

OJ Neil Contracting Ltd uses FormsFly

Eliminating paperwork improves margins

“Using the FormsFly solution has definitely helped us to improve our margins.” Andy Gregory, Director, OJ Neil Contracting



Andy Gregory, Director at OJ Neil Contracting, plans to extend the company's use of the FormsFly solution following significant improvements to job issuing and invoicing.

ABOUT OJ NEIL CONTRACTING

OJ Neil Contracting was founded in 2002 and is based in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. It began as an agricultural contracting firm specialising in spreading services for local farmers. This part of the company has expanded to cover a wide range of products from lime and fertilisers though to organic recycled products. Other services followed to include forage harvesting for livestock farms and, more recently, Anaerobic Digestion plants.





OJ Neil Contracting has also diversified to provide services ranging from the construction of innovative equestrian training facilities and a biomass division that supplies straw to the two fully-operational straw-fired biomass power stations in East Anglia.

THE CHALLENGE

When OJ Neil Contracting won a contract with Anglian Water to spread sewage cake, Director Andy Gregory knew he needed a better way to get jobs to workers in the field.

The job paperwork was extensive – including maps of field boundaries as well as standard job specifications.

What's more, the paperwork required under the contract and by the Environment Agency also required workers to record essential data about each job. A permit is required for each field, and workers must record details such as the date, time, weather conditions, field conditions and the quantity of product applied.

This had been done manually, but Andy says, "Getting the paperwork to people was a problem and reliant on them coming into the office or paperwork being posted out to them. This could be a real problem because sometimes the necessary paperwork was only generated the day before."

"FormsFly gives us better job control over issuing and invoicing."

THE FormsFly SOLUTION

In 2015, Andy began researching on the Internet for a suitable web-based system that would enable him to make the process of getting jobs to workers in the field more efficient and make it easier to record work completed.

After speaking with the team at BarnData, Andy realised that its mobile app platform, FormsFly, could be the solution he was looking for.

Andy says, "As we got talking, I realised how much we could do with the FormsFly frontend and I had a good feeling about it. It was a knowledgeable team with a flexible product. It seemed like a good way to move forward – and that's proved true."

Following the initial meeting, Andy worked with BarnData to create a job system that would record all the jobs that required completing and enable the office team to attach the necessary paperwork, such as field boundary maps, risk assessments and application permits. The system would then send the necessary documentation and a customised electronic form to operators, so they could fill in all the data relating to the appropriate permit, as well as the other data that needed to be captured for OJ Neil Contracting's own purposes, such as health and safety, quality and risk assessment information.

"Initially, I developed some of the forms myself while BarnData was getting to grips with what we wanted," explains Andy. "Designing the initial webforms was easy. Since then, BarnData has completed a considerable amount of development based on our input. Occasionally I create customised forms myself, for example vehicle maintenance records. It's very flexible, you can use it for whatever you need."

Once the workers have added data to the forms, the data is captured in the FormsFly system. From here, a range of reports are created and the data is also compiled into weekly reports for the utility customers.

Importantly, this data is also used internally to invoice for the completed work.

Soon after using FormsFly to manage the Anglian Water spreading jobs, OJ Neil Contracting won a new contract to spread "ThamesGrow" – a range of biosolid products generated from the waste-water and sewage treatment processes operated by Thames Water. "Adapting the forms for this new job was easy," says Andy. "All those jobs are sent to the workers via the app. It's literally sent thousands of jobs now."

THE BENEFITS

The benefits for OJ Neil Contracting have been immense. Andy says, "The weekly reports are sent to Thames Water and they reconcile them with their records as payment is made based on these reports."

"Prior to FormsFly, we would be waiting to receive handwritten permits back from our workers in the field. Once received they would be validated in the office to ensure they were complete with all the information required. Then we'd have to copy them and place them in an A4 envelope and post them to the utility company or alternatively scan them prior to emailing."

The elimination of this paperwork has resulted in significant cost savings and an improvement in cash flow for OJ Neil Contracting. "It's made a massive difference," says Andy.

"When workers are told about jobs verbally it is easy to lose sight of the jobs. Previously, there was a risk of not getting paperwork back – and if there are no records, there is no payment. In addition, we might not see people for several days. That created a lag before the invoice could be produced. Now that lead time has been minimised."

The office team no longer needs to reconcile paper job sheets with spreadsheets. Savings are made by the elimination of photocopying and postage costs.



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Since winning the Thames Water contract, utility spreading work has increased up to sevenfold. Andy says, "It would have been completely unsustainable to manage it on a paper basis. At this point in the process, it saves us at least one admin person during the peak season, from July until October."

He continues, "FormsFly has definitely reduced the administration cost attached to this contract – it enables us to price competitively and still improve our margin."

OJ Neil Contracting is now working with BarnData to roll out the FormsFly solution to every aspect of its agricultural contracting work. Andy says, "I'm currently prioritising my wish list so we can bring the same job allocation and records process to every aspect of our operations – from drilling, harvesting, baling and plant hire business. I am confident we will see similar improvements to invoice accuracy and cash flow across our business."

Who are we?

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