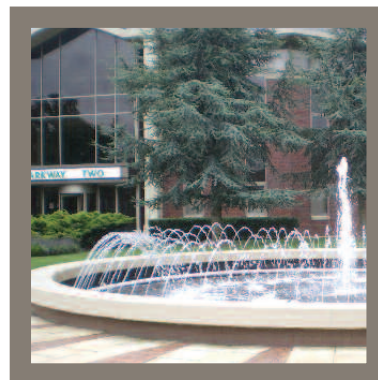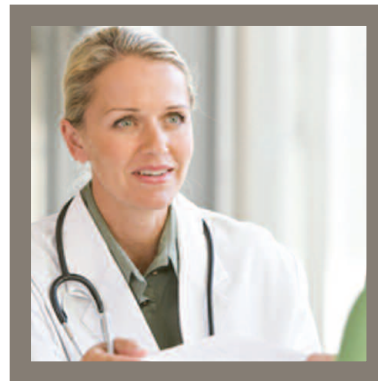# Manchester Primary Care Trust Makes Hot Desking Cool

As part of a major restructuring programme, Manchester Primary Care Trust recently moved the tenants of three principal administrative buildings whose leases were approaching expiry into a new headquarters.

This self contained office building at the Parkway Business Centre provides accommodation for the Primary Care Trust Commissioner, the Central Manchester Commissioning Hub and associated functions.

In line with its strategy to reduce costs, the new space was sized to reflect the fact that not all of the staff working for the HQ would be likely to be in the office at any given time.

Approximately 50% of the workforce would be permanently located at Parkway 3, and the remaining 50% comprised of highly mobile staff members who would only be in the office for a few days in every week.

Although this approach presented savings in terms of building and energy costs, it introduced new challenges in ensuring that the available space could be shared effectively to accommodate the ebb and flow of staff.

Desk Booking on Demand

A key factor in enabling desk sharing was to employ an effective desk booking system.

According to Ian Scullion, Project Manager at MPCT, "Staff not permanently based at Parkway 3 had to be able to very easily book an available working space.

We chose Resource Central from authors Add-On Products to help this process as it integrated tightly with our existing Microsoft Outlook Calendaring system. Staff can simply check their working week in Outlook calendar and book their desks as needed - without having to launch a separate application.

Touch for Action

For maximum convenience we also wanted to provide a facility that enabled staff to make last minute desk bookings on arrival at Parkway 3 reception."

Meeting Monitor from QED was used to provide a Touch Screen booking console that was also fully integrated with Outlook.

Floor plans of the building show up-to-the-minute desk availability, with an intuitive 'red for booked, green for free' colour scheme. Simply touching a green-coloured desk automatically books the resource and removes it from Outlook.

The combined solution was delivered by messaging and collaboration experts, Essential Computing.

Just Part of the Solution....

"Introducing technology to support the booking of meeting rooms and desks was just part of the picture," continued Scullion.

"Messaging on the move, wireless networks, IP call routing, and even communal storage cupboards have been vital services to supporting our move to using hot desks. The switch to hot desking has also meant a major shift in mind-set and culture.

A Shift in Mind-Set

The days of having your own desk are over and even the members of staff that are more or less permanently based in Parkway 3 will be expected to release their desks into our free pool on the days they are out of the office. That's why it was essential that our booking system had to be both simple and fit closely with existing work practices.

Resource Central and Meeting Monitor will help change our staff's perception of how resources are managed within the Trust, as well as add value to other aspects of our organisation's efficiency. In the future we will want to manage our meeting rooms and other resources using Resource Central. Our staff are very comfortable using Outlook Calendar to manage their diaries and meetings, so the fact that Resource Central is a seamless add-on to Outlook and is Microsoft certified were key factors in our decision to purchase Resource Central", concluded Scullion.

Improving 'behind the scenes' efficiency in order to direct maximum resource toward public frontline services was a key objective of the Gershon review launched back in 2004.

Although this report focused on improving back office processes and services, for example, through improved ICT and streamlined procurement, the efficient usage of property came under the spotlight. In some cases unused buildings were disposed of as a means of funding 'Gershon activities'.

More recently, the Government's Operational Efficiency Programme (OEP) report took a closer look at property, indicating that even greater savings could be made through the rationalisation of office space.

Findings based on the Government's own real estate estimate that costs could be reduced by up to 30% by shrinking the space allocated per office worker and by introducing initiatives for sharing desks and meeting room facilities.

► Integration with Outlook email & calendaring eases end-user adoption

► Optimises usage of available space

► Allows accommodation to meet the needs of evolving workforce & working patterns

► Touch screen option enables last-minute desk bookings on arrival

► Extensible to support bookings of meeting rooms, parking, etc

► Support for Outlook access rights enables users to book or release desks for co-workers

► Encourages staff to plan their working diary more diligently

► Reduces accommodation costs

essential ⓔ

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