

## Detailed Application Documentation

**Client:** Anonymous

**Business Size:** Corporation

**Industry:** Luxury Watch Retailer

**Country:** UK

**Technology:** VB6, SQL Server

**Objective:** Fully document legacy applications enabling future support and development

### The Brief

The initial brief of the project was to document the existing suite of legacy VB6 applications, providing any new developers with a framework of solid documentation from to start, and eliminating reliance on a small number of in-house developers.

Upon successful delivery, OCS would take over the development and support of the applications, freeing the in-house developers to move into other roles.

### More Detail

The client, a UK-based luxury watch retailer with international operations, have a suite of VB6 applications originating from 2002, covering point-of-sale, back-office, and insurance. Over the years, many developers have worked on these applications, often leaving them with inadequate and out-of-date documentation.

### Challenges

The applications run in many countries, adding extra complexity, with differing tax and money-laundering rules, further variations of these regulations in international airports, and multiple language translations.

When any modifications were needed, even if it was just a few lines of code, the out-of-date documentation for these complex applications meant that time-consuming analysis had to be completed before changes could be made.

## **Solutions**

A methodical approach was adopted, starting with documenting the back-office application. This part was the most straightforward, communicating and sharing the SQL Server database with the main point-of-sale application, while managing reporting and housekeeping tasks, with each store running its own copy. This took about 3 weeks. Once this was complete, the point-of-sale application was tackled. This application registers sales-related transactions, running on each of the tills in a store and communicating with the back-office application and head office systems via XML. It was the largest and most challenging task, with an extensive and complex codebase, taking nearly twice as long as the back-office application to properly document. In addition, utilising the system knowledge gained through the documentation exercise, several functional enhancements were made to improve robustness and usability, and to add new facilities. Finally, the application for the jewellery insurance side of the business, based at the head office, was documented. With the knowledge and experience already gained from the first two phases, this didn't take much longer to complete than the back-office application.

## **Results**

A new developer is already benefitting from the quantity and quality of up-to-date application documentation. This investment has facilitated a considerable number of functional enhancements and bug-fixes to be rolled out, to the benefit of all client stores within a short timescale.