

THIRD-PARTY QUALITY

THE WORLD IS GETTING SMALLER AND IN MODERN BUSINESS EVERYONE WANTS TO OUTSOURCE. USING EXTERNAL SUPPLIERS WHEN GEOGRAPHY CEASES TO BE AN OBSTACLE IS NOT JUST A COST SOLUTION, IT IS OFTEN A MEANS TO IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND EFFICIENCY.

PETER JOYCE, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER OF NONVERBA, EXPLAINS HOW YOUR IN-HOUSE QUALITY SYSTEM CAN BE AIDED IN ITS DEVELOPMENT BY A THIRD PARTY



Peter Joyce is managing director of NonVerba. He founded the company after three years helping build a US, UK and Indian outsourced organisation - Office Tiger - where he was director of European Operations. Before this, he was at Goldman Sachs for seven years where he had a number of roles including European technology support group management and the conception, development and deployment of the Goldman Sachs IBD emergency planning response methodology.

NonVerba is a corporate information systems provider supplying today's businesses, most of which are increasingly dependent upon the internet, with either specially designed or generic outsourcing solutions. The strength of the company lies both in the UK and India. The company mainly specialises in corporate information systems that help organisations improve their quality by merging best practices and quality processes into one centralised solution.

NonVerba's solution is specifically developed for those companies that require sophisticated QMS software throughout their organisation. The solution has been acid-tested in the quality industry and it has proved successful for blue-chip companies like Land Securities Trillium and Land Securities, which both have well-established business processes, as well as for SMEs such as HedgeMedia and EcoCentroGen, which are building their quality processes from the ground up.

In the global marketplace, as companies decentralise operations to improve communications, efficiency and become more cost-effective, it is important to ensure that information related to quality processes is centralised and managed effectively in real-time. NonVerba's software product 'NV Quality Processes eCentral' has been developed over the last two years, and is based on each client's requirements.

The use of the software is flexible, and is either implemented as a fully-integrated solution within the corporate intranet of blue-chip companies, or as a rented, subscription-based application service provider (ASP) solution for SMEs. This approach is proving popular, with large traditional IT companies such as IBM, EDS, HP and Compaq all taking it up. As companies continue to scrutinise IT costs, there is a growing willingness to outsource applications and the ASP model offers a low-cost alternative.

THE LS TRILLIUM STORY

LS Trillium provides commercial property and property related services to large clients like the BBC, British Telecom and O2. The company has established over 200 processes to implement best practice across the whole of the organisation, and in order to provide a high standard of service delivery, it needs its staff to follow business processes in a coherent manner. Historically, these processes were defined as multi structured, paper-based documents, as application

files within the corporate intranet, or as localised electronic files. As a result, it was not guaranteed that all users would have the latest versions of the same process definitions. Locating the process documents when they were required wasted time. Updating them and making the updates available to all users immediately was a daunting task. All these factors hampered LS Trillium's capability for delivering a quality service to its clients.

What the company really needed was for its business standards team to have the ability to create and update their business processes easily and also publish them so that they were available to all UK employees. NonVerba's solution was to create a quality processes library, through which users could locate the process definitions using multiple search mechanisms. Based on LS Trillium's business processes and their underlying procedures it proposed a new, standardised structure for the overall processes and the sub-procedural definitions. This means that viewers can access the different procedural sections within the overall processes quickly and easily. Overall processes were then classified into categories

and procedures. This was particularly important because recent mergers had left different parts of the company with disconnected processes. NonVerba asked for specific requirements from these different parts of the company in order to provide enhanced or tailored features, which were specific to the post-merger entity. For example, the branding style, such as the company logo, was tailored for different companies within the group. The administration portal was enhanced to manage the branding styles and also generate reports based on geographical location/region. Over 350 process definitions have also been restructured and loaded into the company's central database so that they seamlessly integrate within the existing system in a standard way.

TO RENT OR TO BUY?

As well as providing the QMS software to large organisations, NonVerba also provides the quality process library as a centralised ASP solution to many clients through the internet. This model is better suited for SMEs that are looking for cost-effective, maintenance-free solutions. It removes the need for them to buy either expensive hardware or applica-

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and sub-categories, and mapped to the different functional structures within the organisation, enabling viewers to access the functional processes within just two mouse-clicks.

The next step was to fully integrate the quality process system within LS Trillium's corporate intranet. Process definitions, sub-procedures, attached diagrams and related electronic forms were all stored in a central database and displayed dynamically within the intranet. Viewers could also download PDF versions of the process definitions, which were generated by the system automatically, eliminating manual PDF production requirements.

The business standards team was provided with an administration portal to help maintain online process definitions with ease. Once published, a process definition was immediately available to all the employees in real-time, on a national scale. Additionally, the administrator could now generate sophisticated management information reports to identify usage patterns, modifications, least and most used procedures, redundant procedures and other valuable management information.

THE LAND SECURITIES STORY

A FTSE 100 company with an investment portfolio of over 250 properties valued at £7.74 billion and with a £2.2 billion development programme, Land Securities decided to deploy NonVerba's solution to give all staff access to company

tions software. Instead, they pay a nominal fee for initial configuration and then rent the software, which is hosted and maintained remotely by NonVerba. Once subscribed, the client can then access the software over the internet, also meaning there will be no ancillary costs to the client to further develop and maintain the system.

Establishing and maintaining quality processes has become an indispensable part of delivering quality products and services, which ultimately is the chief determinant to survival and growth. Using technology and the internet to automate these processes is now an easy and cost effective way of improving the way you do business.

Most recently NonVerba has adapted the process definition library to cater for the business continuity industry by providing an emergency planning system. The product addresses the need for business continuity planning and disaster recovery for client organisations.

The ASP delivery model of these solutions provides companies with few or no IT staff the ability to scale up and become effective quickly without investing large amounts of time and money in hardware, software and personnel. The flexible design of the systems also allows a company which wants to own them in-house, to do so. The systems have the added provision that they can be customised to meet any additional requirements specific to the company ■