

AMS



AMS at British Airways



Managing Director Stephen Martin

Founded in 1995, AMS Ltd started as a small team in an Edinburgh office that was determined to create innovative design and build practices that were more client-focused than those on the market. While it is still a relatively small team, its approach has accomplished large-scale projects to the benefit of clients throughout the world. Managing Director Stephen Martin discusses how he utilised his experience with consultancy in order to create better solutions.

Having been client-side for a number of years in the late 1980s, we understood the frustrations of traditional methods of consultancy. There is a disconnect between contractors, consultants and architects, while teams become blinkered to other parts of the project. No one takes responsibility and ultimately it can end up costing the client more money. By taking charge of the project and creating a relationship between the design and build processes, AMS not only presents clients with a clearer through-line but a plan that incentivises contractors to work more effectively and efficiently.

Our approach always begins with the client. Listening to what they envisage, developing the brief and, then, not only bringing them our concept solutions but also helping them comprehend what can be achieved. From there we take care of the whole project, making sure it will be delivered to those expectations. In doing so we create a consultant-project management bias where project and construction management are rolled into one. This is the difference between traditional consultancy and what we could call smart consultancy.

FACTS ABOUT AMS

- » Managing Director: Stephen Martin
- » Founded in November 1995
- » Located in Edinburgh
- » Services: Project and construction management, architectural and M&E design
- » No. of employees: 22
- » Sponsors of Scotland's Under 18s Women's Hockey Team
- » www.amsltd.net

Challenge accepted

One of the key assets of our design and build approach is the ability to take on potentially mammoth tasks in particularly time-sensitive situations. For some companies this is seen as either too much of a risk or perhaps an excuse to haemorrhage clients' money and time, but for us it is an opportunity to prove where we are most useful. Our first undertaking of this kind came in 1997 when BT Cellnet hired us to build 12 new switch sites across the UK. The rollout was a success, coming in on time and reportedly saving the client £6.5 million. As a result, they have continued to call upon our services.

Our most challenging project ran between 2008 and 2013. In the wake of tightening international security, we worked in conjunction with CSC's technical solutions for the rollout of a new network of visa application centres across Europe and the Middle East. In Cairo, for example, we turned around a brand-new centre within 12 weeks while being sensitive to the local staff's requirements, thus establishing our expertise on foreign soil.

During this process we invented the VAC-in-the-box system, which was integral to us winning the NCA Best International Project award with CSC.

Plans were underway to continue the project across South America and the USA but were cut short when the recession hit. While the economic crisis brought disappointing news such as this and was of course a very difficult time, we are proud to say that we weathered the storm without losing any of our respected team. Had there been more support, however, we would now have implemented this effective network worldwide.

The most recent example of our unique technique on a similar scale was between 2015 and 2017 when we were brought in to assist with the integration of ININ into Genesys. Across eight European countries, we designed and built bespoke offices inclusive of the electrical and mechanical engineering design and spatial planning. The new European headquarters for Genesys also had to facilitate engineering labs, computer rooms and Genesys University spaces as well as all associated back office requirements.

“Establishing our expertise on foreign soil”

KSA base project



Queen Alexandra Hospital

Throughout the years we have become known for delivering ambitious projects like these, not only within tight timeframes but also without causing disruption to the client's operations. It is because of this reputation that we were requested to take over from Carillion at Queen Alexandra Hospital after their collapse in 2018.

The urgency surrounding the project was palpable, as Carillion had left a multitude of incomplete projects in an NHS hospital trying to function at full capacity. Our priority was to pick up these tasks immediately, without causing any further disturbance to the staff. Within 12 months we had already completed approximately 135 of these outstanding projects. Indeed, the client commented that we seemed to have achieved more in eight months than Carillion had in three years.

Not only did we complete what plans had already been set out without break in delivery, but we also improved upon them. One of the most pressing and extensive assignments was the renewal of the underground steam duct system that had been put in place in the 1950s and 1960s. Carillion's original solution was only to upgrade the current system and at an even shallower depth, which we knew would cause problems in years to come and would probably need to be replaced again in the future. By introducing our design and build approach, we gave the client deeper insight and understanding of other, more innovative options. In September 2018, we completed the total renewal of the water system to 68 on-site staffing apartments over a three-week period.

We were brought into this project on a short-term contract, knowing that we



Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth

could be trusted to stem the discord following Carillion's leave. But having seen the efficiency and effectiveness of how we work, the client and the residual Carillion staff have agreed that we should continue to lead the project.

Twenty-five years in the business

Work continues in Portsmouth at the Queen Alexandra Hospital with a steady team in place. Business also takes us to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, implementing new O2 networks, and most recently to Manchester, installing a system of government smart meters.

As we approach our 25th anniversary, we question how much longer before our methods become the new traditional. We hope that future small businesses will be given the opportunity to prove the worth of their ingenuity, not just for the good of their economy but for clients, the institutions they build and the generations that will depend upon them.

“What we call smart consultancy”