

The story of *PIRANA*

The People's CMMS – nimble, fast, powerful and unbeatably affordable



At Maintec 2008, CMMS market-leader Shire Systems unveiled Pirana - the very latest technology, browser-based Computerised Maintenance Management System. Pirana sets new standards for price-performance and ease of use...

Pirana's functionality was specified by maintenance professionals from across all sectors of industry. The system was configured to their requirements. Only features endorsed as vital are included - elements the majority dismissed as unnecessary were barred. Accordingly, Pirana is a neat, dovetail-fit with the real

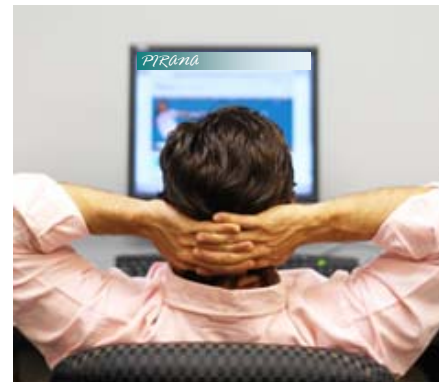
world needs of maintenance management practitioners.

Listening to needs & wants

During the past few years, Shire has organised and presented over 50 Maintenance Management Roadshows throughout the UK and Ireland. At these free, day-long events we've been host to more than 1000 maintenance professionals from existing and potential customer organisations from across every sector of industry. During the sessions we explain and discuss the functionality and usability of our maintenance software. Our guests tell us what they think is invaluable and what gets in their way - and anything they see as missing from the system!

For any time-poor maintenance manager to take a day away from the workplace to talk 'systems' is ample evidence of their concern about current ways of working and the need to do better. The priority given to seeking answers is understandable, though. Maintenance effectiveness and efficiency ultimately determine product cost and quality, workplace health and safety, environmental well-being and workplace morale. The responsibility maintenance managers carry is formidable - and they're exceedingly well aware that a good maintenance system is an essential aid.

Listening to the views and concerns of the maintenance community in these frank, warts-and-all sessions has given us a deep understanding of the practical needs, expectations and wishlists of maintenance professionals. We've probably had more dialogue with this key group of individuals about CMMS usability than any other organisation around. This unparalleled knowledge of real-world user requirements was funnelled into Pirana's functions and features specification.



User-friendliness

Over the past 50 years, maintenance practice has radically altered from being predominately about greasing and bolt-tightening to one where information management has become accepted as the

key to a winning performance. Globalisation and safety legislation have changed the rules of the maintenance game for ever. A slick information management system is a prerequisite for business success - that's the case whether you're running with a reactive or proactive maintenance strategy.

When engineers address their need for more maintenance management information, they instinctively turn to paper-based systems. Many still choose to schedule work using a planning board and control operations using simple job cards. Whilst these systems are reasonably OK when work volume is low, they can quickly become unwieldy. However, their shining virtue remains their user-friendliness.

Practical engineers are naturally suspicious about swapping their tactile paper system for an electronic one - even though paper's downside is a nightmare! Paper systems automatically mean high administration costs and mounds of un-sharable, difficult to access information - they also lack fundamental integrity and security. With paper systems, information can be easily lost or tampered with and there's no watertight audit trail of transactions and events - all very disconcerting when an

auditor, an inspector or the boss comes a knocking at the door. Paper systems just can't cope effectively with the myriad of regulatory, quality assurance and other performance management demands a modern-day maintenance organisation has to satisfy. To carry out the job efficiently, and with the ability to demonstrate the required degree of due diligence, a properly configured electronic information system is essential.

Clearly, the challenge for Shire was to produce a CMMS that would more readily induce practical maintenance engineers to give up their comfort-blanket paper systems. Shire's vision was to reinvent CMMS with strict fit-for-purpose functionality and all the simplicity and 'information at a glance' virtues of a T-card system - whilst at the same time enabling users to fully exploit the power of advanced information technology in an intuitive and straightforward way. A tall order!

Chris Lee, Shire applications specialist, puts some of the issues plainly: "The vast majority of engineers just want a simple, easy-to-use, compact system. Engineers don't want their maintenance system complicated with unwanted features and gizmos they've no intention of using. They want a lightweight XK Jag with the trim and carpets stripped out, not a Chelsea Tractor with all the extras".

Chris goes on: "We set about building Pirana with the needs of the vast majority

in mind. Like our F1 and motorsport clients, we weighed, drilled and fettled each part of the product to keep its overall mass and footprint down. OK, you don't get the huge capability of our FrontLine CMMS - with Pirana you get a lean and mean tool with superb feel and handling. It's solid muscle and no fat. What's in there is going to get used - it's as simple as that! With Pirana, engineers can immediately see the big picture and instantly zoom in on the details - they're in control."

Easy-peasey for new users

Training Manager Fraser Richardson has presented countless CMMS training courses over the years; he says: "It's vitally important that new users feel instantly at home with the CMMS user-interface. Above all, a CMMS is a practical tool. New users must be able to quickly pick up the tool and use it - that's what it's all about. Observing how new users interact with software has given us unsurpassed insight into maintenance system ergonomics that we've been able to feed back into Pirana's design. Our goal was to make Pirana so intuitive that new users can just flick the switch and go".

Fraser goes on: "People working in maintenance are probably the most pressurised around - they're key individuals that can't easily take off from the workplace. For this reason too, we aimed to provide a CMMS that needs little or no training".

Will Cheater has been at the sharp end of things on Shire's customer Support Helpdesk for the last 8 years. He's extremely enthusiastic about Pirana and says: "On the Helpdesk we're the first port of call when a user has queries or runs into difficulties. We know how the different users think and interact with our systems. We know their needs and preferences as well as we know our own - and we share their frustrations and aspirations. It's been great channelling all that knowledge and emotion into Pirana's development".

Exquisite usability - tiny cost

By keeping the maintenance community's wishes strictly in mind, we've achieved paper-system simplicity and barred features the majority of maintenance system users aren't going to use - and don't want to pay for.

Alex Thompson, the Pirana Project Manager, says: "During Pirana's development, one of the biggest challenges we faced was gate-keeping - stopping extra features from creeping into the system! But we did succeed in constraining Pirana's waistline and kept its bulk down. We've provided awesome information technology with exquisite usability".

The cherry on the top is that Shire can now pass on the savings made in expensive systems engineering to the customer. Pirana's price is just unbeatable. In terms of user-focus and value for money Pirana delivers mega usability at nano cost. With Pirana, gaining control, implementing

good order, and ensuring compliance in the workplace is as straightforward as it can ever get.

The People's CMMS

Maintenance engineers in the workplace specified Pirana CMMS themselves - that's the bottom line. The Shire team took their requirements and, using unique insight and expertise gained over a quarter of a century, crafted Pirana accordingly. In lyrical mood Chris Lee reflects: "We've produced the CMMS that engineers craved - Pirana is the People's CMMS." ■



The Pirana development Task Force - between them they have over 80 years of experience of Computerised Maintenance Management Systems with the UK's CMMS paragon Shire Systems

For further details visit us online
shiresystems.co.uk

Call us on
+44 (0) 23 8022 4111