FERA is an Executive Agency of the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with an income of around £68m of which 20% is from commercial companies.

Located in York in the UK, it works with a broad range of public and private sector customers including Government departments and agencies, European Commission, overseas governments, research councils, industry levy boards, and commercial organizations. Totaling over 7,000, this customer base also means FERA works in a wide variety of market sectors including agriculture and horticulture, agrochemicals, human and veterinary pharmaceuticals, food and drink, retail, aviation, and renewable energy.

Business Challenge

Increasingly FERA was finding that decision makers in customer organizations were responsible for multiples strands of work that came under different science teams across FERA itself. This was leading to missed opportunities to provide integrated solutions to customers and a degree of confusion with customers as to who to talk to about what within FERA.

Across FERA's science programs there was little consistency in the way bidding and quotations were managed which made monitoring the business opportunity pipeline a difficult process.

In addition, there was no one place where customer contact details were kept up to date and accessible to all FERA staff.

Solution

FERA looked for a Customer Relationship Management tool that was intuitive to use and would work 'out of the box' with minimum customization. Users from across the organization were involved in developing the list of requirements and also in the evaluation of potential solutions.

The selected system was the BPA CRM solution. Internal users found the basic interface to be intuitive to use and liked its integration with MS Outlook. Designed in SQL and with an API interface capability, it also had the potential to interface with FERA's other existing/future electronic business systems.

FERA's internal IT Support team worked with Great Benefit, a UK BPA Partner, to implement an 'off the shelf' system with only minor customizations. However, FERA identified the need to be able to issue standard product quotations from the CRM to complement the more bespoke bidding management activity. This lead BPA to develop an additional standard module for the system, which it then piloted with FERA.

Result

FERA held a competition among staff to come up with a name for the CRM, which is now known as Connections. Today, Connections is adopted and working as a corporate system within FERA and is used to manage customer and stakeholder intelligence, sales activity, customer pipelines, customer communications and stakeholder contact details across both its public and private sector activity.

Solution for End Users

- Intuitive interface
- Out-of-the-box solutions
- Integrated with MS Outlook
- Integrated with external systems

One Solution for many Usage

- Customer & stakeholder intelligence
- Sales activities and pipeline
- Customer communications