

Greater Manchester Police

Effective automation for
innovation

When the Greater Manchester Police Force (GMP) decided to develop their in-house suggestion program, they installed PrIsM Ideas Management software from ISDE.

GMP has run an ideas management program since 1990 with the aim to improve internal communications and provide a dedicated channel for staff ideas. The program, branded Forceful Ideas, offers cash awards for successfully adopted ideas as well as encouragement awards for innovative ideas or ideas that involved a measure of effort and initiative by the author, but cannot be implemented. In addition, recognition is given for all submissions to encourage greater participation.

Searching for a solution

The original software used for the GMP program was a German package, which provided a database of submitted ideas. As the program expanded, however, GMP realised that evolving process requirements had outgrown the capabilities of the current software package, which could not be adapted.

Mr Pat Garside, GMP Suggestion Program Manager, explains, *"As Forceful Ideas developed and the number of contributors increased, we realised that we needed a system capable of managing ideas information, not just storing and retrieving each suggestion. In addition, we were spending an increasing amount of time on administration of the program, so we began looking for a system that would allow us to streamline our activities."*

Mr Garside initially contacted members of ideasUK, the UK society of Suggestion Programs, to find out what they were using, what worked and what didn't. This process of benchmarking was carried out over several months and one particular system was being recommended time and time again.

Mr Garside continues, *"From our feedback, we began to receive an increasing amount of positive remarks from existing users about PrIsM. Around the same time, I attended an ideasUK seminar, which included a presentation on PrIsM and I was able to investigate the system more thoroughly."*

Mr Garside discovered that PrIsM is a modern ideas management software solution designed to encourage, manage and track employee ideas. Unlike a simple store and retrieve database, PrIsM offers a wide range of benefits to improve business processes and provide significant cost and time savings.

Time savings

PrIsM automates much of the time-consuming administration work, such as correspondence, status tracking and report production, which was a problematic area for GMP.

Mr Garside explains, *"Part of our function is to produce quarterly management reports and statistics for the Deputy Chief Constable, the Greater Manchester Police Authority (GMPA) and the Suggestion Awards Panel. Using our original software package, the compilation of these reports took three to four days every quarter. Using PrIsM, the reports now takes just two or three hours and saves us a considerable amount of time and effort."*

The final decision to go with PrIsM was based on its ability to provide a fully automated ideas management facility while offering value for money. GMP was also impressed that the system would be developed on-site and tailored to exact requirements through a consultation process between ISDE and GMP. The most important aspect for GMP, however, was ISDE's obvious long-term commitment to its business and the 'partnership ethos' in after sales care.

Results

Since GMP installed PrIsM, the whole Ideas Management process has become more efficient and administration time has been reduced. In addition, the quality of internal communications has improved, which in turn has improved the success of the program and its reputation, both within and outside the organisation. Submissions have increased from 200 annually prior to the upgrade to around 1000 subsequently.

Conclusions

Mr Garside concluded, *"PrIsM is an excellent ideas management system, and one we can rely on to support our business needs and achieve our business aims. We have enjoyed working with ISDE throughout the project and the 'can do' attitude of ISDE's staff is a great asset. In addition, we have found that the sales and technical support from ISDE is an example to all companies large and small, in both the private and public sectors, of excellence to a standard which should be recognised as the benchmark in business practice."*

