

Enterprise-wide Technology Solutions

XML

for the construction industry

The challenges:

- Achieve greater efficiency, leading to cost savings
- Increase your control of the business and projects
- Increase your knowledge sharing to enable enterprise-wide, accurate decision-making

Collaborative working practices

Collaborative working practice initiatives have revolutionised the construction industry over the last five years. You are experiencing many challenges, not least of which is how to reduce costs, improve safety and quality assurance, improve customer communication and the management of your staff, sub-contractors and suppliers. In order to meet these challenges you will need to adopt the most up-to-date tools to facilitate continued growth and improved profitability.

ECC's groundbreaking XML solutions play a key role in maximising your ability to use your existing data cost-effectively.

ECC have developed a set of solutions that enable the integration of existing internal and external information, automation of business processes and the management of personnel into a single knowledge-sharing environment. Our Internet knowledge-sharing portal uses open technology standards that further reduce costs. Importantly, this integration of information supports decision-making by measuring success through pre-defined parameters. It reports on trends thereby enabling projects to become more profitable.

What does this mean for you?

- create more development opportunities with reduced turnaround time
- reduce the cost of finding, developing and maintaining projects
- sell more homes for more profit (with less proportional cost)

SCOPE

Rapid development of new systems

Integration of internal and external data

Protection of legacy data and systems

Project scoping and methodology

Knowledge collaboration management portal

Snagging management

Electronic tender management

Electronic trading



Enterprise-wide technology using XML standards

ECC have developed a solution which handles many different information processes based on XML standards.

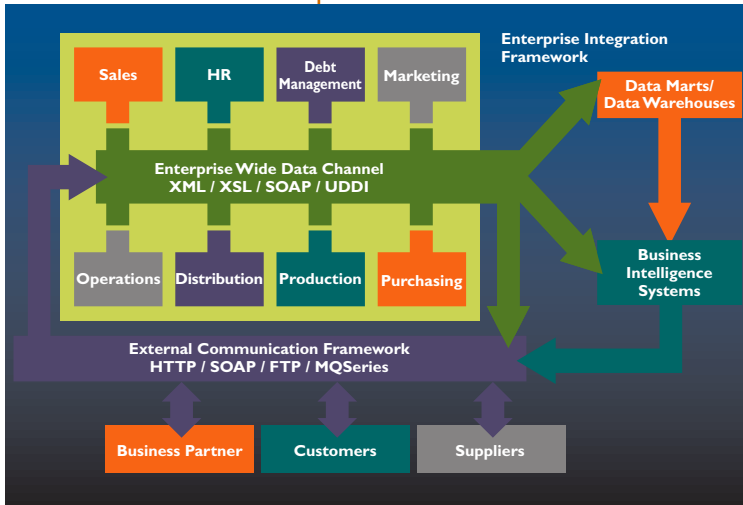


Fig. I Enterprise-wide technology

Revolutionising the flow of information

XML is currently revolutionising the flow of information within SME's and large corporations. Traditionally information (data) flows out from the company core systems into the desktop

environment. XML facilitates a two-way exchange of information enabling core systems to be reactive to customer/supplier/user inputs and/or actions.

XML is now an established standard enabling companies to protect their investments in any of their proprietary databases or enterprise resource planning systems such as SAP or Siebel. Data can flow effortlessly between disparate systems without the need for conversion. It also facilitates a totally flexible strategy and minimises capital and revenue costs.

Above all else, the flexibility of the solution allows you to make changes almost instantaneously and with minimal redevelopment.

All of the major database languages, Oracle, Sybase, Microsoft Sequel, DB2, etc., can produce and support XML. This is the first time all of these individual languages have produced a common software platform which enables a corporate view across whole businesses and facilitates the two-way flow of information.

By using ECC's enterprise-wide solutions based on XML you can gain the following advantages:

- Efficiency improvements leading to cost savings
- Greater control of the business, projects and partners
- Increased knowledge sharing to enable accurate decision making enterprise-wide and
- Rapid integration of new technology, flexibly and cost effectively

Projects that are built without utilising XML will lose out to competitors whose systems facilitate this rapid and automatic exchange of data.



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**CONSTRUCTION
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Ensuring a smooth transition for your business

Our approach to implementing solutions ensures the smooth transfer of your existing business functions to the new platforms.

Our methodology offers a three-stage approach thereby minimising your risk and offering a much quicker return on investment.

- Scope the project – produce a plan
- Proof of concept (POC) – implement on a small scale to prove the plan
- Rollout the proven plan to the enterprise

Global enhanced business performance

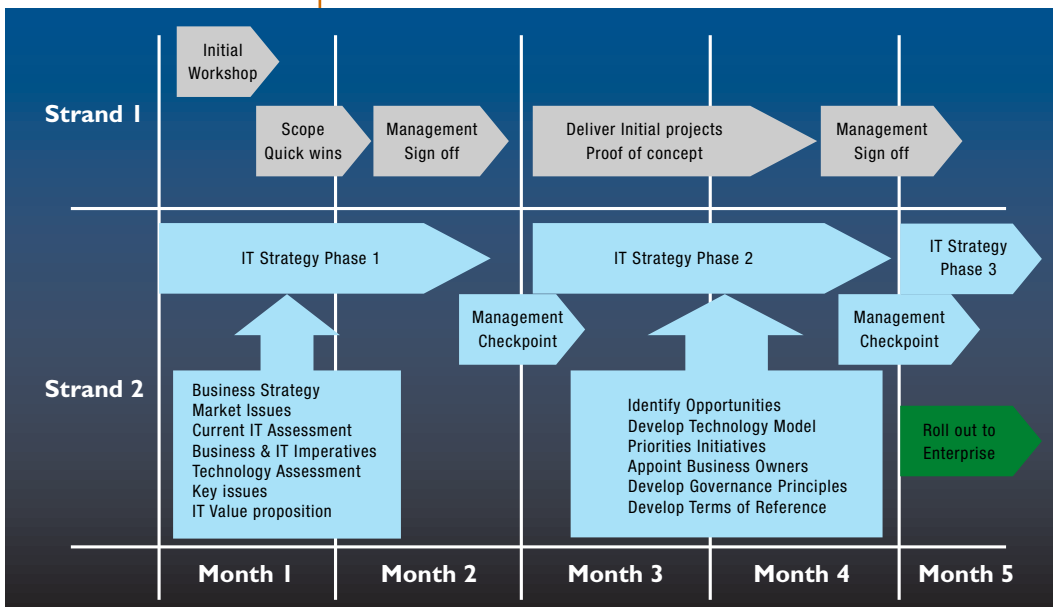


Fig 2. An example from the 3-stage plan

Minimise risk and costs, maximise ROI, use proven methodology, control the project, ease the change of culture.

This approach limits your exposure both financially, you only pay for each part of the project as it is implemented, and strategically, because we are mapping against this proven methodology. This provides the framework that can be customised using our change control techniques in response to the feedback we get from the implementation of the POC.

Using the IT Construction Best Practise self-assessment questionnaire and the DTI's Business Excellence Benchmarking Index questionnaire we can assist you to identify key areas of your business that will maximise your return on investment. Additionally, because we are implementing the project in phases, a return on investment is usually seen within the first five months of implementation.

Our project management procedures ensure that all key business performance measures are tracked and changes communicated to ensure client satisfaction. Our training, communication and change management programmes can ease employees' transition to the new ways of working.



Construction TeamSpace

Is a set of modules developed for the construction industry that will enable you to improve communication and collaboration amongst your team members, sub-contractors and suppliers. The modules can be used individually, integrated with existing systems or customised to support your corporate requirements.

Module 1 - Knowledge collaboration management portal

Via a central web enabled repository, Construction TeamSpace enables communication and collaboration amongst contractors, suppliers, engineers, clients and others as they have the ability to share project documentation and drawings within a secure environment. The self-authoring of documents and document management facility reduces administration support costs associated with accessing, tracking and production of documents. Corporate control is achieved as the information is shared across all business areas. The drawing management facility is capable of supporting multiple versions of incoming drawings. Electronic administration and notification, link to the drawing document for viewing on-line, and transmission and receipt of drawing documents electronically reduces times in communicating to suppliers and contractors.

Module 2 - Snagging management

Improved cash flow through speedier payments of retention fees and reduced administration and management costs through better management of sub-contractors are some of the benefits gained from using the Snagging management module. Through the use of an electronic administrator, the module provides an automated process for tracking and escalating snagging issues, speeding their resolution. It controls reporting for sub-contractors, issues snagging lists and produces reminders to sub-contractors.

Module 3 - Electronic tender management

Reduced administration costs, increased speed in receiving and inputting data into an estimating system are gained by using this module. The facility enables the electronic collation of documents, receipt and return of tender documents with customers, automates tender management and integration with suppliers and business partners, and provides analysis of supplier performance in the tendering process. Increased versatility is gained as the data input can be converted and applied to other systems.

Module 4 - Electronic trading

Improved supply chain management and increased productivity is gained by the exchange of electronic orders, invoices and payments with suppliers. The software also enables the conversion of data (where appropriate) to industry standards specified such as CITE, for receipt and despatch of data with supplier and with delivery site. By automating the business processes required to support e-trading at head office, on site and in partnerships with other suppliers communication is improved across the enterprise.



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**CONSTRUCTION
TEAMSPACE**

A leading provider of innovative enterprise-wide technology solutions

Established in 1989, Edinburgh Computer Consultants are a market-leading provider of enterprise-wide technologies. We have developed innovative solutions for some of the UK's leading companies within the finance, construction, business services and transportation industries.

Our experience of delivering solutions to the construction industry gives us a huge advantage in understanding the issues and processes involved within this market. We have developed a comprehensive solution set based on the latest industry standard technologies to address some of the challenges you face.

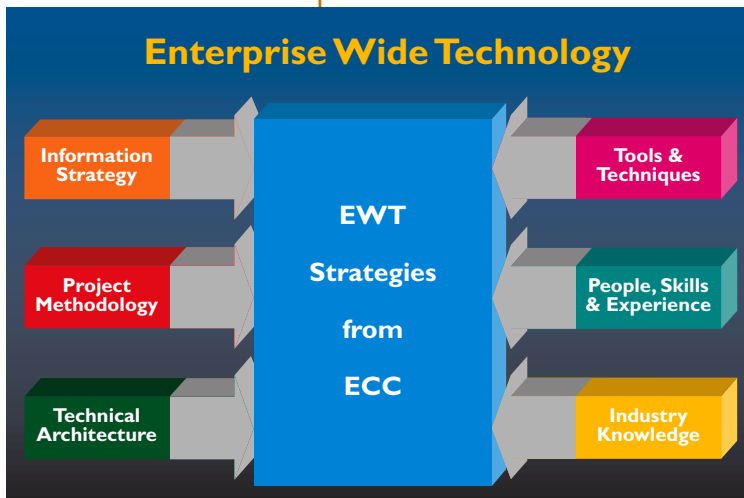


Fig. 3 The six essentials for success

By implementing leading edge non-proprietary standards we can offer a technology infrastructure that will enable business improvements through greater knowledge sharing, better customer relationships and improved decision support capability.

With the growing number, scope and range of projects undertaken by ECC the company has created a depth of skill in many modern and leading-edge technologies, methodologies and standards. Our projects can be customised easily and efficiently to support your corporate requirements. This enables you to deliver your own benefits needed for your business, by using our 'six essentials for success'.

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For more information on Edinburgh Computer Consultants enterprise-wide technology solutions and services for the construction industry contact:

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