

## Remit Case Study: Grosvenor – Facilities Management System Selection Project

**Grosvenor manages a large residential estate in prime central London. In summer 2013, the company was faced with a repairs and maintenance system that was no longer fit for purpose. It had just six weeks to find a replacement. Grosvenor called in Remit to identify a new supplier that could dramatically improve both efficiency and customer service.**

### Aiming for a step change in service delivery

Grosvenor is an international property company that manages a broad portfolio across Britain and Ireland, the Americas, Australia and Asia Pacific. In London, the company is best known for its ownership and management of the prestigious Grosvenor estate, which dates back to 1677.

Nick Jones, Performance Improvement Manager at Grosvenor, was tasked with finding a new repairs and maintenance system for the properties that Grosvenor manages in Mayfair and Belgravia. “Our previous system wasn’t fit for purpose,” he explains. “It wasn’t a specialist property system, so it wasn’t well suited to the task.”

Grosvenor required a new system that would be able to: manage redecorations and refurbishments; handle communications with tenants; and manage contractors such as cleaners, security personnel, builders and decorators, lift engineers and Health & Safety assessors.

“We wanted a system that would produce a step change in the way we deliver our services,” continues Nick. “Our goal was to become more efficient, reduce the number of individuals dealing with repairs and maintenance, and improve our communications both internally within Grosvenor and externally with customers and contractors.”

### A new system generating long-term efficiencies

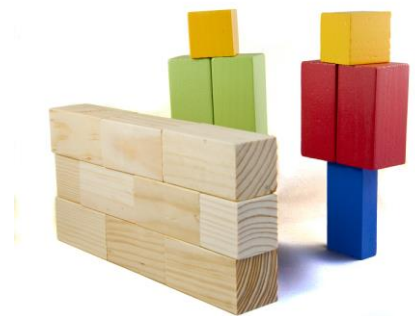
The new system would support the Grosvenor Estate’s long-term goals by:

- Achieving more efficient, higher quality and more cost-effective management of the workload
- Improving communication with tenants over works to be undertaken, and ensuring they receive appropriate levels of customer service
- Changing the ratio between planned and reactive work, resulting in more planned work and greater efficiencies.

The deadline for selecting a new supplier was just six weeks, as the new system had to be up and running by Christmas 2013.

### Why Remit?

Due to the short deadline, Grosvenor didn’t have time to carry out a full system selection and required the help of an external consultancy. “We chose Remit because we wanted to take advantage of their experience and knowledge of the marketplace to accelerate the selection procedure,” says Nick. “We’d worked with Remit before, which gave us confidence in their ability to deliver.”




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## The project: an unusual approach

Remit fielded a small team that included specialists in system selection, systems specifications and developing test scripts. Melita Thomas, the consultancy's process expert, headed up the team. Melita has advised many UK and international clients on how effective use of information systems can improve business efficiency, so she was perfectly placed to lead the selection process.

Melita decided to take a different approach from the standard procurement procedure by not asking suppliers to fill out a Request for Proposal (RFP) at the beginning of the process. She explains her reasoning: "RFPs are very cumbersome to complete and mark, and it doesn't benefit anyone to ask the entire long list to fill one out. We think it's better to select a shortlist, hold conference room pilots, and then ask just the most suitable suppliers to complete an RFP."

"This approach gives the client an opportunity to see the product earlier and to start to establish a relationship with the supplier. The client discovers what the supplier would be like to do business with, whether they're flexible and whether the system satisfies their requirements."

## Identifying a long list of suppliers

In June 2013, the Remit team used its knowledge of the property management field to identify a long list of 11 suppliers, some of which were previously unknown to Grosvenor. "It was easy for us to choose this initial list," says Melita. "We've worked with all these suppliers before, so were quickly able to pinpoint the companies who were likely to meet Grosvenor's criteria."

Remit sent the long listed suppliers an initial Request for Information (RFI) based on Grosvenor's chief requirements, which included mobile applications, and the ability to budget, run a help desk, and plan and schedule works. It was also important to select a supplier that was large enough to service a company like Grosvenor.

"Remit's experience and knowledge of the property systems marketplace really came through when they were building the long list and putting together a selection of pros and cons for us," says Nick. "This enabled us to make an effective decision on the shortlist."

Grosvenor whittled the long list down to a shortlist of four companies. "From the RFI details and our own knowledge of the market, we knew these suppliers had the right profile and expertise for Grosvenor," says Melita.

## Putting suppliers through their paces

The next stage was to carry out a series of conference room pilots with the four shortlisted suppliers.

The Grosvenor team had already undertaken some analysis of the business processes, so Remit was able to turn their business requirements into functional specifications. "It's important to ask the right questions and probe the areas where the system might be weak," says Melita. "No one system will be able to do everything. It's about finding the system that's the closest fit, spotting the gaps, and budgeting for the necessary work to customise the system. If you don't identify the shortfalls before you sign the contract, you risk signing an open cheque. Our approach ensured that we presented a very tight, focused set of specifications for the pilot stage."

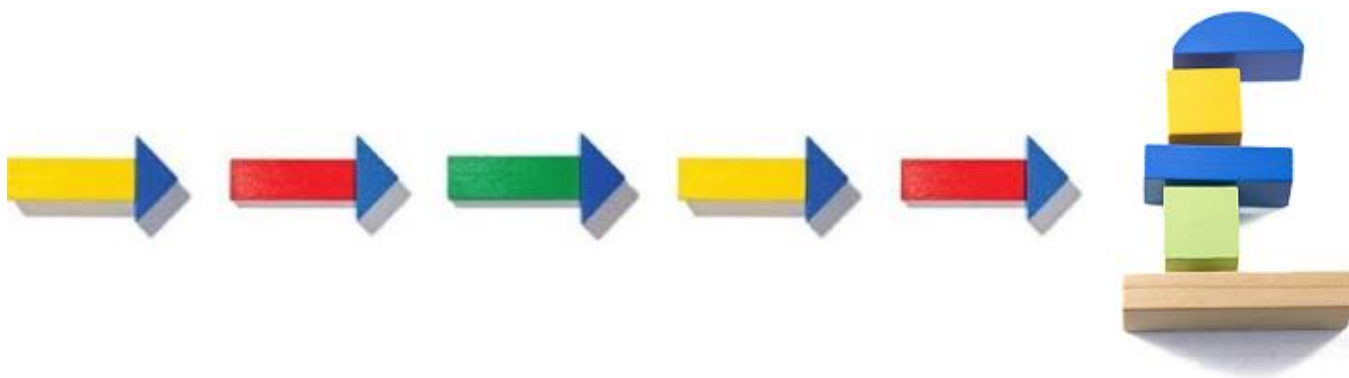
Remit asked each of the four suppliers to follow a closely monitored script to demonstrate very specific capabilities. "The conference pilots followed a very effective process," says Nick. "We had a day with each of our shortlisted suppliers, which gave us an unparalleled view and understanding of the systems on offer. The pilots were highly structured, which resulted in a very effective use of our time."

An additional benefit was that the pilots helped the Grosvenor team to get on board with the change management process at an early stage. "The people running the project had the chance to see the systems, ask questions and become involved in the decision-making process," adds Melita.

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### And then there were two

By now, Remit was confident that the suppliers understood Grosvenor's business and culture, that they were people that Grosvenor could work with, and that they understood exactly what Grosvenor wanted from the system. The upshot of the conference room process was that Grosvenor selected a shortlist of two suppliers, neither of which it had been aware of previously. "The work that Remit carried out in converting our process maps into test scripts was done to a very high quality," says Nick. "This meant it was straightforward for us to convert those test scripts into a high quality RFP for our chosen shortlist of two suppliers."

Both suppliers scored highly. "We were looking at functional and non-functional requirements," says Nick, "and this process gave us a very quantified method of comparison. The supplier we eventually chose gained an outstanding score." Grosvenor selected Planon, one of the leading European suppliers of facility management and real estate software.

### A straightforward success

This type of selection process usually takes around three months. Remit achieved a result for Grosvenor in just six weeks. This enabled Grosvenor to report details of the new supplier at a crucial board meeting and get the go ahead for implementation of the new system.

Nick is very happy with Remit's contribution to this project. "I would thoroughly recommend Remit as a partner for this type of role," he says. "I found Melita very open and approachable, and admired her honesty and pragmatic opinions. Remit's involvement made this engagement very straightforward and easy to manage. I was very impressed with the way the team stuck to deadlines and the high quality of the work delivered. Ultimately, we were delighted with the selection we were able to make. We're currently implementing the system and so far, so good."

For more information:

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