

## Customer Story

**BRITISH PETROLEUM**

“British Petroleum ends their meeting room struggles.”



**Steelcase**

*“We were looking for an ad hoc booking system that advised people that the room was in use—a system whereby individuals could make their own bookings and not have to rely on a team assistant or go through a central booking system. I found, almost by accident, the RoomWizard system.”*

*— Julie Cooke, Johnson Controls Customer Business Manager*

The challenge: too many methods, not enough consistency.

At British Petroleum's (BP) eastern hemisphere headquarters in Sunbury, England, effectively using meeting space was always a problem, both for company employees and the company's facilities management contractor, Johnson Controls. But in recent years, the task had become daunting:



- The system for reserving meeting rooms across the site was actually five unrelated, paper-based “systems” (including one that simply relied on pieces of paper being stuck to doors)
- There were nearly 120 administrators juggling requests for over 140 meeting rooms in 90 buildings on the company's 32-acre campus
- Each administrator could spend up to an hour a day (that's 20 hours a day) coordinating schedules, settling conflicts and meeting the demands of about 3,000 co-workers and countless visitors

### A growing sense of inefficiency

Under BP's unrelated room-reservation systems, meeting rooms were overbooked or under-used, and meetings frequently ran beyond their

designated timeframes. As a result, employees were always scrambling for space.

“I am just one of several people who book rooms. And for me, a lot of my time was being spent with people coming to me, wanting a room, wanting to know who was in a room. I was spending at least an hour a day doing just that,” said Rebecca Card, BP's administrator in site management.

There was no coordinated method for handling impromptu meetings, which represented 50% of the meetings being held at BP facilities. Nor was there an easy way to capture factual data about how often the rooms were being used, by whom and when - critical information for an organization that wants to operate as effectively as possible.

Wasted time meant wasting money—lots of it.

“People were having to go off-site and pay for additional meeting room space in local venues, and they were not able to have the types of meetings that they wanted,” said Julie Cooke, the on-site Customer Business Manager for Johnson Controls. “They would often have to cancel the meeting or go and sit in a public meeting rather than a private one.”



**BP p.l.c. is the holding company of one of the world's largest petroleum and petrochemicals groups. Its main activities are exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas; refining, marketing, supply and transportation; and manufacturing and marketing of petrochemicals. It has a growing activity in gas and power and in solar power generation. BP has well-established operations in Europe, North and South America, Australia/Asia and Africa.**

## A simple goal.

BP needed a more-effective method for managing meeting space. The company wanted a system that would not only boost productivity but would include:

- 1 a one-step process that everyone would be able to access
- 2 a reservation system that would make reservation information visible
- 3 a system that was simple to install, use and maintain



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discovered, had tremendous appeal to the people using the system.

For the study, Steelcase introduced RoomWizard in five meeting rooms at two buildings on the BP business center. Kevin Tettmar, project manager for Johnson Controls, found the technical requirements were simple: power and network access.

Steelcase installed a web sign outside of five conference rooms. The system also offered users remote access to room reservation information through a browser-based interface. This gave employees access to the data at the sign itself or through the company's intranet.

RoomWizard allowed company personnel to:

- Reserve the appropriate room at the appropriate time, via any network computer
- Display meeting information on an easy-to-read LCD display, informing people they were in the right place at the right time
- Extend a room reservation via the touch screen when a meeting ran long
- Quickly release a room for colleagues in need of space
- Quickly identify, via a red light or green light, whether or not a room was available or occupied
- Instantly claim an available room for an impromptu meeting via the touch screen

### An immediate and significant impact

With the introduction of the system, employees were able to stop using the designated administrators—freeing them to attend to other duties—and begin making reservations

## JOHNSON CONTROLS

Johnson Controls manages over 1 billion square feet of buildings in more than 40 countries, providing integrated business solutions for clients including BP, Barclays, IBM, and EDS.

### A cultural challenge

After talking with Steelcase, management at BP agreed that a widespread change in room reservation habits would be difficult. Yet, they sensed the time was right to implement a system that held everyone accountable, one that—by nature of its design—helped avoid or mediate conflicts.

“I was having to act as a bouncer, coming in to tell people their meeting time was up. It was a very hard process,” said Rebecca.

Julie agreed. “People didn't have a single, defined way to keep others informed. Accommodations are too expensive to waste them. We needed a reliable system that could keep everyone up-to-date on a room's status.”

### The answer: RoomWizard

Steelcase suggested the new RoomWizard reservation system as part of a pre-launch study. The RoomWizard system offered all the essential features BP was looking for. It was easy to learn and, as they soon

“I was extremely impressed. Right away, people were interested in the system,” said Rebecca Card. “Having a digital display right outside the room was a new idea—something people hadn't seen before—and they wanted to see what it was like. They wanted to try it. By trying it, they became comfortable with using it. There was an instant change in the way people worked.”

## ROOMWIZARD™

themselves. The number of conflicts declined. And the meetings themselves became more efficient:

- Attendees arrived on time
- There were fewer disruptions
- Individuals matched the right rooms with the right tools (everything from audio-visual equipment to markers and telephones) to the right tasks

Before the study, people could not readily evaluate the status of an empty room. They frequently had to track down meeting participants to find out if a meeting had ended early or was cancelled, or if another meeting was about to begin. RoomWizard solved that.

According to Kevin Tettmar, the system also reduced wasted time by allowing employees to check room status quickly, either at the display or at their computers. This made for faster decision making and hastened confirmation time. Plus, it reduced the number of informal (and distracting) stand-up meetings in hallways or offices. And it meant greater productivity in the meetings themselves, since individuals were no longer preoccupied with the status of the rooms.

“With RoomWizard, people will go check the meeting room themselves, and decide if they can use it. And they're more focused when they meet—smaller meetings or shorter meetings actually take place in the meeting rooms,” Kevin said.

Under the company's old paper diary system, reservations were not posted, so the completion time for a meeting was often open-ended. With RoomWizard, employees committed to both a start and an end time.

According to site administrator Rebecca Card, meeting facilitators or participants held to those times.

“When it's on the screen outside the room, they can actually see that people have scheduled the room after them. They then know that they have to finish on time. And I haven't had to move people out of a room, so from that standpoint it is working. People are sticking to their times,” Rebecca said.



RoomWizard green and red lights signal if a room is in use.

### A better plan

The Steelcase RoomWizard trial has made BP personnel more aware of the way they use their office space. The system's data output has also given their facility managers a record of room usage, including the traditionally difficult-to-track impromptu meetings.

As the company plans construction of its new facilities, officials say they'll use the information learned

**BP wins the 2001  
Premises and Facilities  
Management Award.**

*Premises and Facilities Management* magazine honored BP with their 2001 Facilities Management Award for their partnership and progressive administration of their extensive organization.

through RoomWizard to decide how many and what types of rooms to build. The result could mean reduced construction costs and greater use of available square footage, long-term.

“This gave us some true readings of what the lengths of the meetings are, what styles of meetings there are, what the meetings are about, and therefore how to make the appropriate space available,” Julie said. “It's quite likely we'll be able to reduce the number of rooms we were originally going to plan, on the basis of the audit that we've been able to take from the RoomWizard system.”

### Post-script: End-user feedback gives RoomWizard high marks

In a survey performed during the trial, RoomWizard delighted both employees and visitors to BP's facilities. Respondents to the study cited the system for:

**Simplifying the reservation process:** RoomWizard eliminated the need to consult multiple paper records in order to verify room schedules.

**Delegating responsibility:** In a culture where administrators traditionally reserved rooms, employees quickly learned to do so themselves.

**Increasing accountability:** By displaying user's names on-screen, RoomWizard encouraged individuals to adhere to schedules, and it also fostered greater communication and reduced territorial conflicts.

**“Hall of Shame”:** Before RoomWizard, meeting rooms were claimed but went unused because the meeting had been cancelled. Occupants would forget to inform

the administrator about this. The meeting room would be unused while other people were looking for a meeting room. Displaying the host name made people automatically more aware of wasting corporate resources, a notion BP affectionately refers to as the “Hall of Shame.” BP claims that the RoomWizard web sign's display of meeting information caused people to be sensitive to canceling unnecessary reservations.

**Reducing interruptions:** The web signs helped prevent interruptions and allowed employees to make on-the-spot decisions about whether or not meetings could be interrupted for emergencies or for discussions with meeting participants.

**Boosting awareness:** Sometimes little things can have a big impact. By simply displaying key information like the title and the host's name, BP discovered that there was a greater awareness of the work that's going on in the organization. Sometimes it would help a person find a colleague easier. Other times, seeing a particular meeting happening would trigger a thought or question. Overall, it helped make people smarter about what was happening “now.”

**Showcasing the company's commitment to innovation:** RoomWizard generated considerable interest and accolades from visitors, bolstered BP's image as a forward-thinking company and saved money.

