specification could be improved, which might prove a risk and what could realistically be altered to deliver a better return on our investment. This was impressive and valuable help at such an early stage."

The decision to adopt the Kelros approach was taken in July 2004, kelros.support provided the backbone for the Assistance Requests reporting and monitoring system. kelros.sales was deployed as a CRM repository for distributor information. The extensive customisation of kelros.support was carried out on site by the Kelros developer. kelros.support was enhanced primarily to provide accurate time tracking to enable FFEI to demonstrate their performance to the distributor. It was also changed to allow FFEI technical support staff full functionality via both an IBM Lotus Notes client and a web browser, while allowing the

distributor a restricted view and functionality via a web browser only.

The need for a smooth roll-out without incurring the cost and disruption of training was identified as one of the restraints in the Kepner Tregoe process. With 1000+ users able to access the system and a core of 150 key users extensive training could have been costly and unwelcome, reducing the take up of the system and removing the benefits of implementing it. An FFEI user interface that was fairly familiar was required, along with an intuitive web-based interface for distributors.

"Unlike the off-the-shelf packages we wanted to provide information our way," Bob explains, "We wanted the history of the call, with the direction of the communication, to be clear from a single main page." Working closely with Kelros FFEI was able to achieve a solution that marched their business processes, rather than the software defining how they worked.

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The Benefits

Today FFEI and its distributor community benefits from a system which provides:

- improved tracking and monitoring of service requests
- improved statistics collection and reporting on Service Level Agreement performance
- better audit and monitoring of Assistance Request suggestions and responses

One of the results of the implementation has been an increase in the number of support calls being fielded by the team, without increasing staff. The team handles an increased workload though more efficient and effective working.

Distributors benefit from better quality of information, easier access to technical expertise and a faster response. As Bob explains, "It's a testament to the system that we're now handling more calls – support performance has increased because of efficiencies in the system, but also because our distributors are realising its value and ease of use."

The experience of working with Kelros has been very positive. Particularly in the consistency of contact - strong bonds have been formed and a deep level of knowledge and understanding of FFEI's operations serve to give the company confidence in the relationship. "We are dealing with people who understand our requirements and will do everything they can to meet our expectations." Says Bob.

FFEI is proud of its reputation for high quality products and services, "Our support offering is the best in the industry," says Bob, "we're determined to keep that edge and are looking at ways of utilising new technologies like SMS to maintain our lead. The Kelros team are helping us achieve our goals."

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 strategic alliance partner and an IBM ISV Advantage partner, provided with technical and marketing support to help meet information technology needs of SMB companies. Kelros is an advanced 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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Kelros
72 Shrivensham Hundred
Majors Road
Watchfield
Swindon
SN6 8TY
United Kingdom

tel: +44 (0)1793 784666
fax: +44 (0)1793 784777

email: sales@kelros.com
web: www.kelros.com