

RICHARD EMERY - PROJECT EXPERIENCE

JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

John Lewis were one of the first companies in the UK to move from old-fashioned cash registers to the new Electronic Point of Sale (EPoS) systems that were beginning to be developed. As Project Manager I was responsible for defining the business requirements and working with the system suppliers to meet those requirements. IBM had very little understanding of department store retailing in the UK and their first generation systems fell far short of what we needed so we worked with them to develop their future systems to meet our business needs.

The project lasted over 5 years and cost £6m. It covered 17 department stores, ranging up to 250,000 sq ft (25,000 sq mtr) and the complete system had over 30 mini-computers and 1,300 EPoS terminals.

ICL WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT

Although ICL was the No.1 supplier of EPoS systems in the UK they did not have a Retail Warehouse Management System (RWMS) that they could offer to their users. We identified a third-party WMS that could be developed into a full RWMS solution and worked with two retailers as the focus for that development. As the Project Manager for one of the clients I was responsible for defining their business requirements and ensuring that these were incorporated into the new system. I Project Managed the implementation of the system in parallel with their move from a number of disparate units into a new integrated distribution facility.

ICL RETAIL EXHIBITIONS

As the leading supplier of EPoS systems it was important for ICL to have the “showcase” stand at every major retail systems exhibition. As Project Manager I took on board what the various Marketing Managers wanted to exhibit and then worked with the stand designers and builders to achieve the highest quality of presentation within the available budget. The stand needed about 40 staff and I was responsible for managing the whole team. One year the Marketing Managers wanted to show that ICL could deliver head office systems as well as in-store solutions so I arranged for a mainframe to be installed on the exhibition stand. The timetable for the stand build meant that we had only 12 hours to install a full size mainframe. I was told that it couldn't be done but we did it with time to spare!

ISSC / UNISOURCE - WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

ISSC was a subsidiary of IBM and they were completely re-engineering the whole IT infrastructure for Unisource. Unisource was a paper distribution company with over 100 warehouses in North America. The 3 pilot sites for the new WMS (which had cost over \$3m) were not functioning as expected and I was asked to go to the USA and investigate what was going wrong. In summary my report said that they were trying to install the wrong solution because they had failed to correctly define their business requirements because the wrong person had written them because the appointment of a new senior Vice-President for Logistics had been blocked at board level.

I was asked to spend one week in every three for several months working in USA to put the project on the right course, which I did.

SUITS YOU

Suits You were operating their warehouse and distribution services from a number of separate units on an industrial park and needed to bring them together in a single location. Having identified a suitable new warehouse shell they appointed me to define the physical processes and layout, and then Project Manage the fit-out and relocation.

As the business continued to grow rapidly they appointed me for two further assignments, one of which was to design and Project Manage a new facility for their men's formalwear hire business. This new facility needed to support up to 600 garment sets returning from hire each day for dry-cleaning & pressing, laundering & ironing or simple cleaning at the same time as 600 garments sets of individual jacket, trouser, shirt, tie, cummerbund, cufflinks and, sometimes, shoes and hats were being picked and despatched.

VIACOM OUTDOOR

Viacom Outdoor were responsible for managing the advertising displays on London Underground, London Buses and about 90% of the buses across the UK. This may seem an unlikely assignment for a Retail & Logistics Consultant but the difficulty that they were facing was a logistics' one. They needed to despatch posters to bus garages across the UK, often within tight timescales, and then confirm to the advertiser that the posters had been posted on specific buses within a specific time-window.

As the assignment developed it became clear that their IT systems were not being properly developed because of a serious breakdown in the relationship between the software development team and the user community. I was appointed as (interim) Head of IT to manage the re-vitalisation of the whole IT function. I developed a new interface between the users and the IT team, managed the replacement of a significant proportion of the aging IT equipment and resolved the challenge of being able to confirm when posters had been posted.

WAS THIS A £7.5M FRAUD?

A former employee of a major retailer was charged with "conspiracy to defraud his employer of £7.5m". It was alleged that he had placed orders with suppliers and, with their active support, had authorised their invoices for payment in the knowledge that the goods had never been delivered.

The gentleman's defence team, including a QC, did not understand either the retailer's business process or what their various computer systems did so, based on over 500 pages of witness statements from other employees, I documented the business process in both written form and as a PowerPoint presentation. The QC's response was that he now understood the case better than the Prosecution and, therefore, knew how to defend it. I initiated further investigations which revealed serious flaws in the Serious Fraud Office Accountant's report. The principal charge was subsequently dropped.

CBC RE-DEVELOPMENT

Moving away from the world of work this is a current project which I am serving as (voluntary) Project Co-ordinator. The project is to replace our existing church with a new £2m building that will be available for substantially greater community use.

At the beginning of 2010 (which is when my wife and I started worshipping at the church) they were considering a scheme for the re-development. I was concerned that the architect did not understand what was needed and, therefore, the outline that he had developed would not be suitable. Having discussed my thoughts with the church leadership they agreed with the points that I was making and asked me to take on the role of Project Co-ordinator. (The term "Project Manager" is ultimately taken by the lead architect and we did not want to confuse the titles by calling me PM.)

I interviewed a cross-section of the leadership team and church members, and wrote a new Statement of Design Requirements. We identified seven possible new architects and I managed the selection process, which ended with unanimous agreement over the choice. I have since led the project team through a series of meetings with the architect to develop two dramatically different possible designs for the new building. The church membership has recently agreed to go ahead with one of these designs and we are now working to prepare detailed plans that will be the basis of a planning application later in the year.