Ontario

Eliminating manual data entry and formalizing processes for **OMAFRA**

ⓘ Synopsis

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), was using a paper-based system, so applications were submitted on disk and the information was then downloaded onto a desktop. From there, the details were manually cut and pasted into an Excel spreadsheet. OMAFRA wanted a solution where everyone's work could be done through the same system; a system that would eliminate the exhaustive manual labor, improve accuracy, and make the entire process flow more smoothly. With SmartSimple's RMS360°, they found the perfect combination of adaptable features, a high degree of functionality and ease of use. RMS360° proved to be highly intuitive, saving time and effort on the work they needed to complete while ensuring data integrity.

📊 Statistics

Client: The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Research and Innovation Branch (OMAFRA RIB)

SmartSimple Client Since: 2011

Type of Giving: Research Grants

Dollars Managed: Approx. $7.4 million USD

Old System: Manual

Key Pain Points: Too many errors transcribing application information into spreadsheets, difficult to enforce due dates for applications and reports, no ability to properly track proposal or research progress, no way to consolidate financial data

New System Must-Haves: Ability to create firm application and report deadlines, accurate financial reporting, a system that's easier for our external users to navigate

> " The time needed to manage research issues, performance measures, and compile information has been greatly reduced and our applicants and other community users have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. "

Dr. Oswald (OZ) Zachariah, Manager of Innovation and Knowledge Management

About The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Research and Innovation Branch (OMAFRA RIB)

OMAFRA RIB provides funding for research and innovation initiatives that promote economic development to strengthen and protect Ontario's agri-food system. RIB manages research programs and facilities, supports the development of student talent, and mobilizes knowledge to accelerate innovation. They also collaborate with innovation partners to commercialize knowledge from demand-driven research, or apply new insights to improve policies and programs. RIB's clients and partners include agriculture and food businesses, research and innovation organizations, such as the University of Guelph, Agri-Tech Commercialization Centre, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, and provincial and federal government agencies across Canada.

Better control and discipline needed to improve an entirely manual process

The OMAFRA team was manually administering their research grants, and their process needed to be better organized and maintained. Although there was a formal system for making funding decisions, there was too much physical data entry work and paper involved. The application process needed to be better documented, controlled and managed. "What we lacked was a disciplined process," says Dr. Oswald Zachariah, Manager of Innovation and Knowledge Management. **"We needed a solid structure that outlined everything, from what we actually wanted and needed from applicants, to a formalized approval process, so everyone knew exactly what was expected of them."**

OMAFRA's tracking and knowledge-gathering methods also needed some attention. "We had very little in place that tracked the actual efforts of our team. There was inadequate access to information on other funding sources, and not enough documentation on how our infrastructure was being used at the project level. We needed to do better at gathering, reporting on, and transferring the knowledge we had, as this is an important aspect of the Innovation Knowledge Management Unit's work for the Ministry."

A partner that prioritizes their clients' needs

"Our first impression was that the SmartSimple team had an advanced understanding of our business, our challenges, and the climate we were operating in. Their technical team spoke to us in clear terms we could understand, so we were able to have meaningful conversations. Once we saw a demonstration of what RMS360° could do, we were convinced this was the tool we'd been dreaming of."

SmartSimple's team-based, client-centric approach was a great benefit for OMAFRA. They appreciated having regular access to SmartSimple's senior management team, and found that having a dedicated Project Manager during their implementation was invaluable. **"We appreciated the regular project meetings and knowing there was always someone to reach out to who would answer our questions. This reassured me that our system was in good hands."**

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OMAFRA is hosted on Amazon Web Services

Making adjustments to accommodate a unique relationship

OMAFRA also maintains strong ties with the University of Guelph that added an extra layer of administration to their system. "We needed the ability to share knowledge while still maintaining OMAFRA's accountability as the 'owner' of the RMS360° system. **SmartSimple gave us the ability to iron out the details and maintain an effective, collaborative partnership with the university."**

The time needed to manage research issues, performance measures and compile information has been greatly reduced, and OMAFRA's applicants and other community users have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. "At least one industry partner has adopted RMS360° based on their exposure to OMAFRA's research management system."

"After using the many fantastic features and improved functionality SmartSimple has provided, including the option to have a dedicated server, it's difficult to imagine a future without our SmartSimple system" concludes Oz, "I'd recommend RMS360° to anyone; **SmartSimple is a part of my ministry's research success and my own professional achievement story."**

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About SmartSimple

SmartSimple is a global leader in cloud-based automation software, offering unique process solutions used by over 260 clients in more than 192 countries. Some of the largest companies in the Fortune 100, as well as global foundations and government agencies, choose SmartSimple to enrich their impact story and create greater efficiencies in their granting processes.

RMS360°

Optimize how you track, manage and report on research awards with SmartSimple RMS360°, the research management solution of choice for research funding agencies around the world.

In a single online solution, RMS360° gives complete visibility over the entire granting process. From the initial call for proposals to reporting on final outcomes, RMS360° helps funders stay on top of everything, from correspondence and documentation, to monitoring budgets and payments - eliminating hours of paper shuffling and administration.

With the information you need at your fingertips, RMS360° makes it easy to move applications through the award cycle. Everything can be updated and stored online, and submitted materials can be shared with anyone in the assessment process – making scattered emails and time-consuming downloads a thing of the past.

No two research funding agencies are alike. That's why the technology behind RMS360° comes with the flexibility to fit your unique needs and deliver innovative solutions that transform how you manage awards.

SmartSimple interacts with over 60,000 unique users a month from over 260 organizations in more than 192 countries.

Our commitment to making processes work better and freeing our clients to do more good goes beyond the technologies we create **– it's at the very heart of our business.**

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Discover more.

Contact us to request a demo that's tailored to your granting needs.

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