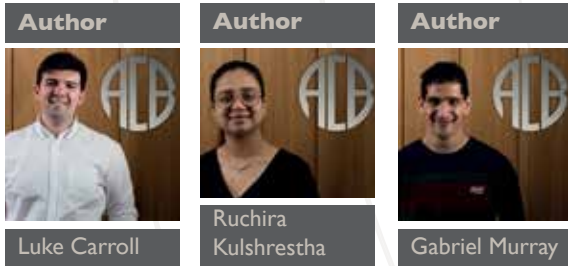


Company Overview | ACB GROUP | acbgroup.ie

ACB Group is a 100% Irish owned company that has grown and excelled both nationally and internationally, having more than 18 years of industry experience on a myriad of complex and fast-moving projects. ACB's vision is to be the 'Go To external envelope solution provider in the global datacenter market' with a mission 'to differentiate our customer solutions using digitisation, innovation,

and modern methods of construction'. At ACB Group we provide the complete design and build solution for your building envelope, including roofing and façade systems along with internal cladding solutions. We are accredited with ISO 9001:2015 (Quality), ISO 45001:2018 (Health and Safety), and are awarded BSI Verification Certification for Design and Construction.



Overview & Background to the Lean Initiative

ACB Group is an organisation dedicated to Lean thinking and practice and continuous improvement for many years to enable the business to operate to its full capacity as it experiences exponential growth. With the advent of the Covid pandemic, and the associated worldwide shift to digital, ACB Group took the initiative to develop a new strategy plan to create a leaner system for lead evaluation through investing in a customer relationship management (CRM) system called ConstructionBos (see Figure 1). The initiative came about through the desire to move information to the cloud across the organisation. The growth and expansion of teams into an online world heightened the need for an online system that could see multiple users interact with projects simultaneously.

The agreed budget for the project was c.€15,000, including purchasing data, licences, and maintenance. The Lean initiative was implemented in two phases and based on making ACB CRM the master. Phase 1 entailed the implementation of the main CRM system, and getting data across and training users. Phase 2 entailed the live data feed to develop an automated governance mechanism.

Having a Lean approach to the way in which the business operates and the way the tendering team conducts its business, aligns to the Lean principle of 'Pursue Perfection'. This focusses on the business's Lean and continuous improvement principles making the organisation as effective as possible.

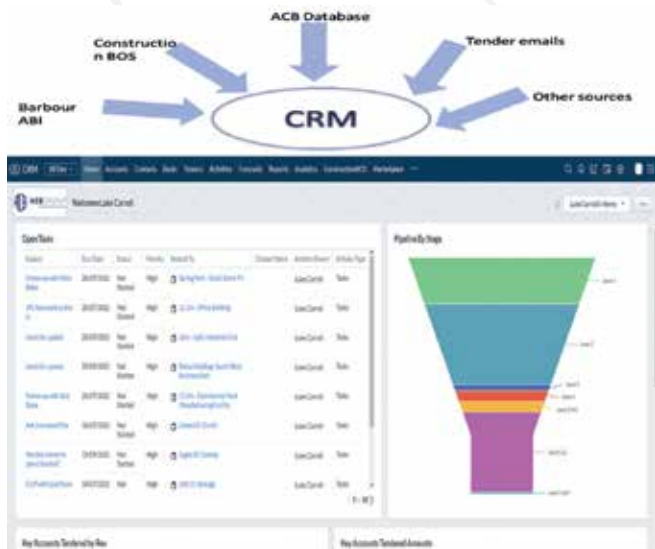


Figure 1. ConstructionBOS

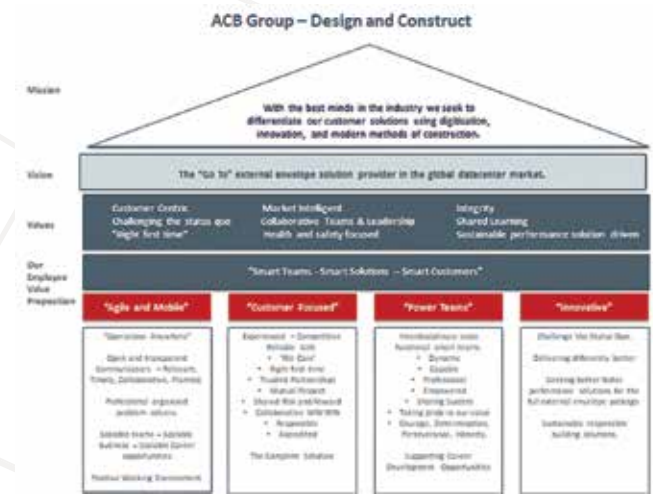


Figure 2. ACB Group Overview with Innovation Pillar

Lean Initiative Undertaken – Lean Thinking, Tools, Techniques

The Kaizen approach is heavily adopted by ACB Group with continuous improvement being a key pillar. One of the many business goals of ACB Group involves migrating all business data to

the cloud, including the way in which leads and project data are held. Before the implementation of ConstructionBos, the organisation managed all tendering activities in one centralised excel sheet

stored on a server: The problem with that process, although a tried and trusted methodology for many years, was it had become too arduous to manage as the world adopted remote working due to the Covid pandemic.

As ACB Group continues to grow and remote work becomes the norm here in Ireland, the UK, and Europe, the logistics of using one excel sheet for a team of six to update was proving problematic. Users were only able to access the sheet one-at-a-time. The information being updated could become inconsistent, and any failure to internal servers (although rare) would interrupt the workday and potentially corrupt the data held within the excel file. One individual working on and updating the sheet via a screen share with the rest of the team giving the information, meant the process was slow in areas such as note-taking, discussions on individual projects, and organising the excel sheet.

The previous format relied on excel sheets to log notes against projects in leads and ones of high priority in the pipeline. Project 'Levels' did not exist – instead projects were categorised as a First or Second Pass. High-priority projects in the Second Pass bucket were generally highlighted manually as opposed to now where the system automatically flags the change in status, thus saving time resources. The key difference with the use of ConstructionBos is that more defined levels were developed by the Power Team (see Figure 2), with ConstructionBos tailoring the system to ACB specifications (see Figure 4).

As well as using excel sheets, Construction Information Services (CIS) was used by the business to track projects in Ireland. Notes and the status of these projects were shared between the excel and CIS. Figure 3 presents the process map that was followed before the implementation of ConstructionBos. The CIS system was not user-friendly nor fit for purpose based on the specifications that ACB Group was looking for. However, Figure 4 illustrates the new process mapping along with in-depth information on the ACB strategy, quantifying Project Identification (Level 1) to Project Win/Loss (Level 5), and this all resulted in a much leaner tendering process.

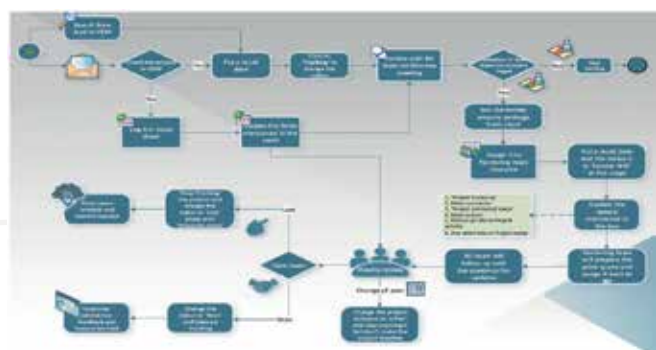


Figure 3. Old CRM Process Map

Leads were manually managed and counted weekly in the excel. Reports involving new leads, leads to tender, and other KPIs used by the business were controlled through the excel file. ConstructionBos is linked to Barbour ABI, a company providing project data through an Application Programming Interface (API) field into ConstructionBos. This means an easy passage of a lead into the ACB Group pipeline. With the integrated system to manage leads, ACB Group can build on and improve lead to tender reports with an automated system.

If a project enters in level one or two, it can be tracked from the moment it enters through to a tender being issued or the project being won or lost.

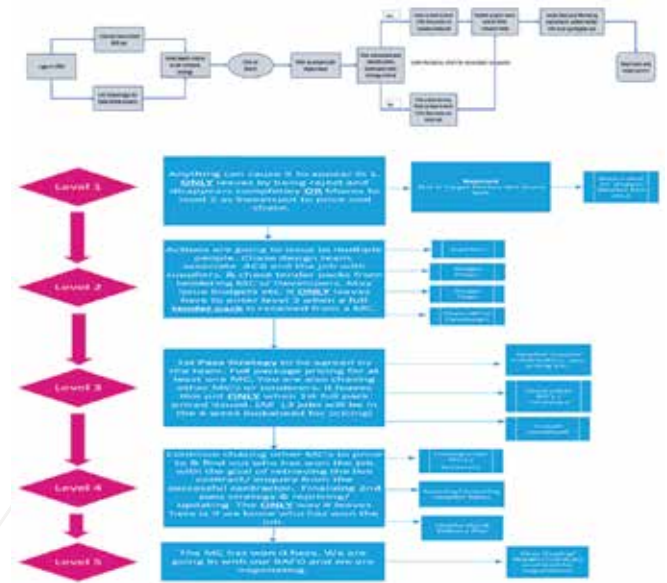


Figure 4. New Process Map and Deep Dive on Levels

The Power Team used the following Lean tools and techniques to map the process as we migrated from the traditional ACB system to the newer ConstructionBos system.

Bottleneck Analysis

A bottleneck analysis was used by the Power Team to map the process and identify issues. This was undertaken to look at the current workflows and processes in place, thus helping to improve the processes and eliminating most operational challenges, and thus enabling a streamlined tendering process.

Plan-Do-Check-Act

The team devised a plan using the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) framework. Figure 5 illustrates the detail of the process undertaken by the ACB team.

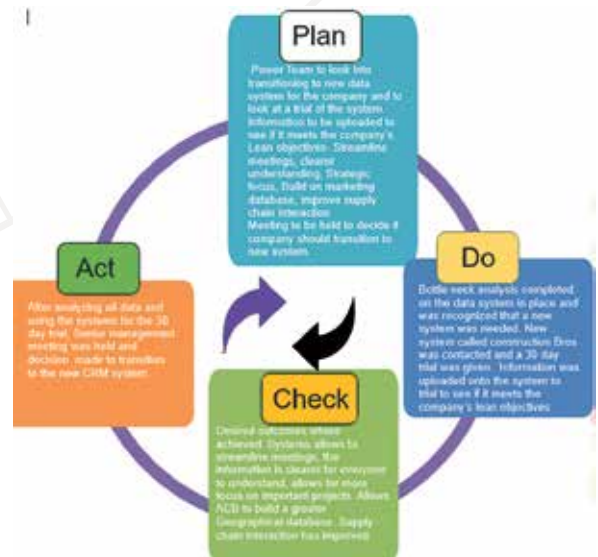


Figure 5. Plan-Check-Do-Act Map

Value Stream Mapping (VSM)

VSM was used to illustrate the roles all members of the tendering team had, how they should interact with the system, and what happens at certain stages of the process. This enables the team to have clear, open, and honest collaboration on all pipeline and tendering workload, whilst also encouraging continuous improvement as to how the organisation operates. ACB Group has achieved tracking on all data centre projects in Ireland and the UK, thus reinforcing a hard strategic focus on this market sector.

Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE)

The OEE is being analysed in phases by the PowerTeam in charge of implementing the CRM. As a high-level view, the system is available to all team members who require access. The performance of the CRM is smooth, with additional fields or fixes made effortlessly. The usability is, as expected, based on the tutorials given both internally and externally. The tendering team have refined reports and the way in which the system is used to enable the CRM to be highly effective.

Lean Initiative Improvements & Impact

There were several key improvements in the business process due to the implementation of ConstructionBos CRM.

Streamlined Lead Meetings

Before the CRM was introduced, projects were categorised as a first and second pass item. With the introduction of the CRM, meetings about pipeline became focussed. The old process saw meetings take place two days a week, lasting between 2-3 hours, to provide project updates. One meeting was held to analyse the pipeline of key opportunities and one for the analysis of current projects on which to tender.

With continued use and refining of the CRM from the PowerTeam, and input from all stakeholders of the tendering department, this has now reduced the meeting to one two-hour slot in the week. The team come prepared with their notes inputted into the CRM, so all stakeholders are aware of updates ahead of the meeting. The meeting is now used to focus on key updates and allows members to expand around other project related talking points.

with their actions taken away from the meeting. This actively helps ACB Group align, for example, with the LCI slogan of being Better, Faster, Together.

Strategic Focus on Sweetspot Projects

The CRM has allowed the business to understand the Sweetspot projects that are being targeted and where. The CRM allows all users and anyone else in the business understand which market the current pipeline of work is situated, what sector, and what actions have taken place against the project. This allows ACB Group to continually operate in an open and transparent manner with all PowerTeams throughout the business.

The geographical element (see Figure 6) of this is done through the ConstructionBos CRM being linked with Zoho Analytics which is included in the same suite of products as the CRM. Fields of information are synced from Barbour ABI to give the team geographical locations. Price reports and other features can be derived from the live data of ConstructionBos integrated with Zoho Analytics.

As well as internal transparency, the CRM allows all primary users understand conversations that have taken place offline with key contacts, as well as updates on individual companies with notes compiled against each Sweetspot company.

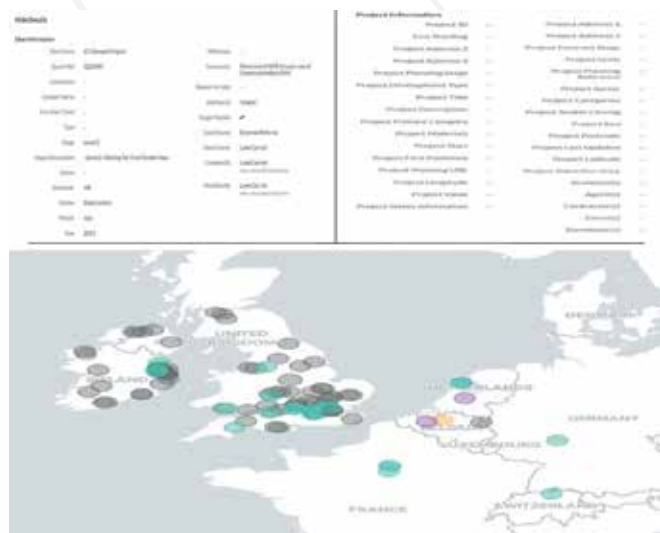


Figure 6. Deal Layout in ConstructionBos CRM & Geo-Mapping Overview

Clear Understanding

Since the introduction of the CRM, there has been greater breakdown of the pipeline and activities associated with each level (see Figure 4). A level is referred to by the team as the status of a particular project. Level 2 is the key level for the team where a project is identified as a 'Sweetspot'. Each stakeholder understands the activities mapped out and what actions happen at each level,

Simultaneously Building a Marketing Database

In migrating to a cloud-based CRM for all tendering and pipeline data, the CRM has also allowed ACB Group to simultaneously build a marketing database of information to ensure the best customer relationships are built on trust and transparency. It helps senior management identify those partners whose work aligns to ACB Group's win: win approach.

Improved Client Interaction

Supply chain interactions have improved because the data collected and used by ACB in the system can be arranged accordingly and then discussed with suppliers. Data is now being organised and used right first time. The team has lists that are easily filterable based on sector and supplier, meaning meetings can be streamlined and both parties can get a satisfied outcome. Merging the data gathered offline with data from Barbour ABI results in ACB being able to understand and interact with projects at an early stage.

Team Satisfaction

All the tendering team members have reported great satisfaction in terms of phase one of the implementation of ConstructionBos. The tendering team reported that the new procedure and processes

run smoothly and they are happy with the reduced meeting times.

Lessons Learned

As the market grew from Ireland-only data centres to include UK projects, the dataset of projects increased substantially. Given the long lead times with data centre projects coming to fruition (typically 18-24 months), the shift to identifying other projects in sectors such

as Higher Education builds in the UK and complex industrial builds existed in parallel to data centre projects being nurtured. This tactic can result in the CRM becoming clogged up with projects that are off-strategy, with resources like time being wasted, discouraging a Lean approach. Therefore, the lesson learned was to have a hard strategic focus on the Data Centre sector, particularly in the UK as ACB learn the market trends.