

Case Study 1: Amec Capital Projects Limited

The aim of this pilot was to process and authenticate monthly Subcontractor Payment Certificates using electronic signatures. The document needed multiple signatures on a single page.

Background and Pilot Partners

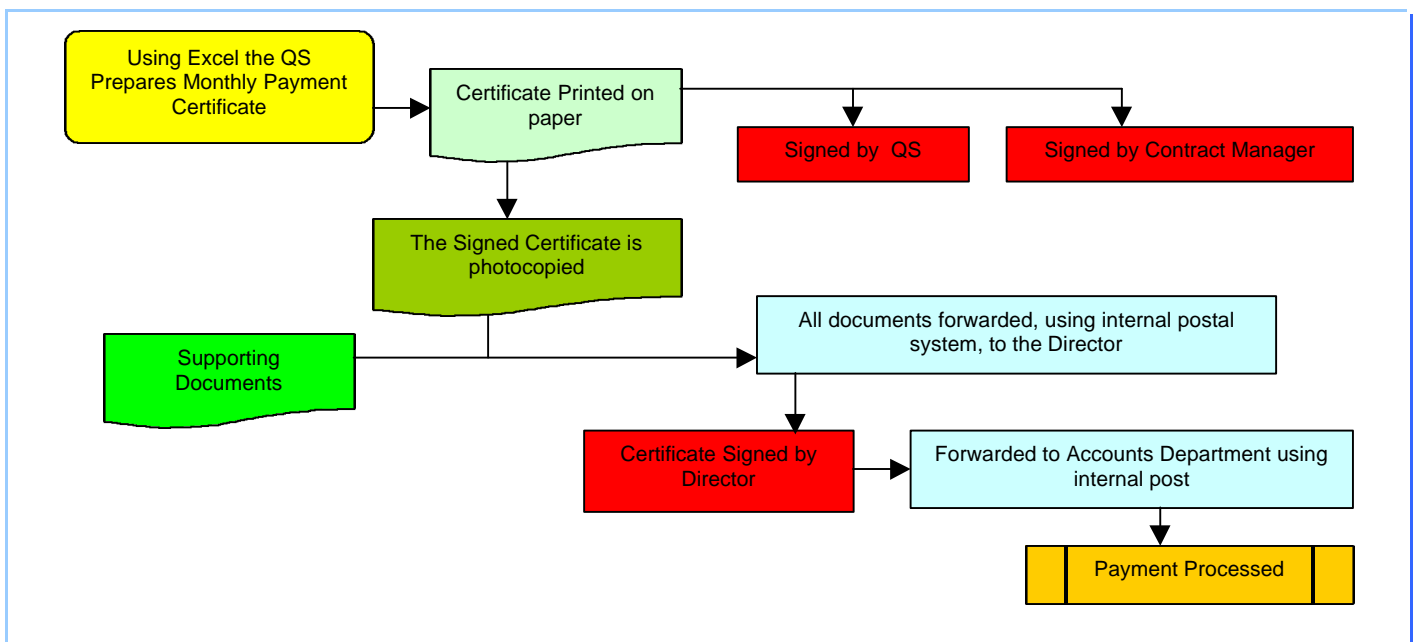
Audata Limited: a CITE Service Provider member and developer of electronic signature capture software 'Sign-it™'.

Amec Capital Projects Limited: a CITE contractor member. Those involved in the pilot were a Quantity Surveyor, Contract Manager, Company Director and Treasury Manager.

Audata, based in Ashford in Kent co-ordinated the pilot study using biometric signature software with Amec who are based in Adlington. Amec chose to use the software to process their monthly Subcontractor Payment Certificates that were generated on one of their construction sites at Ashton-Under-Lyne. These were sent to the appropriate Director at Adlington for final signature before being passed on to the Accounts Department for payment. This meant that the signature software had to be installed at both of the sites. The duration of the trial was 10 weeks.

Original Procedure

The site Quantity Surveying Department prepared the monthly Subcontractor Payment Certificates as an Excel document after which paper copies of the documents were signed as approved by the Quantity Surveyor and Contract Manager on site. These were then photocopied and forwarded together with the supporting documents to the appropriate Company Director for further signature. The Director reviewed payment certificates, signed them and then sent them, again using the internal postal system, to the Accounts Department for processing.



The Approach

It was proposed that a construction site at Ashton-Under-Lyne, close to the Adlington office, had the signature software and Acrobat Publisher software installed on a PC. The Payment Certificates would then be generated on the site and saved as 'pdf' files. These would then be electronically signed by authorised signatories and emailed to the appropriate Director for review and further signature. The Director would then email the document to the Accounts Department where the Treasury Manager would authenticate the signatures to ensure that the document had not been altered between signatures prior to processing the payment. Both the Director and Treasury Manager were based at Adlington. In addition to the signature software they also needed the Acrobat Publisher installed on their PCs.

Prior to the installation, Audata obtained sample documents from Amec to run tests, as well as to ensure that the format of the document could accommodate the multiple signature boxes. The software installations were carried out in one day at both Adlington and Ashton-Under-Lyne and all the available users were also trained on that same day and were provided with a printed guide for reference during the pilot.

The Issues and Suggestions Made

Issues – AMEC	Suggestions - AUDATA
There was an increase in the workload and time spent by the Quantity Surveyor and Contract Manager because there was still a requirement to produce a paper copy of the payment for review, prior to creating, signing and processing the electronic version.	Amec need to review and refine the existing business process.
The need to enter the base information in the signature window <i>before</i> every signing session could be time consuming and exasperating.	The software already has the facility for some of the base information to appear as drop down lists. Additional features to the signature software have been developed and one of these features automatically enters the user's details, thus avoiding the need for repetitive entry.
There was still a need to copy and send the invoice supporting documents to the accounts department in the internal post for VAT purposes.	This is a regulatory matter but the Treasury did not believe these paper copies were required.

The Perceived Benefits

- Speeds up the payment process
- Less paperwork
- Quicker flow of payment certificates when used correctly
- Saves time overall
- Payment schedule is controlled by Treasury and not by internal postal delays

Future Possibilities for AMEC

The subcontract payments tend to be made on a monthly basis, which meant that during the trial period of two months the software was effectively used only twice. Amec have suggested that they could also use the software for the following procedures :-

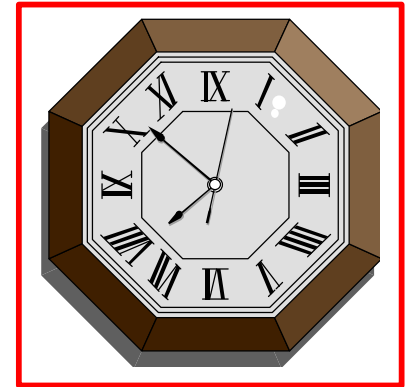
- Monthly financial reporting (QS1s, Board Reports)
- Subcontract Requisitions
- 'Recommendations For Award' of materials and subcontracts
- Production of site orders

Comments from Audata

- Biometric signature software that supports Microsoft Excel™ file format is now available. This means there is no need to convert Excel file to 'pdf' format.
- Two other alternatives available to make the signing process more efficient – Signature Stamp and Fingerprint Stamp: -
 - ❑ Signature Stamp releases the pre-enrolled signature from a database by means of a password
 - ❑ Fingerprint Stamp releases the pre-enrolled signature from a database by means of a fingerprint keyboard

Comments from AMEC

Having realised the possibilities and benefits of using electronic signature capture software, AMEC are interested in continuing with the trial tackling some of the business processes identified above.



The AMEC Procedure Using Electronic Signature Software

