

Midven backs firm which can stop over-runs like Wembley

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

By John Cranage

Birmingham-based venture capital specialist Midven has invested an undisclosed sum in a leading software company that aims to prevent expensive over-runs on projects such as the new Wembley Stadium.

Comply Services provides compliance programs for complex capital projects in highly-regulated industries. Its products are used in sectors ranging from transport and construction to pharmaceuticals and utilities.

Based at Edgbaston, Comply Service is a spin-out from Swedish company Telelogic, a leading provider of enterprise software.

A typical example of the application of the technology developed by Comply Serve is London's Crossrail Project, established to construct a new railway line across the capital.

The project utilises the services of various sub-contractors which all need to be kept informed of exactly what stage the project has reached and, more particularly, which part each sub-contractor is responsible for and what they have to achieve in terms of compliance, assurance and quality standards.

The web-based software provides real-time information to all parties involved in the project, eliminating unnecessary paperwork, saving time and leading to greater efficiency.

Although established only 18 months ago, Comply Serve has already acquired two high profile clients, Crossrail and the Balfour Beattie/Carillion joint venture which is constructing the new East London line extension.

Further clients are being actively sought and the company is targeting infrastructure projects in a number of different sectors including the utilities, power and transport markets.

Midven provided the investment from the Advantage Growth Fund and introduced a non-executive director to the company in Neil Sutcliffe, formerly chief operations officer with Marconi, which was involved in the construction of the Jubilee Line on the London Underground.

Midven managing director Tony Stott said: "We were introduced to Comply Serve through last year's Connect Midlands Investment Challenge. The company has already achieved excellent initial validation of its software through the initial sales to blue chip organisations. It is in a growth market and we envisage excellent possibilities for its future."

Midven investment director Roger Wood, who made the investment and who will work closely with the company, said: The new Wembley Stadium is just one recent and high profile example of a project which went horrendously over schedule and budget.

"The Comply-Serve software is aimed at addressing the sort of issues that arose on this project.

"Neil Sutcliffe is also a non-executive director of another Midven investee company that I work with. He has considerable experience and contacts in this sector.

"Neil and Comply Serve's existing specialist management will form an excellent team. I



Chris Rolinson, chief executive of Comply Serve, Nick Bradshaw, sales and marketing director, Tony Stott, Midven MD. In front are Adrian Van Emmenis and Terry McMahon of Comply Serve

look forward to working with them to create a successful business."

Comply Serve chief executive Chris Rolinson said: "This investment from Midven is a very significant endorsement of our business



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strategy and will help drive the company's expansion and growth plans for the next 12 months.

"Midven understood the potential of our hosted compliance solutions to deliver significant cost savings and improved quality and delivery timescales for complex projects.

"They also demonstrated to us that they understood our business model, which is leading the way in the markets we are tackling. They provided invaluable support and guidance. It is clear we will have a great working relationship and we look forward to working with them over the months and years to come."

Midven is a privately-owned company with a successful track record of investing in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Midlands. It manages a variety of funds and has invested in a wide variety of sectors, including software, biotechnology, healthcare, engineering, manufacturing and distribution.

The £20 million Advantage Growth Fund was launched in February 2003 by regional development agency Advantage West Midlands to invest venture capital in small and medium-sized companies.

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