

* Case Study

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

Oyster IMS addresses the strategic information management challenges facing the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

The company

The Specialist Schools & Academies Trust (SSAT) is an independent, not-for-profit membership organisation dedicated to raising levels of achievement in secondary education. They have a membership of over 4,900 schools and are a registered charity.

The SSAT employs more than 400 staff, is head quartered in London and has a number of regional offices across England, as well as a growing international presence.

The background

Under the sponsorship of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, a project was launched to undertake an Information Strategy Review. The SSAT decided to engage an external consultancy to lead the review and, following competitive tender, the project was awarded to Oyster IMS.

At project initiation, the aims of the Information Strategy were set out as follows:

- To build a set of requirements for information management at the SSAT.
- To assess the current information infrastructure and to highlight real and perceived issues.
- To design an information infrastructure (people, process and technology) which is aligned to the SSAT's Corporate Objectives and which will support the next phase of growth.
- To set out a roadmap of projects and activity to implement the newly designed information infrastructure.

The solution

The review was organised into five phases of activity:

- **Information gathering:** In order to gain a 'broad and deep' understanding of the SSAT's existing information environment and information services provision, Oyster IMS undertook a range of information gathering activities including:
 - One-to-one interviews with members of the Senior Management Team.
 - Detailed use case interviews with individual members of staff occupying a variety of roles across various working locations focusing on business processes and working practices.

The result

- An online questionnaire issued to all members of SSAT staff to identify trends in operating practices and recurrent issues.
- An analysis of external organisations to benchmark information services.
- **Requirements building:** Out of the information gathering activities, a Requirements Specification identifying a total of 65 requirements was compiled and presented to senior management for approval.
- **Gap analysis:** Working alongside members of the Information Services Department and end users, analysis was undertaken to identify where the existing information services provision fell short of the documented requirements.
- **Solution design:** Focusing on the areas highlighted by the gap analysis, Oyster IMS worked collaboratively with the Information Services Department, through a series of workshops, to develop solutions to meet the requirements.
- **Deliverables production:** The findings of the review and the proposed solutions were presented to the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team in the format of a detailed report. This included a timeline and cost estimates for implementing the proposed solutions.

On completion of the review, the SSAT were presented with a strategic vision for information services directly aligned to the needs of the organisation. This was supported by cost and time estimates for delivery.

The solutions proposed in the strategy were far reaching, addressing areas such as:

- Staffing structures within the Information Services Department, with a particular emphasis on senior management.
- The implementation of enterprise technology solutions for Customer Relationship Management, Knowledge Management, Records Management and Email Management.
- The launching of initiatives to address issues of data quality, cross department collaboration and information sharing.
- The strengthening of governance processes around the review, approval and management of IT related investments.

The Information Strategy has been endorsed by the Chief Executive and is currently under review by the Senior Management Team prior to being presented for approval to the SSAT Board.



Professional Information Management is vital for all businesses, whatever their size. Dealing with the flow of information, both internally and externally, is the key to managing business efficiency and effectiveness. Oyster IMS provides consultancy and project management services in the field of Information Management. Areas of expertise include information audits and strategy; document and records management; data analysis and migration; document scanning, indexing and recognition; digital mailrooms.

For more information, call 0207 199 0620 or visit www.oyster-ims.com