



Forms Lifecycle Manager™ Success Story

Buckinghamshire County Council

KEY FACTS

CLIENT

Buckinghamshire County Council

INDUSTRY

Local Government

CHALLENGES

- Eliminate inefficiency of staff forms processing
- Reduce costs of processing paper forms
- Allow auditing and monitoring of forms in the system

SOLUTION

- Forms Lifecycle Manager™ (FLM) processes such as routing can be easily designed and managed
- Adobe forms provide a familiar paper-like front-end for users
- FLM administration tools allow easy monitoring of form catalogue
- Real-time integration with SAP

RESULTS

- Optimized processing of staff payroll
- Audits of form processes are easily created
- More prompt staff payment
- Reduced time and cost spent processing forms
- Long-term manageable form strategy implemented

Background

Buckinghamshire County Council is a large organisation serving just under half a million residents. The Council provides a wide range of services including education, healthcare, transport and environmental management. It has an SAP-based system to coordinate its activities. Optimising the efficiency and minimising the cost of business processes is a high priority for all Local Government organisations. They have a responsibility to deliver the best possible services and provide good value for the taxpayer. Forms Lifecycle Manager™ (FLM) by Arch contributes to this aim, reinforcing and enhancing Buckinghamshire's customer focus objective.

Enterprise-wide Technology

The e-forms solution was first designed to replace the paper forms used in processing schools' supply teacher payments. The second phase incorporates payments for overtime and non-salaried school staff as well as home tutor claims.

Supply teachers are employed by the Council to work in its 200 schools on a per-hour basis. Different pay rates apply according to which school the teacher works in and whether they are entitled to claim any additional allowances. Each day's work must be signed off by a relevant approver. A very

similar process applies to claims for home tutors.

The paper-based process for supply teacher claims involved some 1500 forms being processed manually every month. It was also a post-based system, where there was the potential for forms to be lost or delayed in transit. Queries on payments took time to process and check, resulting in supply teachers sometimes having to wait 2 to 3 months to be paid.

The School Claims Form combines and replaces several different forms including timesheets for school casual staff, overtime forms for salaried non-teaching staff and senior midday supervisor claims.

Efficient and Scalable Solution

Buckinghamshire CC was looking for a solution to streamline the process for these school payroll claims and improve reliability. FLM™ was chosen because of its potential to both overcome the difficulties with the existing process and provide a future platform to extend the technology to other areas of the organisation.

"We wanted a solution that improved the timeliness and accuracy of our forms processing", says David Firth, SAP Service Manager at Buckinghamshire CC.

“In addition to the features we anticipated from the solution, FLM provided more out-of-the-box tools to allow us to get the most out of our e-forms.”

“There is virtually no opportunity for data to be lost using this system, a huge improvement from the paper processes of the past.”

David Firth, SAP Service Manager at Buckinghamshire CC

Arch, The Mews, Elliott Road,
Chiswick, London W4 1PF United Kingdom
www.arch-global.com

FLM and the paper dart logo are registered trademarks of Arch.
©Copyright Arch, 2008
All other copyrights are acknowledged
April 2008

“SAP Interactive Forms by Adobe provided the technology to present high quality forms that could be easily integrated with SAP. This allows us to maintain the existing layout of our forms at the user-end, whilst enabling the integration of the form data with SAP at the back-end.”

The multi-faceted package offered by SAP Interactive Forms by Adobe with FLM is an ideal solution. The Adobe component allows the paper form look-and-feel to be retained and the SAP component supports integration with the back-end SAP system. FLM brings these capabilities together and provides additional features that mean the full potential can be exploited.

“We needed a method to route the e-forms to the required approver, which would vary according to the school the claimant worked in,” says Firth. “The FLM Routing Engine allows the form to be routed to the correct head teacher required to sign off the timesheets. It appears in their portal inbox, where it can be approved and submitted to SAP payroll for processing”.

One of the advantages of FLM is that it reduced the amount of time spent on designing and integrating the business logic of each form, leaving more time to spend optimising the form look-and-feel. Buckinghamshire CC was able to produce finished forms that mimicked the paper forms they replaced, meaning users were familiar with the forms from the off. 181 out of just over 200 schools adopted the Supply Teacher Claim Form scheme at go-live, and almost all are now covered.

“In addition to the features we anticipated from the solution, FLM provided more out-of-the-box tools to allow us to get the most out of our e-forms,” continues Firth. “For example, the Posting Engine enables forms to be ‘queued up’ at the time when payroll is being processed, so even late-submitted forms can be stored, and then posted once payroll is open again. The administration tools such as the Form History Report, Cleanup Utility and Dashboard enable us to keep track of all the forms in the system and make changes as necessary. There is virtually no opportunity for data to be lost using this system, a huge improvement from the paper processes of the past. We can also select an option to create an audit trail showing the form’s status at each stage of the routing, and hide, show or highlight fields according to who is accessing the form.”

A Popular Initiative

The result is that Buckinghamshire CC has a successful and fully functioning e-forms solution that they are planning to extend in the very near future with two further forms: the School Claims Form and the Home Tutor Claims Form. The reduction in the amount of time and staff effort spent processing the paper forms has resulted in considerable cost savings.

Employees are also receiving a better service as a result of the increased efficiency. “Head teachers are grateful for the ease with which they can now approve timesheets, and the feedback from the supply teachers has been very positive,” says Firth. “They are certainly happy about being paid more promptly!”

