Branston Ltd

Background

Originally set up by a group of local farmers as a farming co-operative back in 1968, Branston has evolved over the years to become an industry leader in potatoes.

Branston employs over 700 people across its three sites - in Lincoln, Scotland and the South West. It handles over 350,000 tonnes of potatoes a year and supplies some of the largest retail, wholesale and food manufacturing customers in the UK.

Today Branston is as focused as ever on the fresh potato business, while continuing to build on the success of its innovative prepared vegetable ranges.

The company's expertise goes further than just supply and demand, offering its customers real innovation including developing new potato varieties, packaging solutions and cutting-edge processes. Branston has invested in best-in-class technologies at all its sites with an emphasis on a long-term sustainable future for the industry. From conditioning, washing, grading and packing to recycling water and generating its own electricity, the Branston team works hard to get the best out of every crop in the most efficient and cost-effective way.

The Challenge

Previously the IT Department used a shared spreadsheet for issues, which was very time consuming to populate and resulted in some tickets not being logged or managed very well.

The IT Department felt that it had been delivering excellent customer service to end users, but had little in the way of demonstrating their performance other than informal feedback. Charlie Flack (IT Manager) said, "We had very limited visibility of what issues were repeatedly occurring and how much time the team was spending on certain systems, departments or processes."

The business case for a service management tool set was accepted; the application must underpin existing working practices where applicable and facilitate a formal call logging process by providing a consistent approach to logging issues and responding to requests. Charlie went on to say, "We felt it was absolutely essential that we identify a product that could be easily configured to meet our needs, future proofed in terms of industry standards, supplied by a vendor we could work with and would deliver excellent value for money." Branston also wanted high

availability, with a secure hosted solution that met regulatory requirements and allowed staff to access the system outside the office.

The Solution

Charlie said, "As we have a busy helpdesk team and we were new to using helpdesk software, we needed an intelligent system that would be easy to use and allowed for quick population of tickets. Branston scoured the internet and reached out to their trusted resellers to identify a list of potential providers, this was reduced to a shortlist of three after the initial online demos were completed. Branston put all three shortlisted systems through a rigorous scoring process, focusing on system functionality (ease of use and speed of data-entry), change request flexibility and reporting."

Charlie continued, "Simplisys clearly stood out against the others, the system is simple to use and allows for very quick data entry with a unique Rapid Logging feature. Other systems we looked at appeared to be aimed at larger IT helpdesk teams and were less configurable; this also meant they had a very rigid approach to system support and change requests.

Did you make the right Decision?

"The team at Simplisys were very helpful during the migration project and continue to offer prompt support and greatly appreciated flexibility. They've enhanced the reporting since we went live based on some ad-hoc requests and we're looking forward to seeing that side of the system continue to grow. We certainly feel we've made the right choice and the system is already providing the benefits we all hoped it would."