



- Keep Clients
- Keep Compliant
- Keep in Control

Mortgage intermediary Ocean Financial Services had been having problems with its existing administration software, prompting the company to look at what else was available in the market and how it might fit its operation. The difficulty lay in finding something that was robust enough to deal with Ocean's business while being focused on the mortgage market and being able to cater for the specifics of Ocean's operations. A tall order perhaps, but one that MortgageKeeper was able to meet.

Neil Butler, Finance Director at **Ocean Financial Services**, explains: "We had a back office system in place that we were using and we were primarily looking for an alternative that was specifically for the mortgage market, unlike most financial services packages. We used to run a system called Finale, which was owned by Sesame in the end, having been bought out several times over. We had had ongoing problems with data corruption and that got us initially looking around at other packages."

Not only was it important to find something that could replace the existing software, but it was an essential for Ocean to have remote access to the system without users needing to be on site. Neil continues: "The other thing that we were looking for when we looked at packages – because we have got advisers based at satellite offices – was to have a back office system that allowed users to access it from offices away from the main administration centre. There were packages out there that gave us the facility to access the back office system from



"We had a back office system in place and we were primarily looking for a system that was specifically for the mortgage market, unlike most financial services packages"

"MortgageKeeper has a better understanding of what we do"

"[MortgageKeeper] is straightforward and you can go in and see the client's details, do what you have to do and then come out again without any complications"

"We had very little training as that was all we needed. Within weeks, we were all up and running and using the system"

"With MortgageKeeper the system can be tailored to how firms operate and that flexibility is great. I think it is a big benefit to the business as not all brokers work in the same way or have the same procedures"

"Certainly from our advisers' point of view it has improved their awareness considerably"

"Now that we have the system in place where they [advisers] can track their new enquiries and they have a direct monitoring system, we are finding that we are getting a lot more clients coming back after an initial consultation because the system allows us to keep in touch with them a lot more easily"

"We are very happy with the system and see no reason why we would change it as it does everything we need"

satellite offices, but they were not really aimed specifically at the mortgage market. Most of the packages tend to be aimed at the investment and pension specialists and not mortgage advisers. **MortgageKeeper** has a better understanding of what we do."

While Neil is quick to point out that he is working with computer literate people, he also highlights the fact that **MortgageKeeper** proved to be an easy system to get to know, and that much of its strength lies in the ease and simplicity of its use. This has not in any way come at the expense of functionality and Neil believes the technology has already met the needs of his firm and is confident that **MortgageKeeper** will be able to deliver in the future. He says: "It is not complicated and has no bolt-ons such as budget planners and pension shortfall calculators which can easily corrupt. It is straightforward and you can go in and see the client's details, do what you have to do and then come out again without any complications. Certainly with some of the other systems we were looking at, if you were in one section you had to come out again before you could go into another part of the system. This is not the case with **MortgageKeeper** and that simplicity really appealed. We had very little training as that was all we needed. Within weeks we were all up and running and using the system. The delay was on our side, getting the wordings sorted out for our standard letters and then uploading them onto the system."

Many IT and software providers have become real powerhouses in the business world and are keen to have things done their way. Like any business dealing with massive scale, the ability to be flexible is slowly eroded for the economic benefits that uniformity can bring. For **MortgageKeeper** this is not the case.

The technology is delivered in association with Swift Computing. Swift Computing was established in 1982 as a software development company and now has clients UK wide including major corporates and a Local Government arm serving 70+ councils. In developing its solution for the mortgage sector, Swift has worked with Mortgage advisers to ensure that it is catering for their needs.

As Neil says: "The nice thing is that you are not told by a big company that this is the way to run your business. With **MortgageKeeper**, the system can be tailored to how firms operate and that flexibility is great. I think it is a big benefit to the business as not all brokers work in the same way or have the same procedures. I know people who have set their system up to their requirements and, while the fundamentals are there, it is set to how users want to operate it. We went back with a lot of changes to start with and they were done quickly and simply and the **MortgageKeeper** team has listened to what we have to say."

One of the major factors in choosing new technology is the expected return on investment. Rather than having to buy the technology outright, **MortgageKeeper** is available on a monthly subscription basis.

The benefits that derive from being able to have records kept electronically and use the database of clients more effectively are just as important. Under the new Financial Services Authority regulations, firms will need to keep their records electronically and this needs to be in place by 2008. Clearly the market is being forced in this direction at great expense and so seeing a return is important. While Neil has been able to change **MortgageKeeper** to fit into Ocean's business model, he says that the technology has also changed the way that his staff are conducting their business. By having all of their client information in one place, the software has cut down hugely on the need for brokers and administration staff to be liaising continually over cases, and lets each focus more on their own task.

As Neil explains: "Certainly from our advisers' point of view it has improved their awareness considerably. In the past they were relying on speaking to the administration staff, and they either had to go to the office where they were based or call them up on the phone. They can now do it on the system, look at how the case is proceeding and assist where they can and keep on top of everything. Also now that we have the system in place where they can track their new enquiries and they have a direct monitoring system, we are finding that we are getting a lot more clients coming back after an initial consultation because the system allows us to keep in touch with them a lot more easily."

Not only is **MortgageKeeper** helping Neil and his team deal with the clients they have in place, but it's also making sure that prospective clients do not fall off the radar. Winning business is hard enough without having to struggle against leads that are lost because of poor administration systems.

Elsewhere, financial benefits are derived from simply having an efficient electronic operating system in place. Aside from the demands of the market, those looking to build a firm up before selling it on should find that efficient IT has a value in the eyes of potential purchasers. A detailed, up to date and easily workable database of clients is going to be one of the first things that buyers investigate and **MortgageKeeper** will provide that.

A **MortgageKeeper** implementation doesn't mean that advisers can just sit back and relax, but it will certainly give them the best available chance of staying on top of their administration while concentrating on the client facing aspects of their job. Neil concludes simply: "We are very happy with the system and see no reason why we would change it as it does everything we need."

MortgageKeeper Limited

T: 01275 376190 E: info@mortgagekeeper.co.uk
www.mortgagekeeper.co.uk