

case study:

Reiach and Hall have found a solution that keeps them organised and structured, without their architects realising!



Pier Arts Centre, Orkney. Photographer: Ioana Marinescu, Architect: Reiach and Hall.

Reiach and Hall Architects

About Reiach and Hall

Reiach and Hall Architects was formed by two architects in the 1960s. Alan Reiach, a design led individual with grand ideas and architectural vision, formed the practice with Eric Hall, a disciplined and organised architect with an eye on the bottom line. The amalgamation of these two personalities was the foundation of the organisation that is Reiach and Hall today – a practice focussed on architectural quality and well considered buildings whilst at the same time driving efficiency and keeping control over costs. This focus has led Reiach and Hall to receive many awards for their work including a National RIBA Award in 2008 and achieving more nominations for Civic Trust Awards than any other practice in the UK in the same year. They employ 48 people from their head office in Edinburgh.



“Workspace™ is designed to help architects rather than overload them with administrative duties”

the need for change:

Director Tom Bostock identified the need for a new system; the main motive was a desire to increase efficiency within the office. Tom explains: “A lot of an architect’s time is spent searching for information. I realised that to enable our architects to work efficiently I had to find a solution to present them with the information they needed in a way that was quick and simple to access.” Beyond the efficiency drive was a need to improve transparency; “95% of an architects work is through CAD and email, as this is all run on an individual’s PC the Directors had difficulty in knowing day to day what was going on in the business, we needed a solution that would give us complete visibility.”

Another key driver was an awareness of the increasingly litigious environment in which architects are working. “We needed to be 100% confident that in the event of litigation we could produce all the evidence necessary to make our case bullet proof. Having no effective way to deal with our emails was a major let down in this area. We had opted to print out and file emails in the short term, but quickly realised that without the meta data they were next to useless.”

Reiach and Hall had developed a comprehensive financial management database using Microsoft Access. The system was giving the management team a good overview of how the practice was performing each month, but the vulnerability in this system lay in its reliance on one person. Tom comments: “Whilst the system was giving us the information we needed, it was heavily dependent upon me as the author of the system. I realised we needed a longer term solution that would enable this data to live on in a robust form long after I had left the practice.”



“As a solution to view all the data sources on a project in one place, **Workspace™** was unbeatable”



“**Workspace™** gives architects a structure in which to do their jobs yet still enables them to work as individuals with freedom and creativity”



For more information about **Workspace™**

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the selection:

Reiach and Hall looked at many systems but found that **Workspace™** was the only solution that could be adapted to incorporate their existing financial and timesheets system, and had a solution to manage documents and emails in an intelligent and intuitive way. “We liked **Workspace™** because it clearly isn’t attempting to run an architects offices for them, it is designed to help architects rather than overload them with administrative duties,” comments Tom. “We were also very impressed with the interface with email and that you have the ability to capture everything that goes in and out of your business.” Associate Director Moira Weitzen was impressed with Workspace’s document management functionality, “There was a resounding confidence that Workspace could stand up in a complex working environment and that it was robust enough to cope with the inevitable growth in data. As a solution to capture and view all the data on a project in one place, **Workspace™** was unbeatable.”

the implementation:

Moira was selected as the champion of the **Workspace™** implementation due to her knowledge of the current systems and her understanding of the practice. “We communicated to users the changes that were coming in meetings and company newsletters, and we made it clear that it would mean some changes in the way they worked. The Directors knew that their involvement was critical to get everyone motivated and committed,” comments Moira.

A large part of the implementation process was the bespoke work that was required to get the data from the existing financial database into **Workspace™**. “We had total confidence in the **Workspace™** team that they would be able to manage the data export and bespoke development – we weren’t proved wrong, we were very pleased with what they did. We now have a far more robust system that incorporates everything that we had in our old system, plus many additional features such as recording of back salary data and adjusting timesheets for hourly rates.”

the benefits:

Workspace has bought Reiaich and Hall a range of useful features associated with document and email management and streamlined the practice’s processes.

Key benefits include:

- Reduction of paper files to almost zero.
- Robust, compliant and scalable management of emails, replacing public folders and difficult to manage QA processes.
- Reduction in manual tasks throughout the practice and reduced administration duties.
- Easier to gain ISO9001 accreditation.
- Empowered and happier users through centralised access to information and collaborative working.
- Improved time and cost management.
- More efficient and informed company Directors through the use of **Workspace™** subscriptions.
- Time savings through email notifications.

Tom summarises, “**Workspace™** is just there – it doesn’t get in the way of how we work, it supports us and deals with all the information that we give it – you couldn’t ask more from a practice management system.”

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