

Scientific Research Organisation & [illumin](#)

The focus of this anonymised case study is a large global organisation. The organisation prides itself on its patient focus. For over a century, this business has developed and manufactured medicines and works in a wide variety of traditional and innovative therapeutic areas to deliver original research, partner with suitable biotechnology companies, run clinical trials and manufacture drugs at scale.

The Knowledge Management team handles incoming requests from employees across the organisation covering topics such as technical support, research assistance, newsletters, copyright and more. The team is responsible for delivering a world-class knowledge management service across the whole business.

The research team chooses [illumin](#)

The dynamic research team spans the globe, with team members in three widely spread time zones. An applications specialist ensures Knowledge Management's systems are running optimally to meet the needs of their requesters efficiently, liaises with IT, handles complex technical queries and manages reporting.

"The diverse interests of our company mean our research team has specialized areas of expertise for the creation of the weekly newsletter as well as extended projects that may require up to 20 hours or more; however, any member is prepared to jump right in on whatever project surfaces!" reported a library researcher.

[illumin](#) was chosen to look after a large volume of research requests and queries and to improve and streamline processes. The largest and most complicated research requests coming through the system can take 40+ hours of work to comprehensively answer.

At a glance:

Chosen solution:	illumin
Key objectives:	Streamline request and research management queries. Ability to use as single source of research, request tracking with reporting and analysis capabilities.
Flexible Options	Understanding how to manage workloads efficiently and improve overall productivity of the team when managing incoming requests.
Supported Users:	5 research staff in illumin

Prior to implementing [illumin](#) the research team managed requests via their personal email inboxes or via a SharePoint list. With the switch to [illumin](#) the team can see at a glance what is in progress or pending, respond to requests in a timely manner and stop using individualised, varied manual or semi-manual systems and processes.



What are the results?

Over the past three-and-a-half years of [illumin](#) use, the team has generated over 11 000 requests across acquisitions, technical support, research, innovation, insights, meeting minutes and compliance. Last year alone, the four librarians handled almost 500 research requests and spent nearly 2000 hours on them.

“One of the many great features about illumin is metadata about the requester including their country, branch or site of origin, department affiliation and project or product codes can be tracked” said the researching librarian.

The time spent on each request is recorded along with tags and request or research outcomes which are logged for quality assurance review. Through this process of tracking time, tags and outcomes, [illumin](#) is used to track if their research has led to a direct business outcome. Moreover, any sources used in the research process are recorded and ranked, this provides measurable outcomes for ongoing acquisitions renewal decisions.

What does illumin do for this team?

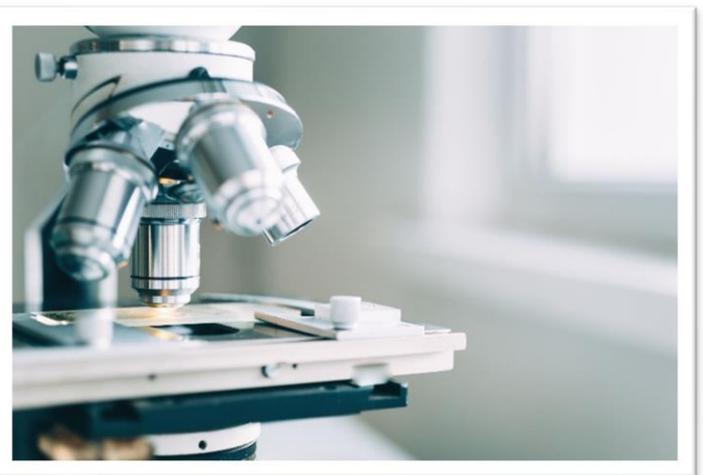
In this team, working with [illumin](#) enables them to:

- Provide accurate and informative reporting with the ability to deliver advanced visualisations via PowerBI. This helps to recognise and reinforce the value of the research team.
- Deliver consistency in responses to similar inquiries and quickly determine if a particular asset has already been researched or needs to be investigated from scratch.
- Keep records of ‘work in progress’, so work can continue on open requests when the lead researcher is absent. This helps track where time is most efficiently spent across all requests.

- Establish due dates for urgent requests quickly and seamlessly assign accordingly.
- Easily monitor the team’s workload and request demand with the ability to use the Knowledge Base a ‘self-help’ option for their requesters (internal staff, clinicians etc).
- Identify which departments are their highest users to prioritise training and outreach.
- Quickly make a list of key stakeholders / biggest projects to highlight at annual review time.

Further, [illumin’s](#) Knowledge Base is used by the research team to promote a self-help option with lists of newsletters, services, and research. It contains a ‘most used’ document with 'best practice' search terms for searching specific databases, journals or records.

“The team finds it convenient to add search terms to the list and use illumin to find similar topics. The knowledge base is a good place to learn what kind of questions we answer and what answers to expect,” said the librarian.



**NB: Stock image for illustrative purposes only*

The team's workflow

Some of the key takeaways for the team's workflow include:

- The whole research team have access to a shared email address, and any emails sent to this address are automatically converted into requests.
- All requests are visible in a shared queue by all researcher managers and system administrators.
- New requests can be made directly via the single request form.
- Any researcher can take responsibility for a request or assign it to themselves, ensuring they complete all relevant metadata and tasks associated with the ticket, as well as informing the requester of the outcomes.
- Researchers working with more complicated requests can create 'child' tickets to ensure any individual's work is recorded. Managers have an overview of the total team workload, including where researchers are working together or need further assistance.
- To ensure consistency with outgoing correspondence, response templates are used to ensure key information such as aim, search strategies and summary, plus a generic copyright statement are included.
- The team uses auto-fill responses when people ask the same questions frequently.
- Copying or cloning tickets enables multiple actions, with each 'master' ticket and subsequent 'child' tickets each team member can have their own tasks associated.
- Bulk updates can also be done if changes need to be made across multiple tickets at once.

Routine administration tasks are a breeze with illumina, some of these the team find useful are:

- Every day each team members check and filter for new requests; some may be long-term goals from strategic planning meetings or those waiting for responses while others may be in progress.
- After 1:1 meetings with their managers, each team member creates a request with any arising action items;
- After regular fortnightly team meetings, the rotating minute taker creates requests listing action items.
- Monthly tickets are logged for project meeting time and project work associated with ongoing 'big' projects, while weekly newsletters also have their own ticket with the time spent logged against it each month.

[illumina's](#) powerful reporting and statistics provide a better understanding to senior managers and the top tiers of the organisation of the volume, depth and scope of the Knowledge Management team's work.

"It's great to know I can easily retrieve data from illumina and share a compelling story about workload, requests and more."



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Why choose illumin?

The business already implemented Softlink IC's integrated library management solution, [Liberty](#), which proved to be a better solution than the original method for management of digital and physical resources in their library.

Softlink IC's customer service was also a big factor in the decision-making process due to the great experience the team had with [Liberty](#). The researching librarian states,

"We value our partnership with Softlink IC and could see the value of implementing illumin once the team was based in multiple time zones."

[illumin](#) easily handles attachments, emails and multi-channel requests and provides visibility of work product across the team, which makes quality assurance and consistency in responses easier to manage. The transparency over the whole team's work product also allows for easy identification for coaching opportunities.

"We'd been aware of illumin and understood the potential uses in our business in years prior, but it became a necessary reality once we had a global team."

This case study focused on an organisation where the Knowledge Management team use illumin to manage a large volume of research requests and queries.

The team has discovered many benefits of using [illumin](#) including accurate and informative reporting, consistent delivery of responses to requests and easy monitoring of workloads. This case study highlights how an effective knowledge management tool can measurably improve efficiency and workflows for organisations of any size.