



# Knowledge Management (eSourcing) Case Study

# eSourcing Knowledge Guides

## 1.0 Introduction

eSourcing Knowledge guides are workbooks that bring together **process, software procedures** and **knowledge expertise** in how the eSourcing process should be deployed.

They guide users through the process, covering the tasks and activities that are required at each key milestone, before highlighting the appropriate software procedures. Both process and procedural steps are combined with best practice techniques as specified by the knowledge experts.

## 2.0 Benefits of Knowledge Guides

There are many benefits associated with using knowledge guides some of which are covered below:

- Knowledge Guides enable users to learn the process and the appropriate procedures up to a level where they are comfortable in deploying the process themselves rather than relying on other forms of support.
- Evidence to date has shown that where users are trained and developed using knowledge guides they are far more likely to attempt some form of eSourcing activity.
- Knowledge guides capture and document expertise that might otherwise be lost should key employees leave the organisation. This also applies to expensive consultative support that might be brought in for short periods.
- Documenting a standard process forces users to apply a consistent approach throughout the organisation.
- Knowledge guides focus on what users really need to know rather than the full range of software available.
- Traditional approaches to software training do not provide a link to a process which often confuses people on how the IT solution fits into their roles and responsibilities.
- Often when users attend a traditional training course they are given a detailed manual which summarises all course details. These manuals are often of poor quality and when users wish to use the software sometime later, they are often not able to locate what they need to know as the documents tend not to be user friendly.
- Knowledge guides are created in a highly professional format with clear instructions on all appropriate steps and procedures. They can also be translated into different languages to ensure that consistent processes are applied throughout global organisations.

### 3.0 Case Study

One of eSourcing Solutions' major clients, who is a well known global operator, was concerned that although many members of their Purchasing team had been trained on a market leading eSourcing application they were still experiencing relatively little eSourcing enthusiasm and activity.

eSourcing Solutions were asked to interview various people internally to establish why this was so and potentially what lessons could be learned. A summary of the key findings were:

- The Purchasing team were in principle enthusiastic for eSourcing activity although many members had raised concerns on whether it was appropriate for their particular category.
- The team expressed some frustration that although they had been on courses they were still not really clear on how to create e-RFx(s), Reverse Auctions etc. It was claimed the instructions were poor and covered too much unnecessary detail.
- There was also no clear understanding of a process and what tasks were required at the various stages. Users were also unclear on the level of decision making, who should be involved, the role of the internal sourcing team, supplier qualification methods etc.
- Although the majority of the global category roles were located in the UK, many other category managers were based in their respective home countries which tended to amplify the problems above, particularly if the users were not fluent in English.
- The internal eSourcing team, although created to assist users in their strategic decision making, were being asked to perform many of the basic tasks that the user community had been trained on and were expected to perform themselves. This led to a poor level of utilisation for a highly skilled team.

It was clear from this exercise that although there had been an expectation from senior management that users were able and fully trained to begin deploying the process, that this was not the case. Users did not feel sufficiently confident as they did not understand the process and had largely forgotten how to deploy the software procedures from training courses previously undertaken.

#### The Solution

As a result of this feedback our client wanted to develop some form of mechanism that would allow users to have instant knowledge of the process, would demonstrate the appropriate procedures in a simple easy to follow approach and also capture best practice and pass this on to all users in the supply community. Any solution also had to be cost-effective.

eSourcing Solutions suggested two alternative methods for delivering this new rich content:

- Printed Knowledge guides that would document process, appropriate procedures and knowledge expertise

- e-learning content that would provide the same material although in a different format

In this particular situation, the client's initial preference was to opt for printed knowledge guides as they had been developed in a highly professional manner. All appropriate screen shots had been captured with clear instructions and various cartoon images were added to emphasise specific process steps and ensure the guide retained the reader's interest.

eSourcing Solutions' sourcing methodology was used to help the client develop and flesh out its own process. Further time was spent with key users to clarify the scope of the functionality that was being used and to understand best practice to enable knowledge capture so that other users could benefit.

### Results

Shortly after the guides were published, users were trained on the process and refreshed on the procedures which led to a significant upturn in eSourcing activity. It was also felt that as users had followed a robust process that required them to meet key milestones before they could proceed, the savings identified from the eSourcing activity were much more likely to be achieved than previous attempts. Summary of the key benefits:

- The level of eSourcing activity had increased by 37% within a three month period as measured by the number of events.
- The additional savings from the increased eSourcing activity, based on the average saving to date, was estimated to yield a further significant saving (client confidentiality restricts the true saving being published).
- Anecdotal evidence also suggested that users and the eSourcing team were far more content with the process and their division of roles.

Users also responded positively to the knowledge guides as there was a structured process with clear decision making responsibilities. They also became more confident in using the various tools and enjoyed having learning material at hand that was easy to follow and focused on what they need to know.

Knowledge guides did not make all users experts in deploying the process, but they have raised the level of understanding and skill levels to where eSourcing is considered almost standard practice.

## 4.0 eSourcing Solutions capability

eSourcing Solutions has a robust process methodology that can be tailored to any organisation's internal processes and terminology. We also have experience of most of the leading applications which would enable our teams to identify what users really need to know and to combine that with knowledge expertise.

eSourcing Solutions are focused on delivering content that combines **process, procedures** and **knowledge expertise**.

**For further information on how knowledge guides can help your organisation or to request a sample please contact Adrian Finn on 0207-100-5365 or via email [adrian.finn@esourcingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:adrian.finn@esourcingsolutions.co.uk).**