

## Ricoh NZ deploys 'jump start' CRM solution

When Ricoh NZ went shopping for a CRM package, IBM Lotus business partner Crossware delivered a finely tailored solution within 90 days...

Ricoh New Zealand is an industry leader in office automation equipment, including colour copiers, printers, scanners, and fax machines. With branches located in each of the country's main centres, Ricoh now employs over 180 staff throughout New Zealand and its local market share has grown significantly in the last few years.

Last year the business realised that one result of this success was that the company had outgrown its entry-level CRM software.

Ricoh's sales team had swelled to 45 reps, plus trainers and sales support staff, and in an earlier attempt to supply these staff with a 'mobility solution,' Ricoh had rolled out an internet-based CRM software package. The results were less than stunning.

Ricoh NZ's Auckland branch manager Cameron Mount says the speed of the old web-enabled CRM software was completely inadequate.

"The sales reps needed Herculean amounts of patience... needless to say that when we came to select new CRM software, speed was right up there on our wish list."

Ultimately Ricoh selected Parnell-based Crossware as its new CRM vendor. "Luckily for us, Ricoh's sales team were all well equipped with late model laptops," says Crossware development manager Paul Graham.

"Crossware was able to supply a highly customized CRM solution that a) did not require an internet connection, and b) ran at exactly the same high speeds on disconnected laptops, as on head office PCs."

Lastly, but very importantly, Crossware's solution provided two-way synchronisation of data (to update any changes made while off-line) which operated completely in the background in a process that was fully automated.

Back at Ricoh, Mount says his team members don't even know what synchronization or replication is. "Replication is just something that happens behind the scenes, without the user's intervention. It happens whenever they plug in their laptop at one of Ricoh's offices, or whenever they connect to the internet from home or from a hotel room."

### Protecting Ricoh's property

Security was an another important consideration for

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### At A Glance

#### Business Objective

Ricoh needed to replace a slow and ineffective web-based CRM package with a tailored solution that was capable of working offline.

#### Solution

Semi-bespoke CRM solution from Crossware.

#### Business Benefits

Ricoh's sales staff are using their time more efficiently as the Crossware CRM solution allows them to work from home or on the road, and it decreases their reliance on returning to home base. Tailored security features have minimised the risk of Ricoh data falling into the wrong hands.

Ricoh, as its old software had some serious flaws in that area.

Ricoh worked closely with Crossware to design software with background tests for inappropriate or suspicious use of the database.

"We saw this as a fail-safe way to protect our data, as well as a double-check to make sure rogue copies had not fallen into the wrong hands," says Mount.

Another security feature of the Crossware solution was that exporting and third party data exchange were completely disabled. Crossware's managing director Per Anderson says that extraction of data from this system is not impossible, but it would require "a hacker of military strength" to do it.

The underlying IBM technology used to build Crossware's CRM solution was also attractive for Ricoh as IBM middleware is renowned for being robust and virus-free. "We use the expression military-strength literally" says Andersen, "IBM Lotus numbers the navies of the US, UK, Australia and NZ among its clients, along with the intelligence services of the US and a number of other nations".

#### **Out of the office**

Another important consideration for Ricoh was mobility. Ricoh's management wanted the sales staff to be able to work from home or on the road, and to decrease their reliance on returning to home base.

"Business owners tell us with increasing frequency that they are not keen on paying their sales staff to sit in traffic jams", says Crossware sales manager Ken Fairgray. "They are interested in software that equips sales professionals to optimise their use of time. That's why Crossware's solution removes the need for physical appearance at the office, at least for IT purposes..."

#### **Jump start solution**

Ricoh's new CRM solution was delivered within a tight 90-day time frame.

According to Crossware such rapid development is possible because the company's 'out-of-the-box' solution typically delivers between 60% and 90% of the purchaser's needs, while the balance is built based on detailed written specifications.

"The result is the best of both worlds: cost and time savings from a jump start solution on top of all the benefits of a tailor-made finished product," says Fairgray.

This approach also means Crossware's solutions are competitively priced.

"Our CRM licenses are affordable for New Zealand-sized businesses, and all of the customisation and modifications are performed right here at local rates." says Fairgray.

#### **In good company**

In opting for Crossware's CRM solution, Ricoh has

joined a long list of local customers including Avanti Cycles, Omron Electronics, the Livestock Improvement Corporation, and venue and event management company The Edge.

Crossware's CRM solution originated in Scandinavia, where Crossware was established 15 years ago as one of the very first Lotus business partners in the world.

The firm opened its Auckland offices in 2000 and launched Crossware in the local market when the then Copenhagen-based founders of the business fell in love with New Zealand while on holiday here.

Today Crossware is New Zealand's largest IBM Lotus business partner, and the firm uses Auckland as development center for international implementations of their CRM and other solutions.

**For more information**

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**Further Reading**

- [The Edge gets smart with IBM](#)
- [CRM ride on for Avanti](#)
- [Montana's secrets ripe for sharing](#)

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