

RANDSTAD EDUCATION GROUP CASE STUDY

FAST™

Randstad achieves software compliance in record time

The company has reduced IT help desk calls by 25% using FAST's compliance methodology.

Case study highlights

- Randstad Education Group achieved registration to the FAST Standard for Software Compliance FSSC-1:2007 in just 8 months
- The company now maintains an accurate IT asset register
- Improved processes as well as moving a Help Desk within the group have reduced support calls by 25%
- Clear IT policies provide guidelines governing the use of software and IT equipment
- The IT Team has improved efficiency and lowered software licensing costs
- A compliant, world class IT system provides a solid foundation for the future

Background

Randstad Education Group, based in Luton, specialises in recruitment solutions for the differing needs of UK and state, private, specialist and language schools.

IT challenges

When Philip Awbery-Maskell joined the company as Head of IT he found that the company had already implemented good IT processes and controls. Philip's aim was to build on the foundations that were already in place so that his department could be even more effective.

Philip and the team fully understood the benefits of good IT asset management, the legalities surrounding software licensing and the requirement for software compliance. The organisation had invested heavily in its IT infrastructure and Philip recognised that maintaining a solid IT environment would enable him to focus his team's efforts on future-looking projects that would bring real business benefits.

He said "My first tasks were to align IT to business processes to give us confidence that our IT was compliant and to communicate my department's role throughout the organisation.

I called on the assistance of FAST so that that they could help us demonstrate software licence compliance and, in so doing, gain even better control of our IT landscape."

The FAST experience

Once Philip had joined the FAST Compliance Programme, he quickly set about the necessary steps to progress towards registration to The FAST Standard for Software Compliance (FSSC-1:2007).

I judge a company on its awards and merits. If I see they are Investors in People or that they adhere to ISO rules I know that that they're run in a certain way and that I can work with them confidently.

Using the training, tools, advice and IT compliance methodology provided by their FAST Programme, the IT support team:

- Educated the organisation's 295 users on corporate IT policies
- Established, and continues to maintain an asset register of IT equipment across the group's 40 offices
- Put processes in place to ensure good operability of the group's 300 desktops and laptops

"Working through the FAST programme helped give us greater operational focus, allowing the team to understand key areas that needed to be addressed to ensure that IT continued to support the business," said Philip. "Having clear visibility of our IT assets enables us to manage the group's infrastructure effectively on a day to day basis. This proved to be particularly important as we successfully completed the delivery of a large IT project during 2008/9."

Before becoming a FAST customer, the IT team had begun auditing the company's software and by doing walk-around audits they had been able to establish a basic view of their IT assets. However, there were some challenges involved in creating and communicating IT policies and procedures and standardising business processes. For example, the company's typical sales consultant environment with a relatively high staff turnover, changing staff rosters and IT equipment moving from site to site presented some issues, but these were resolved and around six months after joining FAST Philip was in the position of having a fully up to date asset register.

To assist with the process of identifying and tracking its IT assets, the team implemented a software audit tool.

"Software audit tools themselves are relatively easy to handle. We now use Visual Audit Pro to get a clear view of our software estate and now there's no mystery to the process," commented Philip. "When we were working through our processes we found FAST to be really helpful and approachable, always supportive. A FAST Advisor was only ever a phone call away."

Randstad Education made very good progress through the stages of the FAST programme: joining in January 2007, achieving Bronze and then Silver in April, and the Gold Award (registration to the FAST Standard for Software Compliance (FSSC-1:2007)) in September 2007.

Achieving registration to the FAST Standard can present challenges. Some companies reach the Silver stage and then become daunted when faced with the task of reconciling installed software with their software licences. However Philip and his team were determined to achieve the Gold Award and they did so in just 8 months; demonstrating alignment of IT to the business needs, giving clarity to each IT member's role, and clarifying where responsibilities lie. This all contributed to their goal of having a compliant, world class IT system in place that would give a solid foundation to work from for the future.

"Registration to the FAST Standard has helped us manage our IT processes more effectively and as a result we have seen a reduction in IT help desk calls by around 25%" said Philip. "Help desk troubleshooting has been improved by knowing where software programs and what hardware is located within the organisation. This helps us get to the root of problems quickly without asking the same basic questions of the user over and over again. This knowledge, gained

through the application of the framework provided by the FAST programme, means that we can prevent user frustration and get workers back in action as quickly as possible."

Moving forwards

Looking to the future Randstad Education is looking to work towards the ISO Standard for Software Asset Management (ISO/IEC 19770). Since Randstad Education is part of a global group of companies, an international standard will be considered a badge of accreditation that proves the organisation's worth on a global stage.

Philip's team regards the benefits of FAST not only as a model for software licence compliance, but also as a process that has delivered a whole programme of practices and processes that support robust IT delivery.

"I judge a company on its awards and merits. If I see they are Investors in People or that they adhere to ISO rules I know that that they're run in a certain way and that I can work with them confidently. It cuts both ways, if Randstad Education demonstrates a framework of good governance including IT and software compliance, staff retention, and demonstrable customer service, then I expect our partners will feel safer investing in us."

The IT team at Randstad Education are really proud of their FAST status. When making their way through the stages the team made a place for their Bronze, Silver and Gold awards on the wall, next to the IT plan.

"Knowing that we're one of the quickest organisations to have achieved the FAST Gold Award gave us a real buzz. We knew that our IT infrastructure was already in pretty good shape but by implementing FAST's best practice framework we have made a real difference. Working through the FAST programme has demonstrated that we have our 'bread and butter' IT function in place and that has enabled us to improve efficiency and lower our software licensing costs. We're certainly advocates of the programme!" concluded Philip. "And now we're looking forward to achieving the FAST Platinum Awards."

For more information please call **0844 815 5742**, email **contactus@fast-compliance.co.uk** or visit **www.fast-compliance.co.uk**

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