

Case Study: Working with the NHS



Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) is the international centre of excellence for treating sick children and teaching and training children's specialists. It is essential that the catering service at GOSH reflects the highest standard of medical care provided at the hospital. An independent audit was commissioned in 2007 to ensure that the catering standards were being maintained throughout the operation including in ward feeding, hospitality, two restaurants, a retail shop and a Costa coffee outlet. With just under £1 million of catering purchases per annum, the audit highlighted the need for updating key back of house financial processes including invoice management, purchasing control and product comparisons.

The Challenge

Over the years GOSH had developed its' own range of IT systems in house. Using a complex series of Excel spreadsheets and paper based forms to capture and record data, systems were not linked and took up a great deal of time to complete. As an output, key performance data was slow in coming out of the system but the team at GOSH were familiar with its idiosyncrasies, and change would be challenging. A new IT system would need to have flexibility in order to match the bespoke needs of GOSH; it would need to be easy to use by all levels of staff, delivered to a fixed budget, and achieve savings for the Trust that would ultimately pay for any investment.

The Solution

In 2007 GOSH invited IndiCater to respond to a tender for their Catering Electronic Procurement and Financial System. Following a 6 month tender process, IndiCater was awarded the contract, with the system going live in April 2008. Using IndiCater's modular web-based platform, with just 8 weeks of development and training time, IndiCater provided GOSH with:

- **A communications intranet facilitating the storage of internal documents, manuals including health and safety and COSHH, and providing rapid communication throughout the department**
- **A tailored finance module to record and access data in real time including cash sales, credit sales, invoices, banking, EPOS takings etc.**
- **An e-procurement, stock control and recipe management module to facilitate better buying, diligence and cost control**

The IndiCater modular system was developed by ex-caterers who understand the very specific needs of complex catering operations such as GOSH. The system has been kept simple, allowing new modules to be added when clients and their teams are ready to move on to the next step. This modular approach has allowed GOSH to train staff at all levels in a series of simple procedures which ultimately come together to produce a series powerful management reports.

The Outcomes

IndiCater met the brief, providing GOSH with a Catering Electronic Procurement and Financial System that changed the way that catering costs and sales are measured and managed by the Trust. Under the direction of a dedicated IndiCater Project Manager, the system has been delivered on time and within strict budget limitations.

Working hand in hand with GOSH, IndiCater have adapted the system to meet the specific requirements of the NHS, utilising its full potential from day 1. Undoubtedly there have been challenges along the way – but each has been seen as an opportunity to build a stronger and more versatile system that doesn't compromise on needs.

With the cost pressures placed on both the public and commercial sectors, the system immediately enabled GOSH to identify areas where costs could be better managed, acting on data that is both accurate and captured in real time.

The system has also enabled the catering management team to spend more time front of house and on the wards with patients and their families, ensuring that standards of customer care and service are continually maintained.

Moving Forward

In 2009, IndiCater and GOSH started working together on the introduction of new modules, tools and processes to further enhance the systems versatility and outputs.

These included:

- Introduction of IndiCater's Employment and HR module which will allow the catering department to capture and manage staff records, rotas and scheduling, training records, absence and sickness, timesheets, staff turnover, visa management and so forth.
- Hand held PDA's for stock taking and product management, allowing stock to be entered directly onto the system, saving time and reducing the possibility of errors.
- Full linking of EPOS cash registers into the stock control system, allowing the automatic updating of supplier orders based on consumption.
- Development of seamless ward ordering system, linking orders directly into supplier orders and food production schedules.

PRESS RELEASE 2009:

Great Ormond Street Hospital wins national award

Robert Wilkins, Operational Catering Manager for Great Ormond Street, the UK's leading children's hospital, wins **Project Manager of the Year 2009** award presented by HefmA (Health Estates & Facilities Management Association).

In a toughly fought competition, the award was presented to Robert for demonstrating the most effective project management competence for his work with IndiCater on the computerisation of the catering operations. This was a complex and demanding project that had to meet the diverse requirements of the hospital. Working hand in hand with the team at IndiCater, Robert brought in the project on time, on budget and now has a system in place which exceeds expectations.

Said Robert Wilkins "The award recognises the dedication of both the Great Ormond Street project team and IndiCater team in demonstrating a truly determined 'can do' attitude. IndiCaters continuous R&D, industry knowledge and overall attitude has significantly contributed to this award".