

# To the next level

*Keeping pace with technology can be a full time occupation but falling behind could result in your competitors gaining a strategic advantage.*

## Quality on demand

Many companies are now looking towards on-demand process solutions, especially with project changes costing industry thousands of pounds. Project specialist David Weaver of Logical Minds looks at how these solutions can be used to cut unnecessary costs...

"Nobody can prevent clients enforcing change onto projects – some changes are necessary, some unavoidable. Yet while changes to projects will remain a costly

issue to many businesses, it is the lack of change management and change control that is cutting unnecessarily into everyone's profits.

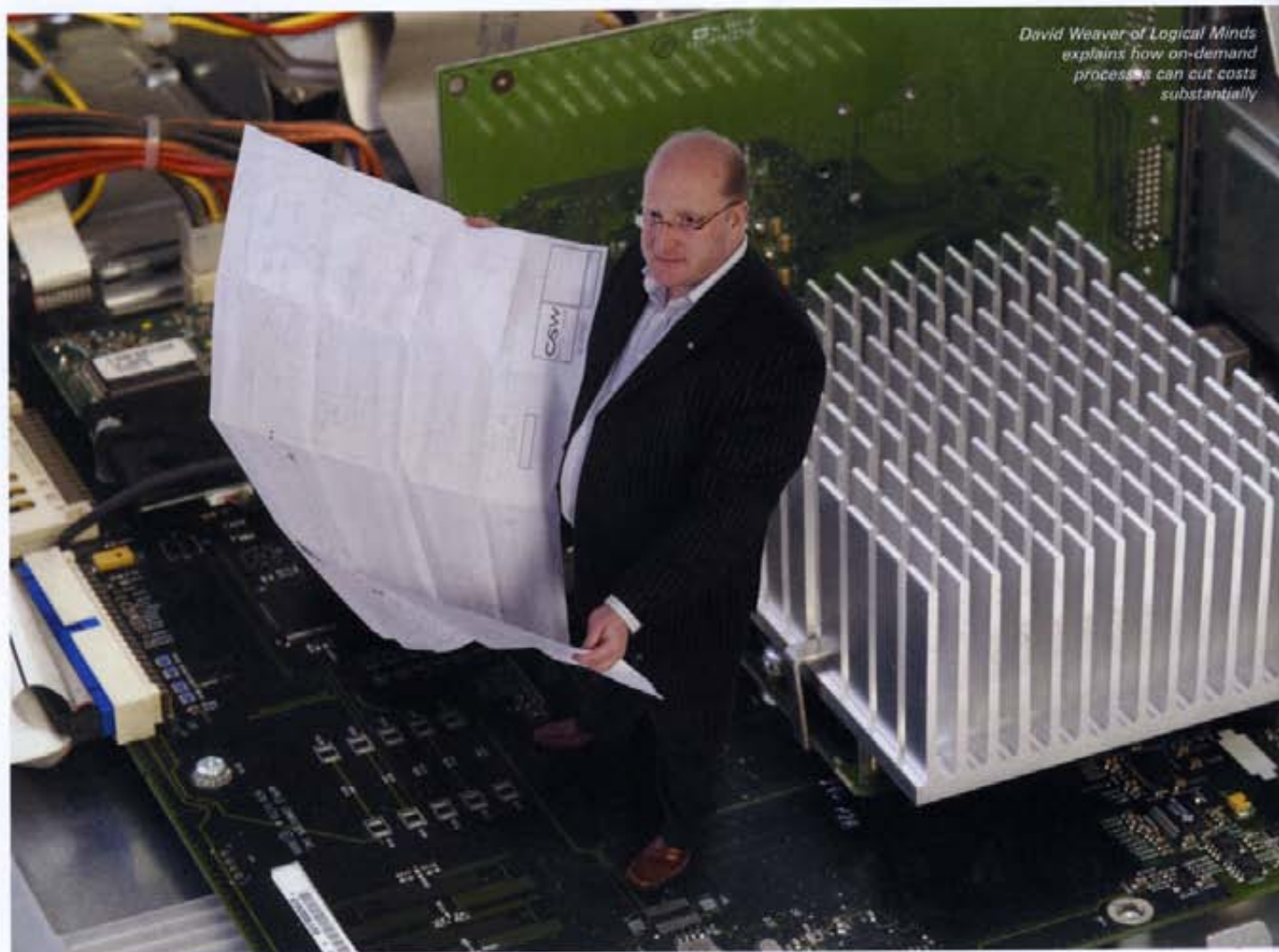
"In the building services, construction and architectural sectors in particular, the number of changes by clients to projects that are already underway is costing suppliers an unnecessary amount of money and aggravation. Clients usually want a fixed price to know where they stand and often expect the supplier to

factor in the cost of any changes to plans and products. The result is that on two like projects, each with fees of £200,000, an architect can deliver one with a substantial project profit whilst another will leave him with a 5% loss.

"By involving all key stakeholders in a project, both the supplier and the client can get a much clearer picture of the project requirements and feasibility, identifying many areas for change before the project gets underway. Sometimes, one of the biggest issues that people face during the project is achieving a consistent quality of work from so many different members of a project team, therefore it is critical that the project is tightly managed.

"So, combining all this into an intelligent on-demand process can enable the right information being available for the right people at the right time and facilitate strong and proactive decision making, resulting in significant savings in costs, time and frustration.

"A good on-demand process consists of



*David Weaver of Logical Minds explains how on-demand processes can cut costs substantially*

four main elements:

**Providing accurate and up-to-date information to the whole team**

This helps to ensure that any changes made at one site to plans or product specifications are updated at every other site involved in the project and for each team member involved in the process.

**"Available both within the organisation and remotely**

This will allow the effective administration, management and distribution of project information between all key locations, for example, enabling drawings and materials delivery details to be passed between companies, offices and the construction site.

**"Driven by a highly visual yet simple user interface**

The aim of a good process solution is to ensure the management of a process is as simple and streamlined as possible; effective processes do not need to be, or look, complicated and actually guide you through the process so that you don't need to read a manual.

**"The process must fit your business**

It is important to review and document your existing processes, then you will be able to actually follow through and implement an on-demand process that both meets your needs and is integrated with your existing systems. In this way companies improve the efficiency of working methods and make good use of their investment in existing systems.

"Investment in on-demand process solutions is being taken on board more and more, as suppliers see the benefits to their business and recognise that the cost of such solutions can be quickly recovered in terms of resultant ongoing time savings."



*Barry James demonstrates the Gatekeeper which aims to stop data theft*

## Disappearing data a thing of the past

With the increasing amount of sensitive information stored electronically, companies are increasingly guarding against external threats with firewalls and anti-virus protection. Yet data theft is not simply an external problem, as almost anyone can take client lists and other key data from a company computer without being detected, using a simple memory device.

Sheffield-based entrepreneur Barry James has created a solution – the TakeWare Gatekeeper. This only allows authorised devices and polices the use of data, and also provides an audit trail so any unusual data movements can be easily traced. This takes away any temptation for employees to wrongly

remove data.

Barry says, "Using MP3 players and other mobile devices for data storage is so common and inexpensive now that massive data theft has become a very real threat to businesses. A 1000Mb card that can store a small company's entire database or tens of thousands of files can be now bought online for under £15.

"If employees know that such theft is taken seriously, and is as traceable as stealing their company PC, then it ceases to be an option and these devices can continue to grow in usefulness." With support from intellectual property specialists Keeble Hawson, the Gatekeeper is now coming to market.

## Always on call

Kingston Communications has launched a messaging service that aims to bring the benefits of SMS services to businesses. The service has a range of applications, including field service management, disaster management and systems monitoring, and allows SMS messages to be sent from PCs, mobiles, or via a 24-hour call centre. Other features of the service include address book management and message log

facilities.

Paul Drummond, KC sales director, explains why texting has become such a boom business. He says, "This year, the number of texts sent every day in the UK is expected to reach 100 million. The business-related proportion of these is growing all the time as organisations take advantage of texting as a quick and easy way to reach people in an instant and at a relatively low cost.

"The type of scenario that this service would be ideal for include field service management, where a company has employees out on the road and may wish to send them details of new appointments, or communications in the event of a disaster, where information needs to be transmitted to a large number of people quickly. While many businesses already use texting in their day-to-day operations, sending SMS messages from a PC is much faster and more flexible than tapping out numbers on a telephone keypad."