

Case Study – ESL Defence Ltd

Company Profile

ESL Defence Ltd is a highly innovative company with capabilities in research, system design, development, manufacturing and product support

Our core business is making electro optic test equipment for armed forces and government test facilities with a large worldwide market.



ESL’s comprehensive programme management, engineering, manufacturing and logistics support groups also provide infrastructure to support the development, tailoring and deployment of technologies from within the company and from other Textron Systems operating units.

Problem

Context

We had an existing software focus group and this had become concerned about our configuration control.

We were constantly going to our drawing office and finding what we wanted was not there or that if it was, then it was incorrect.

As we grew in capability so we developed more and more products. This led to the number of different software and hardware builds increasing exponentially. Add to this that we have a need to control things for very long periods of time as our products

have a long service and it quickly brings home the need for better controls and better management.

Objectives

We certainly needed better control on our baselines and therefore more confidence on the integrity of the baselines. We needed to be certain that what was in the drawing office was what we expected to be there and that it was correct and up to date.

It was also vital that we could use one system handling software, hardware, drawings, CAD etc. but we did not want a process imposed upon us.

We had a change process, albeit paper based, that worked for us, so we wanted a tool that would enable us to continue to use it and of course, we did not want to break the budget to get it.



Finding the Right Partner

We looked at a number of options for quite a few months as we built a business case to get support from senior management.

We quickly concluded that some of them were going to take a huge amount of consultancy to set up and then we’d still be left with something with a limited ability to change it if we needed to.

It was not hard to identify the shortlist of systems we wanted to look at in more detail.

Given our change process worked the way we wanted it to and that the out of the box templates, most systems used, didn't tend to either support that process or do what we wanted them to, we knew it was ease of configurability that would be the decisive factor.

AllChange from Intasoft had been used by someone who had recently joined us from another company so we were able to draw on his experience and so we already had a good idea that it was very configurable.



Another package we considered came from the mechanical perspective but we decided that the software side of things was the more complex area and it was important we got something that was proven to be good in that area but had the flexibility to cater for everything else.

AllChange immediately impressed us at the demonstration. The sales person was obviously very knowledgeable, not just about their product but also about processes and quickly identified with how we wanted to work.

We eventually decided on AllChange for 3 reasons:

1. because it was the closest to what we needed for software control,

2. It was highly configurable and had the closest out-of-the-box configuration to what we wanted.
3. Did not cost "an arm and a leg" to implement even when we took into account training and consultancy costs.

Solution

Process

The first thing we did to implement AllChange was to arrange for training of the key personnel who would work with the software and the consultancy support from Intasoft. Although we had a paper based change management system which worked the way we wanted it to, we knew that the first step was to emulate this process in AllChange and we realised that we needed some help, not only to do this but also to point out to us where the software could actively improve this process for us.

Within just a few weeks we had a trial system in place and were ready for the next step, developing a software release process and finally, migrating our software over to AllChange.



No matter what we wanted to do Intasoft made sure we always had access to the help we needed.

Specifics

What helped us the most though was the software itself. AllChange has many features as you would expect of software these days but there are a few specific features that we really benefit from. In particular:

How easily we can adapt it to what we need it to do.

Its configurability and flexibility has enabled us to tailor it to our specific processes and requirements



The Change Requests facilities in AllChange have allowed us to implement our previous paper based ECR and ECN processes. One of the most important benefits of this is the visibility of change and its progress throughout the organisation.

Authorisation and Approvals

The AllChange voting feature has enabled us to automate our approval mechanism and provides traceability as to who has approved what and when. This has also highlighted bottlenecks in our approvals and enabled us to refine precisely who needs to approve what.

Confidence in what we deliver

The ability to define a delivery or release from the changes we wish to include makes everything so much easier not only to actually do but also, to understand what had

previously been done. We just say we want to implement this Change Request and let AllChange do the rest of the work for us.

Results and Benefits

Change management is easier to track, automated notification has helped keep people up to date and there is much more visibility and traceability. All I need do is look at the Change Request and all of the information is there for me. If I have a specific item in mind all I need do is look at that and AllChange tells me everything that has ever happened to it.

So, not only do we have a process that takes software from inception through to release, but also, the confidence and surety that comes with using a product that keeps our items safe, our changes documented and our deliveries accurate.

We know that, if we put software into AllChange and follow the process even if we do go wrong, we know AllChange will help us to go right again.

This has already been proven in practice.

AllChange delivers “what it says it delivers”



