

CONSTRUCTION:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Taylor Woodrow At-A-Glance At-a-Glance

Industry: Construction

Business Challenge: Find a solution to alleviate administrative backups and snag report confusion; decrease paper usage

Technical Solution: Adopted 5 Logitech io Digital Pens and Sysnet Snagmaster application based on the Anoto SDK.

Benefits Gained: Eliminated the need for dedicated data-entry staff; enhanced data accuracy; improved control of the inspection process; acquired the ability to track contractor response time and detect construction design flaws.

Digital Pens are Foundation to Improve Building Inspection Process

Few people want to spend more time at the office. But Iain McNab does. He's even enthusiastic about the tools that let him do it.

McNab works for Taylor Woodrow, a British construction company that is participating in the celebrated Glasgow Harbour development in Scotland. As a planning manager, McNab has to track the work of some 20 subcontractors. That means he routinely had to accompany various subcontractors and inspectors to a work site, faithfully jotting down any defects or "snags" they discover.

While on site McNab collected vital information, but acting as an on-site secretary to the inspectors was a poor use of his time. Back in the office, someone had to manually enter the data and distribute the entire snag report to every contractor. The process took several days to complete.

The time-consuming procedure had to be simplified, so McNab and his team started looking at alternative methods to collect data.

Digital Pen Produces Immediate Results

McNab hit the jackpot with the Logitech io Digital Pen and the Sysnet Snagmaster application, and he couldn't be happier. What once took him and his staff days, now takes only hours.

Taylor Woodrow began testing five Logitech io Digital Pens, a digital snag reporting form, and Snagmaster at the Glasgow Harbour development. It is one of the largest waterfront redevelopment projects in the United Kingdom, covering 120 acres of land. The 20 subcontractors Taylor Woodrow manages are building 321 apartments.

Managing the development requires a lot of coordination, but McNab now does it from his office. Taylor Woodrow keeps several clipboards with the Logitech io Digital Pen and digital forms at its front reception desk.

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— Iain McNab
 Planning Manager
 Taylor Woodrow

The subcontractor or inspector picks up a clipboard and heads to the construction site to inspect for snags—anything from a defect in the flooring to a scratched windowpane.

The contractor’s notes are stored in the Logitech io Digital Pen. “You’ve got to go out of your way to make a mistake,” says McNab. “It is pretty much idiot-proof.”

Back at Taylor Woodrow, the inspector docks the pen and instantly the information is uploaded to Sysnet’s Snagmaster web-based application. Snagmaster, based on the Anoto SDK, logs all snags and automates their follow-up actions. An e-mail is sent to the planning manager, who reviews snags for further action.

On-site Data Collection Brings Bottom Line Savings

With 321 flats and a possible 10 snags per flat, at least 3,000 snags could be logged—and that doesn’t include common areas or external areas, such as the roof and courtyards. Large projects often demand a full- or part-time employee to manage snag reports.

Not with the Logitech io Digital Pen and Snagmaster. That translates to a savings in the range of \$18,000 to \$36,000—the salary for an administrative person for 6 months to a year.

Paper costs have diminished, too, and contractors are more expedient. Snag reports can be 10 pages long, and each contractor gets the full report, even if they have only two snags.

Not only did the process use reams of paper, the labor required to complete the paperwork slowed progress. With the Logitech solution, the snag information is available on the web, so there is no paper shuffling. “An e-mail goes directly to that contractor and now he is aware that he has a snag—instead of having to wait for a whole list that is two or three days off,” says McNab.

“The issue on a construction site is you are always against the clock,” he adds. “You want your contractors to respond to you quickly and do the work.”

Now they can. When Taylor Woodrow tested the Logitech io Digital Pen and the Snagmaster application, the benefits were evident immediately. As snags notices were sent to contractors, “within five minutes they were quizzing me about it,” says McNab. “You can see the system working. That is the beauty of instant notification—the response is so quick.”

That, even more than the cost savings, is a key point. The Glasgow Harbour project is staying on schedule, and one reason is because the Logitech io Digital Pen speeds up the snagging process. “The snagging process is finished quicker, which makes for happy customers,” McNab says.





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Digital Adoption Enables Data Analysis

Not only has Taylor Woodrow streamlined its operational processes, it has gained a plethora of tracking capabilities.

Taylor Woodrow can easily view all the snags of a particular contractor, apartment or type of flaw. For example, if all units on the northeast corner of the building have a similar defect, the company could contact the architects about a potential defect in the structural design. Or if Taylor Woodrow notices several similar snags relating to windows, it may indicate a delivery of sub-par raw materials. Practically speaking, that level of analysis would not be feasible without the digital pen.

The company is so impressed that it already is discussing future uses of the Logitech io Digital Pen. One application would be to use the pen to take meeting minutes, so all information can be posted to the web immediately. Another is to use the digital pen to centralize site diaries—daily logs of snags and progress on a construction site—to get a centralized record of progress for a construction site.

While Taylor Woodrow considers future possibilities of the Logitech io Digital Pen, it continues to reap an unexpected benefit: a boost in the company’s professional image. On-site contractors and the professional design team have raised their eyebrows in interest, McNab says. “We’re seen as a wee bit more innovative and forward-thinking. You spend some money to use it, but it will save you thousands of pounds—and we are seen as more professional.”

