

# A new way of sharing documents for Sutherland Shire Council

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## Overview

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### ■ The Challenge

Sutherland Shire Council needed a document management system that was easy for staff to use and which could link its 47 business departments. The system needed to accommodate a wide variety of documents and streamline their flow between departments.

### ■ The Solution

Working with IBM Business Partner Cri-Tech Consulting, Sutherland Shire Council implemented IBM Domino Document Manager® and the IBM DB2® database. These systems provided a seamless content management solution that improved internal communication between departments as well as facilitating the flow of documents throughout the organisation.

### ■ The Benefits

The new solution provides a streamlined and systematic way to store and retrieve documents and information for staff in each business area. The new system helps to improve efficiency, lower costs and make the Council more responsive to ratepayers. Potentially it could mean savings of up to \$700,000 a year as managers spend less time searching for documents and focus on more productive work.



### About Sutherland Shire Council

The Sutherland Shire Council employs approximately 1,500 people in 47 departments. With a population of around 215,000 spread over 370 square kilometres, Sutherland Shire is Australia's fourth largest council area. It is also one of the country's oldest councils, with European settlement dating back to 1806.

### Lower costs and a more responsive government

Sutherland Shire Council – located in Sydney's southern suburbs – needed a document management platform that could accommodate office files and other documentation such as building plans, bylaws and applications. The new document management system had to make it easier for staff to store and locate documents.

Previously, document management was generally ad hoc and reliant on individual habits. This made information difficult to retrieve when the employee responsible was away, leading to delays, increased costs and a less responsive Council. It was not uncommon for managers to spend up to an hour a day locating documents and information. The Council estimated that an efficient document management system could reduce the time spent searching for documents by up to 75 percent.

*“The Council was looking for a way to introduce a reliable document management system that would connect all of its departments. It needed to minimise manual data entry and make it easier for people to share documents.”*

— Glenn Folkes, Cri-Tech Consulting's  
Director of Sales

The Council also needed a platform that could be accessed by mobile users in the field, like a traffic ranger looking up a bylaw using a portable computer.

The Council wanted to better capitalise on its existing Lotus Notes software, which was used mainly for messaging. The new system also had to interface with the Council's customer request management system, which logs approximately 80,000 complaints and requests a year regarding barking dogs, uncollected garbage and other issues.

#### **Effective and efficient information flow**

Sutherland Shire Council worked with IBM Business Partner<sup>†</sup> Cri-Tech Consulting to implement IBM Domino Document Manager and the IBM DB2 database.

IBM Lotus Notes and Domino Document Manager enable a more efficient and effective information flow. This all-in-one enterprise-wide interface can be securely accessed both inside and outside the organisation.

This IBM data management software provides real-time access to diverse information. IBM's software delivers the necessary building blocks for a comprehensive information infrastructure – enabling organisations to capture, order, integrate, transform, analyse and use information to provide greater insight.

As a first step, Cri-Tech got to know how documents moved within the Council according to various procedures. It then built a file-management system on to those protocols. The initial implementation took three months.

By carefully analysing how the organisation shared information and moved documents within and between departments, Cri-Tech was able to tailor the new system to the Council's needs. This made it easier to convince staff to adopt the system, thereby reducing implementation time.

Some 600 of the Council's 1,500 or so employees are now using the document management system, representing 75 percent of all potential users.

*“What we have here now is a good product. Having developers who know your business makes all the difference.”*

— Chris Fripp, Information Technology  
and Archives Manager for Sutherland  
Shire Council

*“We started by determining their processes. Then we moved forward with Domino Document Manager by building a program that reflected the Council's needs. We were able to gain their trust at a very early stage.”*

— Glenn Folkes, Cri-Tech Consulting's Director of Sales

*“The new document management system relies on processes more than individual habits.”*

— Chris Fripp, Information Technology and Archives Manager for Sutherland Shire Council

#### **Reliable document management**

The new document management system makes it easier for staff to share and contribute to documents. Complaints from ratepayers, for example can be more effectively responded to and records retained with attachments detailing what actions have been taken and when.

Staff can search for documents and emails whether the person responsible is in the office or not. The Council estimates that the new system could mean savings of up to \$700,000 a year as a result of managers spending less time searching for documents every day.

#### **Faster and more efficient document searches**

Sutherland Shire Council plans to expand access to the platform to make document searches faster and more efficient. It is also looking into ways to have the system accommodate pictures such as thumbnail images to aid document searches.

*“With IBM Domino Document Manager and DB2, we can better store, search and share documents leading to better service and lower costs for ratepayers.”*

— Chris Fripp, Information Technology and Archives Manager for Sutherland Shire Council

**For more information**

Please call **132 426** in Australia or  
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The information on this page about the Sutherland Shire Council's operations has been provided by the Council and IBM is not in a position to verify the accuracy of the information.

† Business Partner' is used informally and does not imply a legal partnership.

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