



Programme Details

The ICT Advisory Service provides businesses with free, practical and impartial advice on all aspects of information and communication technology (ICT). ICT Advisors are available to meet with client companies to discuss the use of ICT within their business and identify potential improvements.

The Company

Balcas Timber Limited are involved in the processing of timber, sourcing trees from a range of forests and producing planks, posts and other timber products for the construction sector. The company is based near Enniskillen and has further operations in the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Eastern Europe.

The Challenge

Balcas Ltd recognised that their management information systems were lacking in a number of key areas and were no longer appropriate for a company of its scale and complexity. Whilst it was clear that there were significant challenges ahead in introducing a fully integrated ERP type solution, there was an immediate need for improvements in the areas of finished goods stock control and management reporting.

Control of finished goods was a cause for significant concern with sales staff having limited visibility of stock available for sale. There were issues in terms of stock rotation in the warehousing area leading to stock deteriorating unnecessarily.

Financial managers within Balcas Ltd were experiencing significant difficulties in producing

management information from across the various functions of the business. A significant amount of time was wasted in collating figures from disparate systems within the Balcas group of companies.

The Solution

With the assistance of an Invest NI ICT Advisor Balcas Ltd identified a stock control system which involved the use of radio controlled scanners and appropriate software systems to control and manage stocks of finished goods at the main plant in Enniskillen with a view to seeing improvements in the sales order processing, stock control and despatch functions.

Cognos reporting software was introduced along with significant consultancy and training support to develop a suite of management reports which allowed information from the separate elements of the business to be consolidated in a fraction of the time previously taken.

Balcas Ltd received an Invest NI Management Information Systems grant to provide financial support for the above projects. They have also recently completed an eBusiness Review to help to define their Management Information System requirements for the entire business with a view to sourcing an Enterprise Resource Planning solution.



ICT ADVISORS

ICT Advisors are technical specialists with expertise in all areas of ICT. They are available to provide advice on:

- purchasing and implementation of computer systems or software
- project management of systems implementation
- internet, e-mail, website design and search engine marketing
- e-commerce, financial systems and customer relationship management
- networking infrastructure

Recommendations on way forward

On referral from your Client Executive an ICT Advisor will help you assess the current ICT position of your business, discuss requirements and compile a report on capability with recommendations on the way forward.

ICT Advisors offer a tailored approach to a business issue. Invest NI clients have made significant savings in terms of human and financial resources as a result of efficiencies from ICT improvements.

Who is eligible?

ICT Advisors are available to all Invest NI clients.

To qualify as an Invest NI client company a business must meet certain criteria.

In addition to showing willingness to work with Invest NI, you should be able to demonstrate that currently, or over the next three years, your business will have:

- total sales of over £100,000 a year
- sales outside Northern Ireland greater than 25 per cent of turnover or greater than £250,000 a year.

If you can satisfy the criteria and would like to become an Invest NI client, contact your nearest Invest NI office or telephone 028 9023 9090.

Contact

Please contact your Client Executive if you feel your business will benefit from this service. Alternatively you can also contact:

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