



METROPOLITAN
CEMETERIES BOARD



Metropolitan Cemeteries Board modernises systems

A Microsoft Dynamics CRM solution to underpin the entire operations of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board.

About the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board

The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board (MCB) is a statutory authority of the government of Western Australia responsible for managing cemeteries at Fremantle, Guildford, Karrakatta, Midland, Pinnaroo and Rockingham. The MCB provides sensitive and dignified facilities and services to meet the needs of the deceased and bereaved, including cremation, burial, entombment, memorialisation and chapel services, as well as planning for future cemetery needs of the metropolitan population.

Legacy systems needed replacing

The MCB had a range of systems that were reaching end-of-life and needed to be replaced. These systems helped the MCB manage all of the data required to run its cemeteries, including information about plots and memorials. Because the existing system needed to be replaced, the MCB was keen to ensure a new, modern system would include the capability to manage every aspect of the business besides the core finance functions.

Peter Deague, chief executive office, MCB, said, "The MCB needed a system that was easy to use and would support the MCB's customer service team. It was important to have one that didn't involve reliance on a third-party to keep it operating.

The team didn't want an expensive and hard-to-maintain bespoke solution."

With limited funding, it's important for the MCB to be innovative and to deliver services cost-effectively. The ability to providing self-service to improve the customer experience and streamline operations was a key requirement for the solution.

Additionally, due to the nature of the business, dealing with upset, emotional and bereaved people, it was important that the system be reliable and available.

Security and automation were key

The MCB uses Microsoft products primarily in the business, so it made sense to consider a Microsoft solution to this challenge. Microsoft Dynamics CRM was chosen because it integrates directly with Office 365, provides a familiar platform for the business and is easily customisable out of the box.

Peter Deague said, "Choosing Microsoft as a platform meant that the MCB could upgrade its entire environment without concern that integrations would fail. And, because the cloud-based model means upgrades are carried out automatically, there is a much smaller burden on the MCB's IT staff. This means they can focus on supporting the business rather than on the IT solution.

"Microsoft Dynamics CRM also provides multifactor authentication and strong security. This is important because it lets MCB staff members work remotely when needed. It eliminates the need for a separate detailed business continuity plan because, essentially, using cloud-based software means the business is always in business continuity mode."

The MCB chose Empired to help it implement the Dynamics CRM solution based on strong client references.

Transparency and control delivered savings

The MCB's Microsoft Dynamics CRM solution provides a single source of truth for the MCB. In the past, paperwork would arrive and be manually placed into a file or record management system. Now, all documentation will be managed electronically, with all data stored in one location, which will provide efficiencies into the future.

Harry Gill, chief information officer, MCB, said, "The solution has delivered significant improvements in transparency and information available from client services to planning and governance. A lot more meaningful information is now within reach and decision-making doesn't require a lengthy search for relevant data. Team members can see what others are doing and decisions can be made faster and more effectively."

Working with Empired helped the MCB ensure a successful transition from its previous CRM system to Microsoft Dynamics CRM.

Joe Fortuna, director finance, MCB, said, "The professionalism of Empired was evident in the way

"The professionalism of Empired was evident in the way the team worked with MCB in a solutions-focused way and moved the project forward. Once the system was implemented, all the business-critical processes worked and there were no issues."

Joe Fortuna
Director of Finance, MCB

the teams worked with MCB in a solutions-focused way and moved the project forward. Once the system was implemented, all the business-critical processes worked and there were no issues."

Staff members who were used to working with a 20-year-old system were pleasantly surprised at the functionality of the new system and sees the value in it as a future-proofing measure for the business. Duplication of effort has been minimised and automation has been applied wherever possible, saving staff even more time. The MCB estimates it has saved up to \$20,000 per year just in document scanning alone.

The MCB is now working on a portal that lets funeral directors and monumental masons access the system to arrange funerals and manage their dealings with the MCB. This is a gamechanger for an industry in which many funeral directors work 24/7. With strong security and correct data collection, auditing will be easier and communication with customers will be automated. The potential efficiency gains are anticipated to be enormous.

Key business value aspects for MCB:

- + The MCB needed a modern system to help run its cemeteries and maintain a single source of accurate truth.
- + Existing systems were nearing end-of-life; new systems needed to be easy to manage and customisable off the shelf.
- + The MCB selected Microsoft Dynamics CRM to be implemented by Empired.
- + The new system provides transparent and accurate data, automation to streamline workflows, and productivity improvements.
- + Future plans include creating a self-service portal that lets funeral directors and monumental masons to arrange funerals and manage their dealings with the MCB online 24/7.