

Sapphire Case Study: Authentics



"We chose to work with Sapphire because they are well known and well respected in the industry and they provide excellent support."

Guy Burnett,
Operations Manager, Authentics



SAP Business One



Authentics provide original designs for life with their collections of home-ware, lighting and accessories for men and women as well as lifestyle. The company has assembled a design team to develop original and innovative products for their portfolio. Through its global network, Authentics has sourced and distributed outstanding contemporary design for nearly 20 years, with a reputation for delivering new and exciting products to an ever-changing market place. As well as offering retail from their high street headquarters, website and catalogue, Authentics also offer a bespoke service to design and develop products for the corporate sector and a consultancy service, utilising their in-house expertise in design and marketing to position or create a brand identity through new product development.

The operations team at Authentics were finding that the financial management system that they had in place was no longer fulfilling all of their requirements. Authentics set about looking for a solution to serve the needs of the company going forward. Guy Burnett, Operations Manager, tells us "The key business driver for finding a new software solution was the need for accurate information with ease of reporting and a logical progression through the system, so that people would find it easy to use. Essentially we were looking for a system that could be managed by the whole team, without them having to become experts."

After extensive research into suitable solutions the management team at Authentics short-listed just 2 options for the final review process: SAP Business One and writing their own system. Guy said "We already had our own bespoke system: Authenticator, written specially for us, but we were starting to see shortfalls in its functionality."

Authentics' team had come across Sapphire whilst looking at software solutions during their research, but the initial contact came through a recommendation from Balloon One, the provider of Radio Beacon [a remote warehouse management product which interfaces with SAP Business One]. During the preliminary phases of deciding upon the right business solution for Authentics, Guy describes Sapphire's input and advice as "Very very helpful indeed. They explained things well and helped us make our own decisions by giving us as much relevant information as possible. Within the software field there is a tendency for resellers and providers to be somewhat condescending, but this was not the case at all with Sapphire."

The decision was made to implement SAP Business One from Sapphire, because, as Guy says "Ultimately it is easier in the long-run to have an 'off-the-peg' solution that is not completely bespoke, although I am hesitant to use the phrase 'off-the-peg' with SAP Business One because it is very customisable. Implementing SAP Business One was also a more cost-effective choice as there are hidden costs involved in writing your own software system, not to mention the danger of making novice mistakes that could then need further programming effort down the line. There would have been a significant cost involved in re-writing the code in Authenticator."



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SAP Business One



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Speaking on the product features that made SAP Business One the most appropriate fit for Authenticity Guy says “The solution has a very simple track and trace capability; also, it is possible to bolt-on Radio Beacon programming which automates and therefore speeds up our systems plus reduces copying and re-keying of information. We can see the population of stock in our warehouse on SAP Business One in real time because the picker in the warehouse is able to manipulate the stock in real time. For me, the fastest way of doing something is the best way!”

During the implementation period Guy commented “One of the best aspects of Sapphire’s service at this time was that they worked very closely with Balloon One to ensure that SAP Business One linked smoothly with Radio Beacon. Sapphire fully explained how to use the solution to our staff - and held our hands to a certain extent! All of the people involved with the implementation were of a very high quality.”

The rollout of SAP Business One took 3-4 months with the solution being installed at the warehouse as well as Authenticity’s headquarters. Guy observed “The rollout time was fairly short – a few months is pretty good going to install a completely new system. We have had no problems with the solution and find it is working very well for us. We usually have around 7 people logged into SAP Business One, with 3 or 4 people using the Radio Beacon hand-held devices at the warehouse.”

Commenting on the benefits that SAP Business One has brought Authenticity since its installation Guy says “We have a very cost effective way of picking and packing goods then invoicing the customer. We are also benefiting from accurate stock levels. A full stock-check took a week to 10 days with our old system; with SAP Business One it takes just a day and a half.”

It took Guy just 3 weeks to get to grips with using SAP Business One and he tells us it has been very simple to train new users in the workings of the solution. He explains “The functions are the same throughout the solution for all the business areas managed by SAP Business One, so it’s all pretty straightforward. For example, to drill-down in any area you simply need to click on the orange arrow: it is a logical and user-friendly solution.”

Looking to the future Guy says “SAP are due to bring out the new version of SAP Business One soon and we will also be installing the Vision XL reporting tool along with the upgrade so that we can further improve our reporting with the use of graphs once data has been exported to Microsoft Excel.”

In conclusion Guy says “I would certainly recommend SAP Business One to others reviewing their financial accounting solution, as it’s a very good system, particularly the level of detail on the programming side. When you factor in add-ons to any solution it is important to have clearly defined areas of responsibility and we haven’t had any problems with the integration of SAP Business One and Radio Beacon – we always know whether we should contact Sapphire or Balloon One and the good working relationship between the two companies also benefits us.

We have found our dealings with Sapphire very easy and the service we get from the Support Desk is excellent. I have no hesitation in recommending them to others.”