



Willmott Dixon Builds In Outstanding Quality by Increasing Leverage of Construction Industry Standards

Quality is a key differentiator in the construction industry. Founded in 1852, Willmott Dixon long ago established a reputation for superior quality across *all* of its businesses. As one of the United Kingdom's largest privately owned construction, regeneration and support service companies, Willmott Dixon's annual revenues surpass £1 billion.¹ The company's Capital Works division includes a Construction group that specializes in non-residential work including award-winning projects for education, leisure and culture, hotels, offices, custodial, health, retail, and infrastructure for national and local government agencies.

Today, Willmott Dixon is building upon its competitive advantage by sharpening its focus on quality. Internal audits are identifying defects and mitigating their potential impact on projects. Project managers are proactively researching new materials and best practices. In each of these steps and more, Willmott Dixon employees must reference industry standards information to ensure compliance, eliminate delays and hidden costs, and deliver maximum value to their customers.

Challenge

- ▶ Assure delivery of well-engineered products and services to achieve customer satisfaction
- ▶ Mitigate or eliminate the risk of non-compliance to prevent waste, defects and liability issues
- ▶ Improve employee awareness of industry standards and access to documentation

Solution

IHS Product Design
with IHS Standards Expert™

Results

- ▶ Ensured compliance with relevant industry regulations as well as best-practice standards to meet higher customer expectations
- ▶ Trained over 45% of staff in 6 months – increasing usage from ~200 to 650+ employees a month – 3x prior level of engagement for better ROI
- ▶ Boosted team productivity by simplifying access – reduced log-in time to 10 seconds instead of 5 minutes for lost password
- ▶ Settled dispute with sub-contractor regarding manufacturer information – saved £35K
- ▶ Supported “quality alerts” to head off problems – e.g. overheated schools, leaky pipe fittings
- ▶ Contributed to improvement in overall quality of products and customer satisfaction

“Our company's vision is to provide well-engineered quality products and services to our clients,” explained Rumana Shaukat, Quality Delivery Manager at Willmott Dixon. “My job is to look at how we can meet each customer's expectations while reducing waste and risks. Raising awareness of industry standards and showing our employees how to apply them in our daily operations is an essential part of the process. That's why we use online standards documentation from IHS. I'm already seeing an improvement in the quality of our products and customer satisfaction.”

Leveraging the Right Resource

Willmott Dixon invests millions of pounds each year in the development of its employees' skills and expertise.² In this case, however, the company has been able to achieve tremendous gains by simply showing employees how to make use of a powerful resource that is already at their fingertips.

In 2010, Willmott Dixon had been subscribing to IHS Standards Expert for a decade but usage had dropped off due to organizational changes at the construction company. Shaukat found that the great majority of her colleagues were unaware of the IHS service and were conducting their own searches on the Internet.

“Unfortunately, when you search the Internet, you have to visit many sites and you may still not get current construction standards. With IHS, we get the specific information we need in the one place and it's been checked by experts. We know it's focused on construction and we can access or download it easily,” said Shaukat.

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¹ <http://digitalpages.digitalissue.co.uk/?userpath=0000082/00008121/00084115/>

² <http://www.willmottdixongroup.co.uk/being-unique/investing-in-skills>

Willmott Dixon Builds Quality Based on Industry Standards

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Raising Awareness, Simplifying Access

To show employees at Willmott Dixon how the IHS solution could help them in their jobs, Shaukat began a series of face-to-face briefings and demonstrations.

“Since the campaign kick-off six months ago, we have run about 80 training courses and reached more than 45 percent of our staff. As a result, we have increased usage from about 200 users a month to more than 650. That’s three times the previous level of engagement so we know we’re getting a much better return on investment now.”

Willmott Dixon also made it easier for staff to access the IHS solution by simplifying the login process.

“We’ve developed a page on our Intranet, called a Quality Dashboard,” said Shaukat. “From your desktop, you’re literally two clicks away from the IHS database. It makes everybody’s life easier. Now it only takes about 10 seconds to get started instead of 5 minutes when someone forgets their password.”

Quality Information, Quality Results

The Willmott Dixon team is ensuring higher quality for the company and its clients by researching standards throughout the project lifecycle.

“That’s where IHS assists quite nicely,” said Shaukat. “Our people can check products before they’re ordered whether it’s a manufacturer catalogue, CAD drawings or finding local supply chain. The level of detail of construction data that’s readily available – the Construction Information Service, Specify IT, SCI Bluebook and Environmental Management - makes this tool very valuable.”

Jo Rock, a senior environmental manager uses the IHS solution to check environmental impact rules. She says it is “A great tool – acts like Google, but specific to construction products. Great for looking up standards, research and widening your knowledge.”

Here are other examples of staff experiences that were highlighted in the company’s *Quality Delivery* publication, where Shaukat serves as editor.³

- Owen Craister, a company quantity surveyor had a dispute with a sub-contractor. Craister was not familiar with the IHS system until Shaukat took five minutes to show him how it worked. He used the system to check the specifications for joints connecting paneling from a certain manufacturer.

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Rumana Shaukat
Quality Delivery Manager
Willmott Dixon

The data proved that Willmott Dixon had scoped the job correctly and saved the company £35,000.

- Neil Ballard, a services manager for mechanical-electrical installations, was having trouble with overheated school buildings. He researched the issue and teamed with Shaukat on a ‘quality alert’ to let their Willmott Dixon coworkers know the problem, the relevant standard and a potential solution. Recently, Ballard described the IHS solution as, “A very useful tool. Easy reference to British Standards, etc. plus relevant guidance notes and publications.”
- A senior bid manager saw a quality alert that Shaukat had sent out after researching crimped pipe fittings and the effects of leaks if incorrectly installed. He was in the process of convincing a client to consider press fit in place of traditional soldered and welded fittings to avoid potential problems. After sharing the standards information, the client took the senior bid manager’s advice and went with the better pipe fittings.

Building for the Future

“The best scenario for us is to make sure we design out potential issues in pre-construction... before we build,” concludes Shaukat. “We want everything right the first time, every time.”

Willmott Dixon has demonstrated its commitment to quality for years, in each of its projects. Now, by leveraging best-in-class standards information and insights from IHS, this industry leader is ready to continue raising the bar as it builds toward the future.

³ Quality Delivery, December 2013, <http://digitalpages.digitalissue.co.uk/00000082/00019241/00087423/>