Digital transformations. Elcom makes these happen.
See how we transformed Hino Australia's entire business.

Hino Australia offers a complete range of next-generation light, medium and heavy-duty transport solutions for Australian customers.

As you would expect from a Toyota-affiliated company, Hino continues to set the standards for safety, performance, efficiency and comfort. With over 80 years of design experience globally, and over 55 years in the Australian market, Hino is proud of its longevity.

THE CHALLENGE

Our old intranet was built from scratch by my previous manager. It was a limited site that only covered reporting because of the difficulty in developing all the CMS functions in-house. Most processes including document management were still very manual and paper based.

I needed a proven CMS platform with viable off-the-shelf functionality I could build a new intranet on. I had to spend my time supporting existing systems, but I could have my developer work on the implementation and would hire a contract programmer to do any customisations. The CMS had to be open for developer customisation. As an IT person, you are dealing with a lot of systems that will need to integrate with the intranet, plus custom functions specific to the business that must be built.

Once the intranet was put up, I planned to target the most troublesome manual processes across different departments and automating these on the intranet. This would make the intranet integral to staff's day-to-day-work. I also wanted to use the CMS to build other solutions including an extranet, portal, and web application interface.

THE PROCESS

I chose the Elcom platform because it had a lot of off-the-shelf features I could use, a developer API and good technical support, at an affordable cost. Configuring the Elcom system was straightforward and 80% of our stage 1 intranet used CMS functions the platform provided. We then started to build up the development environment and added custom features. We also built a coding resource control and the web API, making it integration friendly with other third-party systems including our ERP system.

Every department has their own IT budget, and vendors and consultants compete for their budget. If my colleagues wanted to automate small manual functions, I lobbied them to let my team build it on the Elcom platform instead. They were impressed we could put up solutions so fast and at no cost to them. We then progressed to automating bigger end-to-end processes. Now the company has decided that all system requests should firstly go through my team for a solution before looking for external systems and vendors. We currently have a list of 50 customisation projects planned, big and small.

"The cost and time savings are huge for Hino. With the Elcom platform, my team and I can keep adding new solutions and applications to automate manual and time-consuming processes at no additional cost. We managed to set a record and put up a new portal site for fleet customers in days – and for free!"

Jack Liu,
Department Manager – Information Technology

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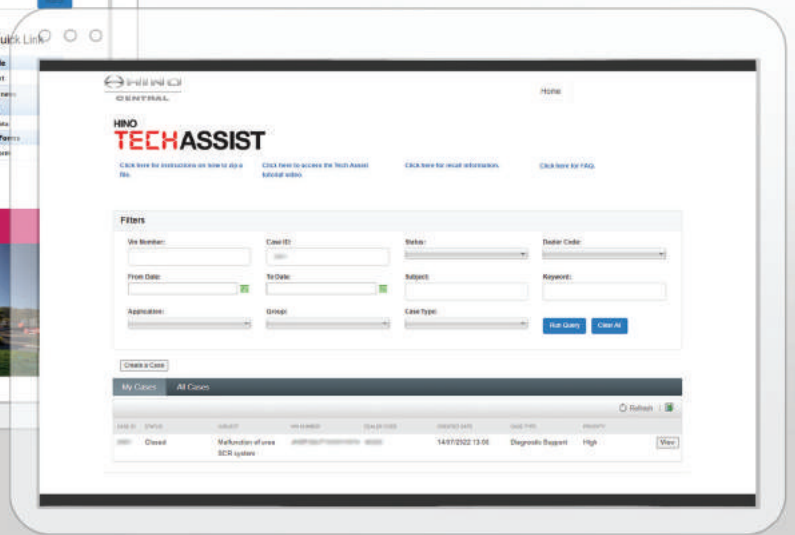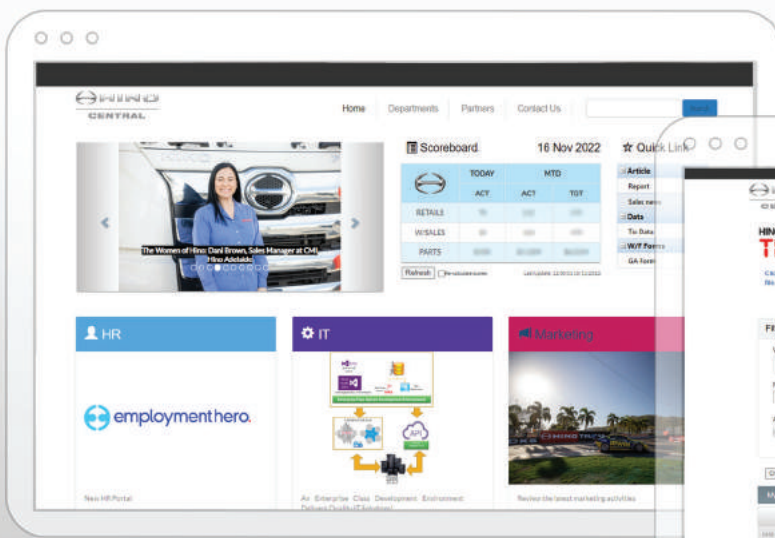
THE SOLUTION

We built a centralised platform for hosting IT solutions across the entire business, named Hino Central. It includes an intranet for staff, extranet for dealers, and portals for our other business partners such as fleet customers and body builders. We manage access to each solution using Elcom's security permissions. Each department has 1 or 2 publishers who can make updates or add content and publish it themselves. This saves a lot of time for our IT department.

We finally have a platform with off-the-shelf tools and features we can build on. As long as you know programming, you can customise the Elcom platform to whatever you need. We extensively use Elcom's existing permission management framework, workflows and look up tables. We do not need to reinvent those interfaces, which makes the development of custom functionality, like the ability to provide online tracking for vehicle recalls, so much easier. Then we just need to create a new page and insert the customised control onto the page, publish and that's it.

We use Elcom as our web application platform to host all our operation's process automations. We are constantly adding new applications to help departments automate manual processes, like the Extended Warranty System. Recently we added an Accounts Payable automation to manage the entire end-to-end supplier invoice approval process. We have an Optical Character Recognition solution to extract information from supplier invoices and insert it into the database table that is used to populate invoice records in Elcom. Then we use the Elcom workflow function to request approval from different staff members based on the amount and department being invoiced. Once approved it goes to our ERP system for payment. We also use Elcom folders to manage the invoice attachments and have set up security group permissions to the folder to manage access.

THE OUTCOME

Hino Central has made everyone's life easier and has become the central portal for not only staff, but everyone who does business with Hino Australia. It has cut back on the time needed to perform end-to-end processes significantly and the productivity gains are huge. The dealers use the portal to get information and submit requests like claiming a rebate. All staff members use the intranet and do a lot of their day-to-day tasks there.

The cost and time savings are significant for Hino. Rather than buying new systems and applications for each process a department wants to automate and then paying to customise it to what the business needs, I can build it on the Elcom platform for no cost and in half the time. For the Body Builder portal, we took a copy of the intranet, updated the navigation and content, and set up security group permissions to manage user access. More recently, the Finance team was approached by an Accounts Payable automation vendor to automate the supplier invoice approval process. Instead, my team built this automation and saved Hino from paying a significant subscription fee to the vendor every year.

The biggest benefit to me is that Elcom is an integration friendly system and has comprehensive API functions provided to developers. All the systems sitting within our business operational boundary are now integrated. For example, with the AP automation, supplier invoice details are pulled from another application into the intranet for approval. Once it's approved, the invoice is pushed to our ERP for payment. Once the invoice is paid on the ERP, the status is updated back into the intranet. There is complete and seamless integration between systems. Users don't have to log into different systems and this complex end-to-end process is fully automated.

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