



“Everyone at CMB loves completing risk assessments now”

CMB Engineering is one of the largest independent building services contractors in England and Wales. Over 20 years, they’ve grown from a small partnership to having over £80 million turnover. Recently, they shifted the entire firm over to HANDS HQ. We talked to David Williams, Group Health, Safety & Environmental Manager at CMB, to find out how HANDS HQ helped their business.

Customer story



South Wales’ largest independent Building Services Contractor

The problem: rejected paperwork

David Williams started at CMB in 2012, with a remit to oversee health and safety throughout the firm’s engineering operations. Immediately he identified CMB’s RAMS documents as a problem area.

“Like a lot of companies, we had a generic word document.” says Williams. “We had generic Word risk assessments, a method statement template, and we would then alter this document to suit each job. It didn’t look very professional.” As Williams didn’t have central control of these documents, he found himself spending all his time helping his site managers create their own documentation.

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It was taking 90 minutes to 2 hours to create a single RAMS document, and every single document was rejected by the firm’s clients.

“There were probably ten to fifteen comments per document” says Williams. Clients were discomfited at the amount of time that they were spending rejecting the RAMS, and it was hard on the contracts team to be receiving constant corrections and “sarcastic emails.”

Williams knew it had to change. “We’re obviously keen to save time and save money to make our lads’ jobs easier. We want the software to live with the times, and make things a bit quicker, because our jobs are hard enough as it is. The old document didn’t do any of that. It was quite a tiresome process if I were to be honest with you.”

The solution: HANDS HQ

So Williams moved the firm to HANDS HQ. “With this new system, it’s like a toy. It’s like a game. It’s one of those things where you can just log on to your computer, you type a few buttons, enter job specific activities and boom, your method statement is there. It’s not generic; it’s specific. It’s a good, professional looking document. That’s what I love about it. It’s quick and it’s professional.”

Thanks to an on-site demo by one of the HANDS HQ team, the firm switched over with minimal resistance. “You obviously got some of this macho, bravado stuff “Oh, health and safety, blah blah blah”, but once they got into the system, I didn’t have one negative feedback out of the room full of thirty grown men. I’m not just saying that, it’s genuinely true. It was that feedback that then persuaded the directors to say ‘Hold on, okay, let’s do it. Let’s give it a try.’

CMB’s clients appreciated the change too. “Willmott Dixon (one of UK’s largest and most exacting construction firms) absolutely loved the system.” says Williams. Indeed, HANDS HQ’s system dealt with the negative comments quickly. “You get one or two comments, if that. From the last twelve months we haven’t really had that many rejections, and that saves me time. It looks good on the company.” It has also heavily sped up the document creation time, dropping it from two hours to just 20 minutes, freeing Williams up to concentrate on health and safety enforcement on-site.

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For CMB’s site supervisors, it means an even a bigger change, as Williams seeks to move them to a tablet and cloud-based system. Rather than waiting for a contract manager to update the documents, Williams wants to empower the supervisors to make their own changes to RAMS documents, then and there in the field. “I’d say ‘Look, you’re competent guys. Get on HANDS HQ and say how are you going to get that boiler down the stairs.’ That’s what we’re looking to do as a company. It’s an objective.” Williams says that HANDS HQ was instrumental in CMB winning an Investor in People award.

With HANDS HQ, CMB has turned its document management round. A system that was previously time-consuming and inefficient has become one that works perfectly for their growing business.

Find out how HANDS HQ can help your business
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