

Case Study: Collins McNicholas

National Recruitment consultancy receives integrated solution.



'Overall, it's been of huge benefit to the company'

Regina Spollen of Collins McNicholas

Offering quick and easy access to a wide range of employment opportunities, jobsites such as Irishjobs.ie, Recruit Ireland and Monster.ie have become increasingly popular amongst job seekers over the last few years. While recruitment agencies continue to use traditional media for advertising their positions, the vast majority of them recognise the value of the internet as a vital tool for attracting high quality candidates in a very competitive market.

"To increase our chances of finding the right candidates, we have to ensure that our jobs get maximum coverage on the various jobsites that we use," says Regina Spollen, IT Group Project Manager and Regional Manager of the Cork branch of Collins McNicholas, one of Ireland's leading HR/recruitment consultancies. Until late 2004, this meant that most of the company's 30 employees, who are based at five offices around the country, spent a substantial portion of their time each day manually removing, editing and republishing job details on five or six of the main Irish jobsites to ensure their vacancies would always be classified as new and would therefore come out near the top of any job search.

At the beginning of 2004, the company began to look at different options for streamlining this process and for improving the overall efficiency of its IT infrastructure. "We had been approached by several companies offering us job automation facilities, which would allow us to enter our job details once and then upload them to all the jobs boards," says Spollen. "However, we also wanted to upgrade our website and integrate our recruitment management systems which, at that stage, were maintained and updated independently at each of our sites. Through its existing relationship with eircom, Collins McNicholas was given access to eircom's web solutions partner, MediaOne, for the project.

Work began on the project in the summer of 2004 and the main elements of the system were up and running by the end of the year. The new website uses frame-based technology, which provides job search optimisation. New aspects of the site, which has a strong customer focus, include a job search facility, 'hot jobs' and featured client

sections, as well as news and advice pages. A content management system, currently being put in place, will shortly allow the company to make its own changes and add new content to various areas of the site. "We want to keep it looking fresh and will be dedicating someone in-house to do that," says Spollen.

A major part of the project involved integrating the company's recruitment management system with the RecruitOne job management system. All jobs are now given a standard content format using XML technologies. When a job is entered or updated at one office, it is instantly live at all five of the sites in Galway, Dublin, Cork, Sligo and Athlone. The standard format also enables selected jobs to be published on third party recruitment websites at the click of a button. "We can now update jobs on our own website and six or seven other jobsites instantly instead of re-entering the information each time," says Spollen. As a result, the workload has been dramatically reduced and, for the most part, just one administrator at each of the offices is now involved in uploading and removing jobs on the third party jobsites. "For us, the emphasis is now back on matching candidates to jobs rather than updating our listings," she says.

The new database allows the company to produce a range of different reports, including the number of jobs advertised at any one time. "We can access information in a more organised way than before," says Spollen. In addition, the company now has an intranet, which has improved communication throughout the branches.

Spollen says that while the project is ongoing the main building blocks of the system are now in place. "It's been a slow transition and we're still in the process of transferring part of the system over," she says. "But overall, it's been of huge benefit to the company."