

## case study



# Martlet tenants experience the benefits of scheduling technology

CHICHESTER based Martlet Homes maintain over 5,000 homes across 300 square miles.



### Key Points

- Number of properties maintained - 5,000+
- Number of responsive orders a year – 14,000
- % @ decent homes - 83%
- Size of geographical area - 300 sq m

The geography added to the challenge of delivering an effective appointment service and Martlet decided to implement scheduling technology as the platform to support the cultural change the business wanted to deliver.

Said Valerie Adler, Business Initiatives and Programme Manager: “We chose to implement



OPTI-TIME as from the outset we couldn't see any provider who could find answers to our niche issues or meet our needs in such a tidy manner.”

“After the first six weeks of moving from a paper based system to OPTI-TIME we had halved our no access visits. This, among the many other improvements we have achieved, is down to the customer knowing what to expect and driving the appointments system.” Operating efficiencies, meaning more jobs per man per month, have been improving ever since the initial implementation in January 2005, and Valerie is expecting this to continue with handheld technology currently being introduced.

### Improving Customer Experience

The most significant aspect of the new ways of working, and particularly the introduction of handheld technology, is the ability to improve the

customer experience. The customer wants the operative to arrive when promised and stay to finish the repair; this is only possible with more flexible working and with the operatives working together coordinated by a central planning team. Managers have more control over the workforce generally and there is more fluidity in the jobs operatives are undertaking.

Said Valerie: “For us, the great thing about OPTI-TIME is its flexibility and the way it allows us to effectively deploy people on the ground, covering a large area with relatively few operatives. The time taken to complete jobs has also decreased significantly as a direct result of more effective workforce planning”.

“It has, so far, given us a better idea of where our trades people are and what they are doing. But now with the introduction of handhelds we



will be able to see this in real time to work with maximum effectiveness; The challenge is to continuously increase value for money without compromising customer satisfaction, and OPTI-TIME has helped us on the road to achieving this.”

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Valerie continues: "OPTI-TIME is an incredibly intuitive system; it is easy to learn and very effective as, unlike many software systems, it does exactly what it says it is going to. But we knew from the outset that to enjoy the full benefits of OPTI-TIME we needed to go mobile."

### Culture Change

The biggest challenge in the process has been changing the culture of the organisation. To ensure operative buy in, first for OPTI-TIME and



now for handhelds, Martlet involved users from across the entire organisation, including trades people, call centre operatives and managers.

The project implementation team aimed to ensure every user saw the potential benefit to them individually; for example, operatives understood that the system would mean out of date jobs was an issue for schedulers not trades people.

Said Valerie: "Moving towards mobile working and intelligent scheduling, like all business process change, is 20 percent technology and 80 percent business culture. Any software system is only as powerful as the team of people using it and these people have to see the benefits of change for themselves and be

fully behind the system. They also have to understand why the change was necessary in the first place."

To ensure the change process was successful, Martlet undertook a comprehensive process review to examine what processes they had and what they eventually wanted to achieve. The goal was for the system to support the organisations objectives rather than drive them. The next step was extensive dialogue with staff and managers throughout the business. Not only do staff as individuals need to understand why they are being asked to change and what is required of them, but more importantly, communication between people from different functions needs to change and become second nature.

Valerie summarises the process: "We identified the way we wanted to work before producing a technical specification for OPTI-TIME to ensure it helped us meet our objectives. A good business application supports the way an organisation wants to work rather than dictating it and this is what OPTI-TIME offers. Together with mobile working it is a powerful tool and, in effective hands, it is magic."



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