



GMC Case Study

:: Transaction Processing / Direct Marketing
:: Customer Communication Solutions for the Enterprise

Scottish and Southern Energy Futureproofs Production with GMC PrintNet Software

Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) is one of the largest energy companies in the UK and one of the few that's wholly British owned. It brings together Southern Electric, SWALEC, Scottish Hydro Electric and Atlantic Electric & Gas and is the UK's biggest generator of electricity from renewable resources. It also supplies gas and telecom products. SSE daily sends out in excess of 120,000 bills and 45 – 50,000 other correspondence items to service its 5.7 million customers. Recently, a leading industry study confirmed the highest customer satisfaction and the lowest rate of customer complaints among the UK's electricity suppliers.



PrintNet T makes customer communication faster and easier at Scottish and Southern Energy plc

Seamless integration of Design and Production

After a rigorous selection process, SSE chose PrintNet T Triple Suite because it seamlessly links the design and production phases of document workflow for greater efficiency and control. Not just confined to print and data exchange functions, PrintNet can also be integrated into CRM, Email and other systems to create a totally automated business process. "We changed our entire bulk document production process in one fell swoop, moving from an IT based, technically biased process," explains Steve Callaghan, Application Architect in SSE's IT Department. "It did what was promised – and much more. The project will pay for itself in the time frame allotted and it will be under budget."

Business personnel make changes instead of programmers

The benefits of PrintNet T have included empowering business-based personnel to make document changes in days rather than months, and freeing 11 highly skilled IT staff for other tasks; in-built error tolerance ensures that print runs are not interrupted when errors are identified and flagged; auto archiving of files and built in disaster recovery.

Among the marketing features SSE will be able to implement is Message Management. Marketing and business personnel can now create the rules for selecting and allocating different messages independently of the documents. PrintNet T allows text to be created and controlled in externally maintained databases, which are cross-referenced by the software so that each document dynami-

KEY FACTS

:: Client

One of the largest UK-based energy companies, the industry leader in customer satisfaction, with daily customer communication mailings of 170,000.

:: Challenge

Find a new generation of document composition and production software that will not become obsolete, with the flexibility to allow business personnel to make changes quickly, while preserving SSE's high customer satisfaction record.

:: Solution

From the beginning, PrintNet T easily stood out from 6 other vendors – single server-based, easy to use by non-programmers, while allowing SSE's IT staff to concentrate on more complex issues.

:: Results

An ROI in less than 12 months, development lead-times decreased by 300% and the required IT staff was reduced from 14 to 3 programmers.



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Steve Callaghan, Application Architect for Scottish and Southern Energy

cally pulls in the variable data and messages needed for targeted customer interaction. The software will even trace and report back on who has received which message, particularly useful when integrating with CRM systems.

Futureproof VDP software with no limits

"It's more flexible than we expected," comments Callaghan. "The limits to what we can do with it have to do with managing our processes, not to any technical limitations in the software. It's futureproof. The integration of all the technologies is in place. It's now a simple task to deliver data to different media. Future development with projects such as automatic bill reading and paperless customer correspondence will be much easier too," explains Callaghan.

Reduced development time – decreased programming and integration costs

PrintNet T is designed to be easy to operate, even by staff with no programming experience. According to Callaghan, "The lead time for development has dropped 300% – a significant benefit. One challenge we have faced is integrating new customers from acquisitions. This software makes a seamless switch a lot easier." The new system also has the capability of combining bills and other documents in the same envelope. Another major improvement has been in the use of stationery. A single, plain stationery stock has replaced the many different ones needed before. The plain stationery can be printed with variable data on demand and on both sides, without having to stop for paper changes – a further savings of £250,000 during the last year on mailsort discounts.

Selection and changeover made easy

Seven companies were asked to put forward their proposals, but for the 6-person selection panel, GMC stood out from the start. "PrintNet T sold itself. It's so easy to use, whereas some of the others still required technical language to operate," Callaghan explains. "We could see that this feature would leave our IT people free to concentrate on more complex issues while empowering our business people. We also were impressed that PrintNet T is not dependent on a particular database or server and it only needed a single server, as opposed to the 10 servers that a competitor required. GMC's commitment to ISO and CMM development methodology standards was another important consideration," continues Callaghan.

During implementation, teams from GMC and SSE worked closely together to solve any problems with the changeover. According to Callaghan, "GMC's CEO, René Müller, also became personally involved and took the time and trouble to come over and visit our site. This demonstrated that the level of commitment was the same for both businesses – we were both in the same trench!"

PrintNet T – a productive investment

Summing up the whole exercise Steve Callaghan says, "The new system hasn't created a single problem for us and is above and beyond what the business required. Now, we're moving from the utilisation to the exploitation phase, and that's exciting."

About GMC Software Technology

Setting the New Standard in personalised customer communications, GMC Software Technology's PrintNet T Triple Suite is a powerful totally-integrated and seamless, end-to-end solution for designing, composing, producing, presenting, managing and automating customised print and electronic (including a WebServices J2EE environment) documents from multiple inputs and formats. PrintNet software features ease of use and implementation, ensuring rapid application development and fast time-to-market. GMC Software Technology is headquartered in Switzerland with offices in Europe, the US, Canada, Latin America and Asia. The GMC group of companies is ISO 9001:2000 certified.