

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Tony Leppard, MD of FMx, author of facilities management software CAFM Explorer, explains how the company's training model has evolved to meet changing needs

WHEN YOU ARE SELLING A SOPHISTICATED FACILITIES

management software system, it is crucial that your customers are able to get up and running with the product as quickly as possible. In particular, training has to be suited to the needs of a diverse range of users, some of whom may be highly computer literate, others who may never have worked with such a system before.

CAFM Explorer is a powerful total facilities management product built around a reactive and planned helpdesk. Designed to look and feel like Microsoft Outlook, it provides a wide range of optional reports in areas such as planned maintenance, asset tracking, property management, room and resource booking and space management.

We have been running conventional training courses for 27 years, but recently we have rethought our whole approach to training. One thing that has changed is that individuals' computer literacy has generally improved. Another is that following the product's launch on to the global market two years ago, the number of users has mushroomed, requiring new training models.

We found that trainees sometimes struggled with conventional face-to-face courses that tend to push out a lot of information in a short space of time. We moved to providing online training using Microsoft's Live Meeting service and found that delivering shorter sessions over a longer period enabled our end users to learn in smaller steps. This has proved highly beneficial and dramatically increases their productivity.

Tips and tricks

Building on this success, we looked for more innovative ways to improve our training, and at the end of September we launched our tips and tricks video (TTV) tutorial service.

This came about through collaboration with the independent CAFM Explorer User Group. Every year the company is



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invited to attend the main user group event to carry out workshops, which are really tips and tricks sessions. The user group suggested that we video those tips and tricks and make them available online for users to view at their leisure, to enhance rather than replace the more formal training. We made some videos and trialled them with our customers, who responded very positively.

The TTVs are now available via our website where our customers can purchase credits, view their favourite tutorials and download them in exactly the same way one would purchase music. Over 25 tips and tricks videos have been created so far,

all associated with CAFM Explorer.

Next year we plan to develop this service further by expanding our TTV offering to include a wide range of FM subjects. We believe that if a facilities manager can look at a 15-minute video tutorial and get a quick heads-up on how another company has tackled, say, their carbon reduction commitment, this insight could save them thousands **fmx**

Further Info

For more about CAFM Explorer, or to access the TTV service, visit:

www.cafmexplorer.com