



➤ CASE STUDY: NHS Professionals

➤ Electronic Fax and SMS solutions improve efficiency and save costs for NHS Professionals

NHS Professionals had two main aims when they contacted ProcessFlows – to improve communications with their bank of healthcare staff in order to increase placement rates and to reduce their spiralling fax costs.

The integration of ProcessFlows SMS and electronic fax solutions with their existing IT infrastructure, enabled NHS Professionals to meet both business objectives quickly and deliver a notable return on their investment in terms of efficiency and direct cost savings.

Providing a flexible workforce for NHS Trusts

NHS Professionals currently provides and trains temporary bank nurses and specialist healthcare professionals for 80 of the UK's 300 NHS Trusts.

Trusts rely on temporary staff

NHS Professionals works closely with Trusts to manage staff resources and maintain workforce efficiency and productivity.

Historically, the provision of temporary staff has been a reactive service, which enabled the commissioning organisation

to deal with fluctuating staffing levels throughout the year.

This is no longer the case. NHS Professionals, along with others in the recruitment sector, have responded to clients shifts towards wanting a managed staffing solution which provides a positive contribution to new talent streams across the entire organisation and lessens the burden on HR departments.

“Temporary employees are a valuable resource. In order that they are as productive as possible, they need to be trained, managed and engaged to feel part of a team. This requires good

communications at every level.” said Phillip Bartlett, Telecoms Manager at NHS Professionals.

So they can meet NHS staff shortfalls (caused by sickness, absence, etc.) and fill shift work requirements, NHS Professionals sustain a register of 55,000 bank and Substantive Trust employed staff. They maintain their talent pool by recruiting 500 new staff a month. To achieve this number, the company has to process 3000 applications a month.

This generates a huge amount of back office admin – 36,000 applications a year are processed.

ProcessFlows[®]
Improving Business by Transforming Process

HR back office processes are multipart

Administering the pre-employment screening, on-boarding and training of temporary staff is labour intensive - qualifications and training certification is verified, DBS checks are carried out, training courses and induction schedules have to be completed, pay details confirmed, and much more.

The core of their system is known as Staffbank which has been customised over a number of years to match the needs of clients and their flexible work force. It centralises staff details, their availability, preferred field of work and contact details. Staffbank is then used to match Flexible workers with Temporary vacancies created by the Trusts either online or via the contact centre.

Filling a high percentage of shifts is a key business driver

NHS Professionals typically yielded a 65% shift-fill success rate. If they could improve shift-fill on the less popular shifts and specialised placements, KPI's and placement percentages could, theoretically, be leveraged by a further 35%.

Technology is used wherever possible to maximise efficiency, keeps costs under control and deliver a positive engagement experience for both NHS clients and registered 'bank' staff.

HR processes require good communications

HR processes need regular and reliable communications – be that telephone, email or fax – to complete successfully in a timely manner.

The SMS drivers

Not being able to get a quick response from bank staff in a specific time frame was restricting placement levels to 65% of potential

Recognising that 90% of people read a text message within the first 3 minutes, NHS Professionals decided to introduce SMS to their communication mix to improve contact with bank staff and increase efficiency.

"In order to respond swiftly to a Trust's staffing request promptly, we need to be able to get in touch with our flexible workers to check their availability for shifts, without delay. SMS is undoubtedly the best way of achieving this. It's simple, fast and effective" said Phillip Bartlett.

NHS Professionals had a set of unique SMS requirements

Multiple users across the business, in 15 separate locations, needed to be able to seamlessly and automatically send/receive text messages from within their familiar business interface - the Staff Bank Booking application.

Staff had to be able to search the booking system and send SMS messages directly to the queried list.

Sending individual text messages, one by one, was not practical. They wanted to broadcast work opportunities to all selected candidates, asking them to call the contact centre to apply for the work advertised.

ProcessFlows SMS solution fully met the brief

"The ProcessFlows SMS solution fully met our brief", said Phillip Bartlett. *"It seamlessly integrated with our existing systems and software to provide the company-wide, texting capability we needed, and with some additional middleware development, the automatic SMS notification process specified was very quickly achieved."*

The biggest users of SMS in the business are the client relations teams working in Trust locations. They use text daily to target staff with work opportunities.

SMS is also used by the back office to target group lists of flexible workers in designated Trust areas, as well as reminding them about any training courses and work cancellations.

The solution continues to be rolled out

"Being able to react to requests for temporary staff in a timely manner has enabled us to increase our shift-fill rate. As we expand the use of SMS throughout the organisation, we will be able to move closer towards our ultimate business objective of a 100% shift-fill!"

The Fax drivers

Processing back office, personnel information

On-boarding temporary staff creates a lot of paperwork and requires the exchange of confidential information relating to pre-employment screening, references, occupational health records, etc.

In spite of past terminal diagnosis that it would be a dead technology by 2010, fax continues to thrive, especially at NHS Professionals, where it is used on a

daily basis to securely communicate this HR information.

Operating a fleet of stand-alone fax machines with all their associated overheads – toner, paper, line rental and the 'people time' it takes to walk to the fax machine each time you need to send or receive a fax – is highly inefficient.

Electronic fax reduces costs

Switching to a networked, electronic fax solution which runs over IP, immediately saves all these costs and makes the whole faxing process much quicker for staff.

ProcessFlows integrated OpenText RightFax with MS Exchange to provide electronic faxing capability on all PC's using Outlook.

An additional PDF module enables staff to fax reference requests which can be completed and returned electronically.

Additionally, electronic faxing is fully auditable, making reporting that much easier, and the risk of faxes inadvertently being sent to the wrong number or picked up from the fax machine by someone other than the intended recipient, is greatly reduced. Electronic faxing is also fully compliant with privacy and auditing regulations, which ticks another box.

Key business objectives have been fully met by the ProcessFlows solutions

Being able to engage with workers by text, rather than relying on phone and email, has enabled NHS Professionals to speed up and improve their vacancy-fill rate.

Staff now send/receive all their faxes from the desktop and it's as quick and easy as sending an email.

Electronic fax immediately saved tangible costs, as well as accruing-back the unproductive staff time the old method of faxing took up.

Phillip Bartlett commented that; *"Greater efficiency through improved communications ultimately has a positive effect on our KPI's, which in this instance is simply getting more temporary NHS jobs filled in the shortest time possible and communicating key employee data securely in appropriate time frames."*

Finally, Phillip said; *"I found ProcessFlows easy to work with and their support team is always extremely helpful"*.