



## CgMs Building for the Future with Digital Dictation

**CgMs is a combined town planning and development, archaeology and historic buildings consultancy. With offices in London and Cheltenham and operations throughout the UK, CgMs is one of the country's fastest growing and most dynamic development practices. CgMs serves many prestigious clients including GE Capital, Corporation of London, John Lewis and J. Sainsbury's. CgMs' employees include 30 dictation authors supported by four secretaries, who are responsible for all of the organisation's transcription work.**

### PROBLEM

CgMs had been using old tape-based dictation units for many years; a system that had stood the test of time. However, many of the users were beginning to find the system cumbersome whilst others were still happier with pen and paper!

With a number of CgMs' 30 authors out on-site for much of their time and not always able to visit the office, there were often delays in getting tapes back to the office. As a result, document turnaround times would increase and, on occasion, tapes were being lost and misplaced. Similarly, secretaries were increasingly finding their transcription workload inconsistent; being inundated with transcription work one day and having very little the next.

CgMs Finance Director, John Stockdale felt there had to be a more efficient way.

### APPROACH

Having heard positive reports of digital dictation solutions, CgMs approached experienced Philips dictation reseller, Newman Business Machines (Newmans) for advice on whether digital dictation would be suitable for their organisation. Although at first sceptical as to the resilience of digital devices in the demanding on-site environment, following an in-depth demonstration by Newmans, Mr Stockdale liked what he had seen and made the decision to trial the Philips Digital Pocket Memo® 9350 and the Philips Executive PC Transcription Kit 6277.

Newmans, a Philips-accredited Master Digital Centre, then carried out a comprehensive survey of the existing systems and the work preferences of CgMs employees before making its recommendation. Once the green light was received from CgMs, Newmans installed the complete system and trained all users in just two days.

### KEY ISSUES

- How to speed up transfer of recordings from field staff
- How to avoid loss of recordings
- How to level transcriptionist workload
- The need to cater for mobile and desk-based users



## RESULTS

Despite some initial concerns about the system, both the authors and transcriptionists at CgMs quickly came up to speed with the new system and now wouldn't entertain the thought of going back to analogue dictation!

The authors have all found the Digital Pocket Memo very easy to use and, contrary to their fears, extremely resilient to the rigours of on-site use. The authors all find recording their thoughts and observations much easier and quicker than writing notes on-site or relying on their own memory. They can now dictate a range of work including lengthy site reports, meeting notes, and letters, then transfer the recordings to the 4 secretaries via e-mail, vastly improving the speed of the document production process.

When the author does visit the office, they simply connect the Digital Pocket Memo to the Philips USB docking station and all of their work is swiftly downloaded to the network.

The secretaries immediately saw the value of the Philips system. By receiving work more regularly, they can now better plan their transcription work. In fact, excess workload can be easily transferred between the two CgMs offices and, in periods of greatest demand, work can even be transferred to an outsourced typing service in India.

The turnaround of completed documentation has been further improved by this flexibility whilst the security of recordings is much improved with the danger of lost recordings all but eliminated.

Even those who preferred pen and paper before are converted. John Lowe, Associate Director said, "I am very site based. I have to do detailed assessments on old buildings. Prior to using digital dictation, I was using a note pad and within 10 minutes I could have taken as much as a sheet of A4 in notes. Now, with the Digital Pocket Memo, I am able to get much more detail, dictating as I walk around the building." He adds, "It is far more reliable to take notes this way. Overall I am able to produce a much more comprehensive report, in a shorter space of time."

## CONCLUSION

For CgMs, the move to Philips digital dictation and transcription was smooth and fast, thanks to the simplicity of the Philips systems and the experience and expertise of Newman Business Machines. The greatest benefit to CgMs is the balancing of transcriptionist workloads.

Matthew Roe, Associate Director of CgMs concluded "The Philips system is very flexible and has made us, as an organisation, much more efficient. If it hadn't, we wouldn't be using it. We certainly would not have been able to balance the workload of our secretaries so well or send dictation to India with the analogue system we were previously using."

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Faster transfer of digital recordings via email
- Higher security of recordings; no lost tapes
- Workload sharing between offices and with offshore transcription bureau
- Better, more accurate report output

