



RLT engineers high rise profitability...

Who are RLT Engineering Consultants Ltd

RLT is a firm of civil and structural consulting engineers. Its projects range from small exclusive developments of high specification construction to 15 floor apartment blocks. RLT conducts soil and contamination investigations, carries out remedial works design and provides designs for foundations, infrastructure and superstructures.

The mission

- Make the company more profitable by being able to understand which projects give the highest return and why
- Analyze the cost of past projects against quoted fees so that future fee quotations can be pitched accurately
- Ensure a precise valuation of work in progress to give a true picture of business health

The solution

Implement time recording software from Timewatch plc and integrate it with RLT's accounting system.

The results

- Ten days off invoicing time
- Detailed reports available each Monday for the previous week's timesheets
- Weekend working easily picked out and analyzed
- 'Request for Payment' process accommodated
- Ability to analyze profitability by project, personnel, date and client

TIMEWATCH CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Customer Summary

*"The real benefit of **time**® is the ability to research past performance in order to understand issues and improve future performance. I anticipate that over the next year or two we will fine tune our analysis to make us significantly more profitable for the same amount of work and expenditure."*

Phillip Richards Director, RLT Engineering Consultants Ltd

RLT had been using a Time & Billing System since the mid '90's. *"When we first automated Time & Billing, the benefits were obvious, but at the same time, the limitations of an inflexible and closed database system soon became very clear"* says Director Philip Richards.

One of the drawbacks of our previous system was the inability to bring forward Work In Progress (WIP). In addition, all jobs that spanned across previous financial years had their old invoice data discarded. As construction projects frequently last for longer, it was not possible to see a total cost per project without looking up previous printed records.

Another disadvantage was that timesheets only allowed recording of hours to a specific job per week, not hours in a day. When queries arose, there was frequently confusion about which specific day was in question and there was no way to identify weekend working. This also meant that it was impossible to differentiate clearly between months. When the last day of the month fell on a Monday, for instance, all of that weeks timesheets (and therefore costs) were counted as occurring in the previous month which resulted in manual adjustments.

The Directors were also unhappy about the internal cost of supporting the system as well as the external costs. As the database was closed, reports needed to be written by the suppliers, so costs kept escalating.

The Company decided to implement **time**® from Timewatch. Philip Richards saw the benefits immediately. *"Timesheet reports for the previous week are available the following Monday. When we get to the end of the month we just begin a new timesheet, even if it falls in the middle of the week. We do not have to close down the month and we can identify weekend working. Everything is done in real time so we are invoicing up to ten days earlier and the invoices contain a lot more detail."*

One particular advantage is the ability to cope with Requests for Payments, a dispensation from the Inland Revenue to certain professions which submit invoices with time as the commodity. When a payment is due, instead of sending an invoice and being liable to pay Value Added Tax (VAT) immediately, the company sends a request for payment to it's client. Once the money is received a VAT invoice is raised and the VAT becomes payable.

Philip Richards is excited about the flexibility and scope that **time**® gives him. *"Once you have the system configured, you can do anything. As the database is so open and intuitive, we write our own reports using Access 2000. We can get a report on the profitability of work done for any client over any number of years. We can also look at particular projects, identify the Project Director or Project Manager and see if choice of personnel made a noticeable difference."*

Using the configurable Analysis Fields in **time**®, RLT can 'tag' jobs so that it can analyze trends to see if it is the nature of each job that really matters. It can, for example, designate projects by type, such as multi floor, steel frame construction or reinforced concrete so that it becomes clear if all jobs of a particular type are more profitable than others.

"We are now able to identify if clients are not profitable and find out why" he says . "Although we are generally doing well, not all of our projects go smoothly and we are clearly cross subsidizing. It is helpful to have a better understanding of what is going on as this enables us to take remedial action, for example, to stop working for a certain client, change a project team, or amend our fee structure."

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Product Summary

RLT implemented a **time**® BusinessPack (Professional Edition) running on Microsoft's SQL Server based Standard Data Engine.

RLT required minimal training, utilizing the product's inherent flexibility, configurability and on-line Tutorials and Manuals to implement, setup and configure **time**® themselves. RLT converted all data from their previous system and have created all company reports, analysis and graphs using Access 2000.