

# Yorkshire Building Society Improving Forecasting and Reporting

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*Yorkshire Building Society chose Sciforma to manage their entire project portfolio.*

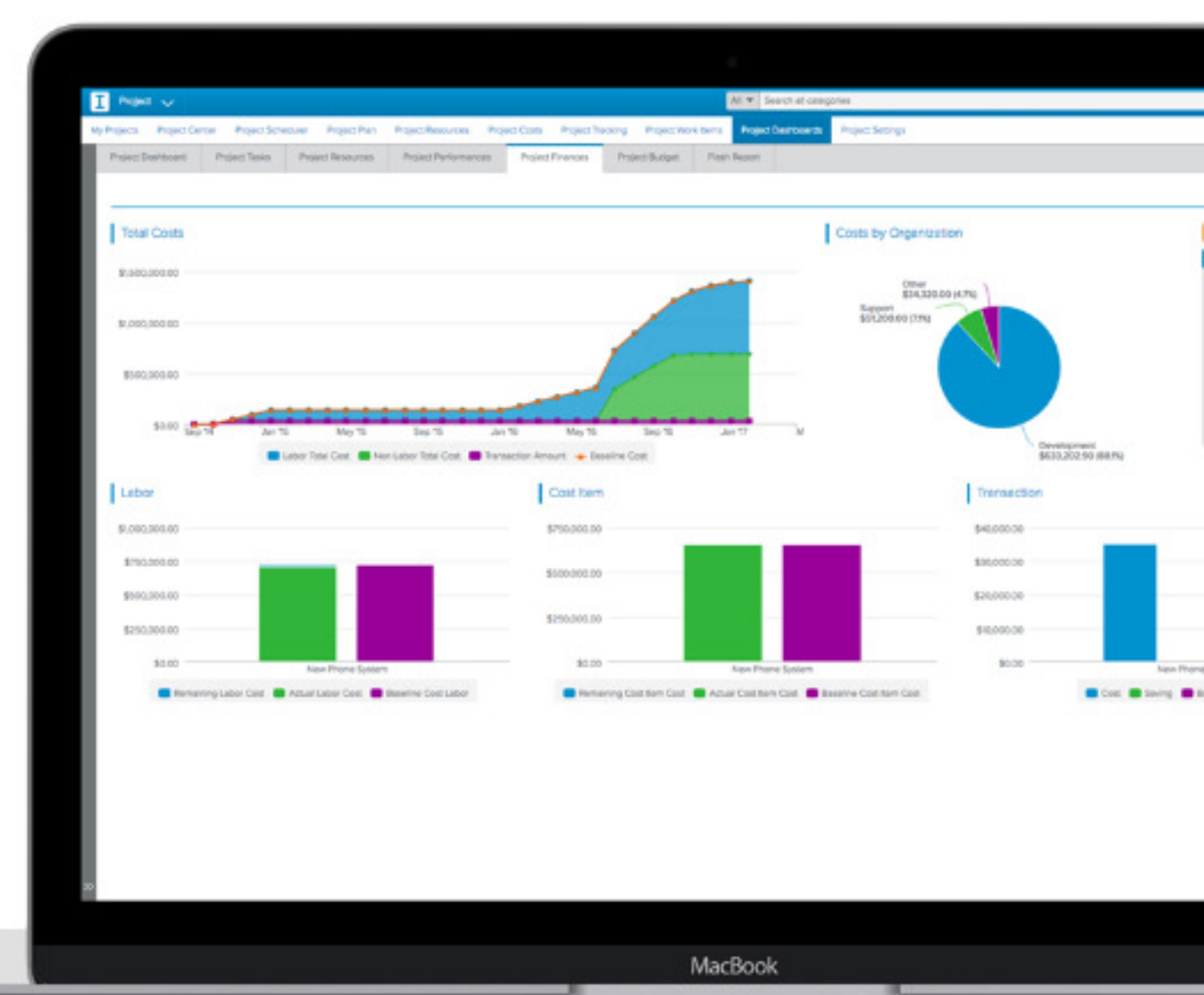
### About Yorkshire Building Society

Yorkshire Building Society is the second largest building society in the UK, with 3.5 million members and assets of approximately £33 billion.

Yorkshire Building Society is a mutual organization that is owned by and run for the benefit of our members and not outside shareholders.

The Yorkshire Building Society was the first building society to commit itself to remaining a mutual at a time when some of our rivals decided to become banks. In this and many other ways, we have led the way in demonstrating that membership of a mutual building society brings a whole range of important benefits to investors and borrowers alike.

More information: <http://www.ybs.co.uk>



### Background and the Need for a New Tool

Mark Brown is a trained RAF fighter pilot and instructor. As his military career developed, he moved on to work in Strike Command's Operational Planning and Policy section. He attained the rank of Squadron Leader and retired from the RAF at the age of 43. He studied for and achieved the PRINCE2 Practitioner's exam. When an opportunity to work for Yorkshire Building Society presented itself, he accepted it.

At that time, the Yorkshire Building Society was the third largest building society in the country. Following mergers with the Chelsea, Barnsley, and Norwich & Peterborough building societies, it has moved up the rankings and is now second only to the Nationwide.

Mark's first project was to introduce formal governance into the way the organization handled projects. He was then asked to take over the Project Management Office (PMO) and basic portfolio management. He is now the 'Intelligent PMO Manager.' Mark explains that the 'Intelligent PMO' doesn't just act as a clearing station for information, it applies through to project management, working more as a portfolio management office and developing the Society's methodology and maturity.

The Yorkshire usually has about 25 strategic projects and around 200 smaller and infrastructure projects running at a time. When Mark took over, all of the strategic project management information was carried out using spreadsheets. Reports were compiled by pulling information from a wide variety of sources.

Time recording and project planning were carried out using a basic time recording system, a product that was coming to the end of its useful life.

The small PMO team (three people plus a part-timer) tidied up and standardized all the reports and introduced budgetary control. They consolidated all project data into one "Single Version of The Truth" (SVOT), but, by then, their time had become fully occupied supporting these new processes. The team needed software that could take this work over and release their time for other things. They wanted to bring more areas of the business into their area of control and needed software that could take over the SVOT and act as a single source for reporting as well as handling the time recording and project planning. They wanted this without losing all of the hard work they had already done.

They wanted a single repository for all of the project data with reporting generated from within the package or, as Mark put it, "press button, get report." They also needed it to handle resource management and portfolio management, including the ability to generate "what-if" scenarios. The organization's project managers must also be able to use it as a project management and reporting tool.

The physical attributes of the tool accounted for about 50 percent of the requirement specification. The other 50 percent revolved around the software tool supplier's culture and attitude towards customer service. Mark was taking a five-year, long-term approach to the solution and considered his team's relationship with the supplier was as important as the product since the team would work with the supplier.

### Selecting Sciforma and Implementation

The search for a new system began in June of 2009. Starting with the Gartner Magic Quadrant, the team identified several products that might suit their requirements and then went through a formal procurement process. This resulted in two strong candidates emerging and they chose the strongest mix. Sciforma offered the best mix of interface, functionality, capability, price, and the promise of an enduring relationship.

Mark showed Sciforma how he wanted to work with their product, setting up an implementation project and explaining that he wanted to work in partnership with Sciforma, who then spent a week training the PMO staff prior to implementation. This later enabled the team to make informed decisions as the product was being implemented and the training, according to Mark, worked "really well" and was "quite remarkable training."

The team planned their project carefully, dividing it into phases. They had to cease using the legacy system by January of 2010, so the first phase was the implementation of time recording. The second involved the project management processes, and the third, portfolio management.

Regular project meetings were held and attended by Sciforma's consultants who were fully engaged throughout.

The project started on the November 18th, 2009 and ended when the final phase of the system went live on the April 13th, 2010. The project had ended with everything complete on time and within the budget. The time recording functions went live first in January of 2010 with all 200 IT staff (all of whom received the necessary in-house training) involved at that stage. The project managers were then trained in-house on the basic functionality. There were very few objections at any stage because people found the interface much easier to use than the system they'd used previously. Any doubts that project managers had were overcome when they saw what the system did for them and they were "comfortable" with it.

The merger with Chelsea Building Society happened during the same month that the Sciforma system went live and resulted in the team having to scale back their current project program. However, as each new business-as-usual project began, it was entered into Sciforma which is now handling twelve business-as-usual strategic projects and around one hundred smaller and infrastructure projects. All new strategic projects will be managed using the new system. The merger projects were (and are) managed using spreadsheets as a completely separate entity.

However, Sciforma is used for time recording and resource management for ALL projects. The team found that the flexibility of Sciforma enabled them to act in this unusual way and Mark enthuses that it has "vastly improved" the way their resources are managed and that forecasting is also "hugely" improved.

Because reports have now been automated, they're much easier to produce. A significant amount of time-saving has been achieved, and the staff has found the new time recording system easier to use. People appreciate the potential for greater benefits and can see how they can make their processes more efficient.

The last planning round was significantly easier from the resourcing and budgeting points of view and more is being done using the same number of people. This was particularly noticed during the Chelsea Building Society merger. The team had double the number of staff to integrate, train, and support whilst coping with a higher than usual churn rate, and they did this with the same number of team members.

Daniela and Lisa, two members of the PMO, are also upbeat about Sciforma. They like the varied layers of permissions and configuration, meaning that different people can be given different sets of privileges. They also like the product's overall flexibility and say, "You can make it do what you want it to."

