



Turner Estate Solutions consolidates end-to-end maintenance processes

Maximising efficiency with IBM Enterprise Asset Management solutions

Highlights

The challenge

UK-based estate management company Turner Estate Solutions (TES) was formed to act as the prime contractor for a major UK government organisation. To enhance its service to this major account, the company wanted to consolidate its estate management processes into a single application to optimise workflow, increase user-friendliness and cut IT support and management costs.

The solution

TES worked with its long-term partner BPD Zenith to upgrade to the latest version of IBM Maximo Asset Management and consolidate business-critical investment planning and change control applications onto the new platform, greatly simplifying the enterprise architecture.

The benefits

- The end-to-end business process is now managed by a single application, enhancing efficiencies and reducing IT costs.
 - Maximo Start Centers help improve user experience and information integration, fostering increased business agility.
 - IBM's roadmap for Maximo has helped result in more investment in product development, more frequent updates and new features.
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Turner Estate Solutions (TES) is a UK-based subsidiary of Turner Facilities Management (TFM), itself a subsidiary of Turner & Co (Glasgow) Ltd. TES was originally formed in 2001 to deliver a major regional estate management contract for a large UK government agency. The contract provides for capital works and estate management services to approximately 9,250 buildings and facilities at more than 120 sites across Scotland. The initial contract ran from 2003 to 2010, and was delivered so successfully that TES was awarded a three-year extension.

In 2003, when the project was still at tender stage, TES decided to adopt Maximo Asset Management software as its core estate management solution. "At the time, version 4 of Maximo represented the most stable version of the software platform," says Lynne Rafferty, Head of IS/IT at TES. "With the help of our business partner, BPD Zenith, we customised the Maximo software and developed a suite of other applications to serve as a total estate management solution."

Maximo software has since formed the basis of TES's business. When planned maintenance is due or issues are reported to the helpdesk, a Maximo work order is created which tracks the job's status from the initial report through to final completion. Once approved, maintenance tasks on TES assets are automatically assigned to a technician or sent to the appropriate subcontractor, streamlining the process of repair and maintenance work.

"The software performed well," says Lynne Rafferty. "However, as the contract progressed, it began to feel dated, and we felt that we were missing out on new features that would really benefit our business. One thing we really wanted was the ability to access all relevant information from one screen, instead of having to switch between applications."

Solution Components

Software

- IBM Maximo Asset Management 7

Services

- BPD Zenith
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Lynne Rafferty
Head of IS/IT
Turner Estate Solutions

Moving to a new platform

TES decided that it would upgrade to IBM Maximo Asset Management 7, and enlisted the help of IBM Business Partner BPD Zenith.

“Given our overwhelmingly positive experience with Maximo over the past four years, upgrading to the latest version was the obvious choice,” explains Lynne Rafferty. “We were confident that the cost and disruption of upgrading would be less than moving to a different solution. We also saw that other parts of Turner Facilities Management were already using the latest version, so we saw how it could work for our business.”

A simpler architecture

As part of the upgrade, the investment planning and change control applications, which had previously been developed as standalone systems, were integrated into the new Maximo platform. The BPD Zenith team’s expertise was critical here, as they had built the original applications and were ideally placed to port them onto Maximo.

“Although we had the option of modifying our work order process when we upgraded Maximo, we decided not to, as we determined that the underlying efficiency and robustness that led us to Maximo at the start of the project still fulfils all our needs,” says Matt Wilson, Business Systems Developer at TES. “Instead, we wanted to work with BPD Zenith to redesign our bespoke Maximo applications from first principles in order to streamline the workflow process.”

“We decided to build one system that would do everything – providing a single, consistent source of asset management data,” comments Lynne Rafferty. “The new solution is also better from an architectural point of view – the previous version relied on several different application and database servers, whereas this one is more reliable, more powerful and easier to manage.”

Working in partnership

BPD Zenith customised Maximo to meet TES’s original business need, and continues to provide IT support.

“We have been working with BPD for seven years now, and we are very happy for the partnership to continue,” says Lynne Rafferty. “BPD isn’t just interested in selling products and services; it’s a very solution-focused company. For example, before the upgrade, we ran a series of business review workshops to discover which new software features TES would benefit from. BPD team members attended all of these workshops – they really wanted to understand our business processes first hand, and translate them into a system design that fully addressed all our business goals.”

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Seeing the benefits

Since upgrading its Maximo environment, TES has seen improvements in many aspects of their business. “By far the biggest benefit for us is having the entire end-to-end business process in one application,” says Lynne Rafferty. “Having a consolidated solution has also decreased our IT maintenance and management costs; there was only one solution to develop this time, and the logical architecture of the latest version of Maximo is far simpler and more reliable.”

Whilst the original solution required the installation and maintenance of client applications on users’ PCs, the latest version of Maximo is web-based. New features of the web-based user interface have improved information integration and user experience.

“The web interface has a much better look and feel,” continues Lynne Rafferty. “What we’ve found really useful are the Maximo ‘Start Centers’ – personalised dashboards for different types of users. Users at TES can see the information most relevant to them, and our customer also has a Start Center that shows key performance indicators [KPIs] for the contract as a whole.”

“Moving to the web-based UI has made a huge difference to the IT department,” comments Matt Wilson. “Previously, we had five different applications with five different logins and interfaces. Now there’s just one, which is much more user-friendly. The volume of IT support calls has dropped significantly, so the IT team is free to spend our time on more valuable activities, such as application development and system improvements.”

TES has also implemented a solution called APEX, which creates reports from the Maximo data and publishes them on a Microsoft SharePoint powered web portal. These reports show information such as target completion times, compliance rates for assets, sustainability and energy efficiency ratings.

“Now it’s easier to get insight into these KPIs – all the information is easily accessible, and available from one screen,” says Lynne Rafferty.

Investment planning is another vital aspect of TES’s business now built-in to the Maximo solution. “The system runs data from building inspection reports through an algorithm to give each asset a ‘condition score’ – A, B, C, and so on,” says Lynne Rafferty. “We can see the cost of the work that needs to be done to raise the condition score. So if there is a limited budget, we can see where it can best be spent. For example, it’s better to spend £10,000 on raising the condition of a ‘C’ to an ‘A’, rather than spending the equivalent sum on a building that’s already ‘A’ rated.”

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“This aspect of the process has become far more efficient since the implementation of the new solution,” says Matt Wilson. “Now we have an accounts application that can automatically check if there are appropriate funds available to start a project before it begins. As a result, we have far more control over the financial validation process, which is a crucial component in our workflow.”

“The fact that we have been able to restructure an entire IT system serving 150 demanding users with a project team of only four people is a testament both to the excellent collaboration between our team, BPD Zenith and IBM, and the user-friendliness of the product.”

Planning for the future

Following this successful upgrade, TES is already working with BPD Zenith to upgrade its systems to Maximo 7.5. The company is also investigating the possibility of installing IBM Maximo Mobile software, which would further streamline the workorder process. With mobile support, sub-contractors could view and update job plans and asset repair histories on-site, reducing non-productive activities such as paperwork and data entry.

“From my perspective, it’s clear that since IBM became involved with the product, Maximo’s functionality has gone from strength to strength. There has been much greater investment in product development, and it really shows. Updates are more frequent, and there many new features,” concludes Lynne Rafferty.

About BPD Zenith

BPD Zenith Limited is an IBM Premier Business Partner that specialises in IBM Maximo Asset Management software. The company is also an authorised Tivoli reseller, and offers Level 1 support. More than 60 percent of its technical staff hold current Maximo Deployment Professional certifications. This technical expertise, combined with more than 15 years’ experience of successful deployments, upgrades and transitions, enables BPD Zenith to offer the complete package for all IBM Maximo Asset Management software, services and support.