

BEIMS #1 in healthcare:

David Lee from the Royal Children's Hospital explains how BEIMS has met their needs for over 20 years

Healthcare is perhaps one of the most challenging facilities environments to operate in. Facing strict regulations and often limited funding, healthcare organisations require software that is not only powerful and robust but that provides excellent value for money and return on investment. Healthcare is literally a 'life or death' business and as such it is critical for all building and equipment maintenance to be carried out in a timely and efficient manner.

Originally built out of a hospital environment, BEIMS is ideally placed for meeting the needs of this industry. In fact, BEIMS is used to manage the facilities and assets of more hospitals throughout Australia and New Zealand than any other facilities software.

One hospital BEIMS has a special relationship with is the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH). Established in 1870, RCH is one of Australia's most respected hospitals and is internationally recognised as a leading centre for research and education. It is the major paediatric hospital in Victoria, providing clinical, academic and advocacy services for children and young people throughout the state. In 2006/2007 it treated approximately 35,000 in-patients, 190,000 children attended outpatient appointments and 60,000 children presented at the emergency department.

The relationship dates back to 1984 with Garry Busowsky, Managing Director of Mercury Computer Systems (producers of BEIMS facilities management software) working at Royal Children's hospital and developing BEIMS based on RCH work processes.

Since this time RCH and BEIMS have enjoyed a long and satisfying relationship with RCH continuing to have input into the development of BEIMS and building it to be the world class software it is today.

David Lee, Network Technical Officer for the Engineering Department at RCH has been working with BEIMS since 1991. David speaks to us about how RCH are currently using BEIMS, how their needs have changed over the years and how BEIMS has addressed these changing needs.

Can you talk about your current environment and some of the ways you use BEIMS to meet your needs?

As a hospital, the environment we operate in is very challenging maintenance wise. For obvious reasons, it is critical that the hospital is at all times safe and well maintained. The hospital runs 24 hours and maintenance needs to be around the clock. Urgent jobs must be completed within 15 minutes of receiving the request. The hospital has strict compliance it must adhere to and we are audited once a year by an external company. There is also extensive planned maintenance that must be carried out – schedules must be up to date and work completed at the appropriate times. We have to comply with essential services and meet compliance standards for all hospital equipment. There are backups of all equipment so instead of, for instance, just servicing the one pump that is in use, we also need to service the backups. Compliance standards also change every year, so we need a powerful system for tracking and complying with these. BEIMS helps us to manage all maintenance and compliance inspections.

Our essential services records are audited yearly by a Building Surveyor as part of our form 10 obligations. As per all Victorian hospitals, we go through an accreditation process every 3 years. Meeting both of these regulatory standards means our maintenance and record keeping must be in good order.

In what ways is this environment different to when you started at the Royal Children's Hospital in 1991?

The environment we are operating in was very different to when I started. Compliance standards are much stricter now. To meet regulatory standards, maintenance now has to be carried out more frequently and in greater depth. This makes it more expensive, time consuming and labour intensive.

Over time, the hospital has also tightened its maintenance standards and procedures. For example, in previous years we did not have specific KPI's that needed to be met. The hospital has also become more client and service focused and maintenance must ensure clients are satisfied with our service.

In what ways has BEIMS assisted with meeting these stricter standards and greater customer service focus?

BEIMS is a very flexible system and has allowed us to adapt to the changing requirements. For instance, it is easy for us to change the frequency of any planned maintenance jobs. It also keeps a detailed service history which assists us with compliance and with the auditing process.

We have varying KPI's for high, medium and low priority jobs. BEIMS helps us to meet these KPI's by tracking and recording the time taken to complete various jobs. BEIMSWeb also assists with tracking this, as it is easy to run reports on when a job was received and when it was closed. The data in BEIMS helps us assemble reports to track KPI's and report to management.

BEIMS has also allowed us to provide better service to clients. For example, enabling clients to log requests online via BEIMSWeb has provided a convenient and easy way for clients to lodge jobs. Clients are able to check up on job status at any time by logging into BEIMS. They can also request to receive an email to notify them at various times of the job's progress. For example, when a job has been completed, BEIMS generates an email to notify the client that the job has been completed and the actions that were taken. This has improved our communication with clients as well as eliminating the need for clients to follow up maintenance on how jobs are progressing. This email notification also provides them with a feedback form to ensure the job was carried out to a satisfactory standard. The client can rank and assess our service on a range of outcomes. This enables us to constantly improve our performance and identify any problem areas or issues with contractors.

BEIMSWeb also serves to reduce phone calls and administration for the maintenance department - we can deploy these resources into other maintenance activities such as ensuring jobs are completed more quickly and to a higher standard.



In what ways has BEIMS changed and adapted over the years to a changing facilities environment?

BEIMS has obviously changed significantly over the years – in the early days it was using a DOS based system! Technology has played a huge role in improving the service we can provide and in making our jobs easier. BEIMS has readily adapted to this technology by offering web and PDA based services.

BEIMSWeb enables clients to log maintenance requests via the Internet. We now receive 99% of our maintenance requests via the Web, whereas previously the majority of requests were received via phone. The introduction of the web based service has easily reduced our number of phone calls by 90% - obviously a huge timesaver! It is a far easier way for clients to place requests and they are also able to check the status of their requests online and receive automated email feedback via the BEIMS Remote Request Notification function.

We have also introduced pocketBEIMS to enable our maintenance team and Contractors to receive and complete jobs directly onsite. This has provided huge benefits for emergency and “out of hours” jobs. It is also useful if a contractor is offsite or at another job as they can receive an SMS notification to alert them of pending jobs. pocketBEIMS has also enabled us to adopt a “paperless” environment as we no longer need to print and send jobs to contractors. Instead they receive all work directly from BEIMS to their PDA’s.

In what other ways has BEIMS benefited your organisation?

BEIMS makes our job easier and we are able to be more organized and efficient. Our workflow is more streamlined. Being able to track and record expenses has also reduced our maintenance costs. We are able to group similar jobs together or jobs in one location to save on resources. A more streamlined workflow has also contributed to greater staff satisfaction and as mentioned earlier better service for clients. BEIMS is easy to use and our staff enjoy using the software. We do not meet any resistance to new staff using BEIMS.

Administration time has been reduced as there is no doubling up of data entry. Record keeping is also simplified as we don’t need to print as many things out. We are able to store all important information in BEIMS.

The information we get from BEIMS helps us make better decisions for managing our buildings and maintenance costs.

Can you describe the Support offered by BEIMS?

Staff are friendly and helpful, and provide accurate and timely information which ensures we can continue to meet our performance standards and provide excellent service to clients. User group meetings are also a good way to learn and network with other BEIMS users and hospitals.

Recommendation

Without BEIMS, we couldn't manage! It is the lifeblood of our activities and helps us function at optimal levels. We use it to manage all aspects of maintenance and ensure the hospital is maintained to the highest possible standard.

BEIMS is an ideal solution for hospitals as it was originally built out of a hospital environment. As a result the system strongly reflects the processes and challenges that are unique to hospitals.

BEIMS has successfully met our needs for the past 20 years and I would not hesitate in recommending BEIMS to hospitals and other organisations.



Mercury Computer Systems would like to thank Mr David Lee of the The Royal Children's Hospital for sharing his experience working with BEIMS over the past 18 years.