



Emrill found the online portal helped to effectively manage its growing home maintenance offering.

"Having mastered this in the last two years, an FM client we serve, has seen the benefits, as has its clients. It has won six new contracts using the same software.

And cost savings come from a down-time reduction, companies like Emrill have found, following the implementation of its online customer portal.

"The online portal was primarily created for the convenience of our customers. Emrill observed that its home maintenance customers had got busier and cash transactions at the customers door was slowing down the emergency response times while the maintenance teams were doubling as cash collecting sales men," says Jason Ruehland, operational director, Emrill. "[Also]most of our customers owned multiple properties and some of them resided outside of the UAE, finding it challenging and time consuming to order home maintenance packages or obtain a simple repair quote."

Emrill's online customer portal extends the company's helpdesk service by providing an online application for customers to manage services, pay bills and access support anywhere in the world.

"Customers can request services, [and track requests], get instant updates [...] and maintain a full history of all discussions," says Ruehland. Customers can also pay online and the portal allows them to check the latest information within their organisation or community.

"By cutting out transactions at the door we have reduced our average emergency

SUPPLIER FOCUS: ESOLUTIONS MAXIMO

eSolutions Maximo part of Midis Group, was established in 1996. Its Middle East team consists of more than 100 Maximo Consultants. Clients include the RTA, Dubai Airports and even the Burj Khalifa. The IBM Maximo Enterprise Asset Management helps in getting the maintenance and inventory cost down and gives the asset a maximum optimum up time in order to serve its purpose. Results vary, but typically, clients report an increase in asset up-time from 5% to 7%, inventory carrying cost down by 10%, maintenance cost down by 10% -15% and warranty recoveries from 20%-50%.

response attend time from 63 minutes to 24 minutes and our registered portal customer base has tripled in the last three months," said Ruehland.

"Operationally we use the back end of the web portal to track jobs by location, type and volume. This allows us to better plan the number and type of technicians and vehicles we need to deploy across the UAE. By doing this daily analysis we have increased our first time fix to 84%."

And while some markets within the region are gradually integrating IT to improve FM service delivery, others, in particular developing markets, like Qatar are quickly jumping on board.

Omnix International is offering services to the Qatar National Bank and is currently tendering for a project with a large sports management company that has a strong presence in Qatar.



Concordia: paper and admin reduction through PDA use.

And it is evident the rest of the GCC is quickly catching up with its Western counterparts.

"I think they are jumping several steps that companies have in the UK have gone through over time," says Poynton. "The demand for it in terms of level of service and accountability is what most of the clients are going to be looking for. I don't think there's any way to deliver [high] levels of service without that technology because you're not sure who is doing what, where and when."

But, says Kumar, it is essential that IT is used to enhance business operations.

"A company should not have to change the way it works to make room for new technology. The system should work as per its procedures and workflow. We do that customisation for them; what they have been doing manually, we do that on one single platform."

Regardless, it is becoming widely accepted that IT is the future for FM.

"The future workplace isn't necessarily going to look like a building. We're looking at a state of affairs where information is coming up, CAFM, AutoCAD and so on is really coming back to individuals carrying PDAs and smartphones and beginning to interact in a different way completely outside of the built environment and dealing with info exchange outside of corporate control. We have to understand the shift that's going on when planning future FM. In future there will be true mobility of data," concludes Producers. **fmME**