

CEMENT AUSTRALIA finds safe waters

For project managers, merging two companies' HR information is no less challenging than navigating a ship through rough seas. **Liam Tung** explores how Cement Australia's Wayne Beel, General Manager Human Resources and Business Improvement and Collaboration and Development Manager, Ian Norvock navigated project HR RAFT to safe waters.

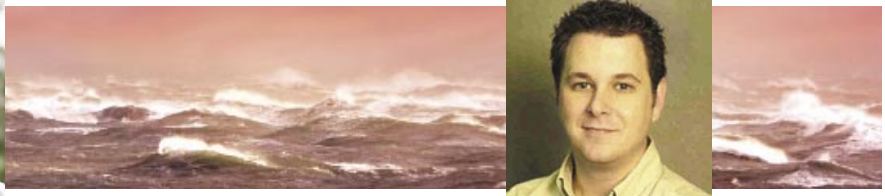
Cement Australia, one of the country's largest suppliers of cement products and services has facilities in more than 20 locations along Australia's east coast. Cement Australia was formed in 2003 as a result of the merger of Queensland Cement Limited and Australian Cement Holdings. The merger brought with it a large number of incompatible systems and technologies in addition to myriad and inconsistent HR information on over 1200 employees including job titles, policies and procedures. This provided the opportunity to remove paper from most HR processes and rectify inconsistent policies which led to HR decisions being referred to executive management.

An equally important consideration was finding a technology partner with experience in SAP and IBM Domino and Lotus environments. Eos Solutions was contracted to deliver the platforms to facilitate greater self-service for all employees and provide data manipulation tools to help HR automate the generation of dynamic reports and stay abreast of the latest HR information.

To help stem the tide of decisions being referred to executive management, Eos introduced a range of tools to enhance productivity and better distribute relevant information to the right people. One tool is a web-based application that creates dynamic organisational charts from SAP data.



Wayne Beel, General Manager Human Resources



Ian Norvock, Collaboration and Development Manager.

The Company needed to deliver a solution that would leverage Cement Australia's SAP system, streamline management processes and make appropriate HR information available to all employees, on demand.

The team set sail in September 2005 with the aim of delivering a ready-to-use salary review system by February 2006 in readiness for the 2006 salary review. There was considerable pressure for all concerned on the project however Wayne Beel knew it was possible; he had done it himself at another company some years before.

Beel says, "It had to be user friendly with a consistent look and feel and plenty of graphics. We needed the flexibility to add and remove components easily."

Following instructions to leverage existing investments, it was decided to use IBM Lotus Domino for the portal framework. Cement Australia was already equipped with IBM Lotus Enterprise Integrator for information extracted from its SAP system. IBM Workplace Content Management was deployed to serve static content and enable employees to update HR information themselves.

All hands on deck

Just as humans need a clean source of drinking water, systems that help employees make clear decisions need clean data. Great emphasis was placed on preparing for the rollout of HR RAFT; the team spent 12 months in the SAP engine room, cleaning up data classification inconsistencies and renewing HR policy and procedure information.

"After the discovery phase we built the site foundation before implementing any of the advanced functionality. That made it easier to implement functionality in an incremental way," Beel says.

Self-sufficiency in calmer waters

Cement Australia and Eos delivered the framework by February 2006. "The beauty of having this solution is that it empowers the right people who possess the knowledge—HR staff—to manage their own intranet presence without the need for IT involvement," says Beel.

Cement Australia can offer anyone with access to a computer online access to payslips, leave applications and balances and recruitment processes. The portal also serves as a repository for a vast library of information on HR policies and training.

"There have been significant cost savings associated with removing 20,000 pieces of paper. This has translated to less work for the HR team," says Beel. "The system also makes it harder for employees to manipulate their entitlements and gives us a strong audit trail."

Cement Australia has reduced the number of policy documents it needs to print and distribute and has extended access to HR service providers such as recruiting companies and legal advisers to further reduce printing and distribution costs.

"We also built strict security policies into HR RAFT that make sure people can only access the information they need to see," said Sean Kelly, Director at Eos Solutions. "On the other hand, managers can drill down through all the employees that report to them."

Mr Beel says that "Ian Norvock and his team has delivered a significant contribution to how HR is adding value to Cement Australia. This view is endorsed by continuing positive comments from the executive and users of the system. HR RAFT is now part of the way Cement Australia does business." 