

Sapphire Case Study: Deafblind

History on Deafblind and background to the case

Deafblind UK is a national charity offering specialist services and human support to Deafblind people and those who have progressive sight and hearing loss acquired throughout their lives. The aim of the organisation is to enable people living with this unique disability to maintain their independence, quality of life and to reduce the isolation that deafblindness creates.

Business Profile

Number of users:

- ▶ 20 Finance
- ▶ 4 Professional
- ▶ 23 Logistic
- ▶ 20 Typically logged in at any one time
– expected to grow to 35



Version used: SAP Business One 8.8

Sapphire customer since: February 2010

Cost saving with SAP Business One: £200,000 pa

Return on investment: 7 months

Sector: NFP/Charity

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Rod Cullen
Management Accountant for Deafblind UK

Deafblind UK had been using a system that had been in place for over ten years and which they had outgrown; the quality of data output was lacking. In order to ensure that the business could continue to develop and expand, Deafblind UK needed to invest in the organisation's infrastructure. Rod Cullen, Management Accountant at Deafblind UK, conducted a tendering process and shortlisted 4 systems.

Why SAP Business One from Sapphire was chosen

“The Sapphire team did a lot of in depth groundwork to find out exactly what it was we wanted and our specific needs after they received the tendering document. There was a clear interest and decision to understand requirements, showing dedication to the process” stated Rod.

At the initial product demonstration, Sapphire's Solutions Advisor quickly illustrated the adaptability and flexibility of the system and how data can be manipulated during a highly tailored demonstration, which impressed the team at Deafblind UK.

“We chose SAP Business One as it offered an all round package” said Rod, “It means a strong structure is in place for financials and potential for use as CRM [Customer Relationship Management] and HR [Human Resources] system which our

Head of Human Resources aim to be using by the end of the financial year.”

What made SAP Business One the best fit for Deafblind UK?

- Deafblind UK wanted to push data inputting tasks out of finance and into the wider organisation. Since SAP Business One is accessible and easy to understand for non-finance people it really facilitated this requirement.
- Reporting and strong multi-dimensional analysis were a key requirement. Sapphire's eXtended Analysis Module allows Deafblind UK to track all transactions within the system by up to 10 dimensions.
- The SAP User Interface was very straight forward and intuitive. This meant that Deafblind UK could roll the system out quickly and easily to a relatively non-technical user community

In comparison with the other solutions shortlisted: “It was in fact the most expensive solution that we reviewed with the highest number of consultancy days quoted – some had as much as 10 days lower” said Rod. “However, Sapphire put together the most realistic proposal and the groundwork had really gone into it. Plus SAP Business One has the most product development. Being a charity it is imperative that we don't waste money, so it

was important for us to get the right system and the right implementation partner.”

Deafblind UK needed a system that would:

- immediately help improve the quality of their data
- improve their ability to output data quickly and effectively
- enable the management team to make better and more informed decisions.
- provide a scalable platform to see Deafblind UK through at least the next 5, if not 10 years.

The design phase

“We were fortunate in that the Sapphire consultant we worked with was incredibly knowledgeable and was able to tell us immediately what was and wasn’t possible with the system. If something couldn’t be done out-of-the-box he would say so, but was able to come up with a suitable alternative” said Rod, “We liked the fact that he wasn’t a ‘yes’ man and was willing to reference and outline the limitations of the system and offer a work around. He was great.”

Working with SAP Business One

Deafblind UK took the decision to implement SAP Business One from Sapphire at the end of 2009 and went live on the system in April 2010. Currently on version 2007, there are 8 users of SAP Business One at the organisation.

The team at Deafblind UK say the solution is working very well and they are benefiting from improved cash flow forecasting and staff efficiency by only having to deal with data once: it goes into the system as a sales order and is automatically converted to an invoice. Previously data had to be re-keyed up to three times, now that it is just the once, time is saved and there is less room for human error.

Deafblind UK require all of their home carers to fill out paper timesheets which were then sent back to the office and converted into invoices. Previously this process was very time consuming as timesheet data was collected manually and consolidated manually in excel and then invoicing was then handled as a separate manual process further increasing the risk of error and physical time it took to increase the monthly invoice run.

“Day to day I am hearing positive things, there is no moaning any more and we are two weeks ahead of where we used to be with invoicing. We’ve improved our cash flow position by reducing our debtor days and are now able to manage our supplier payments more effectively. By the end of this calendar year we will get invoices out two weeks after the service delivery – which will be a four week improvement” said Rod, going on to list some key benefits:

- Invoices are sent out faster so our Order-to-Cash cycle has been reduced
- Management time is freed up from credit control and debtor days have gone down
- There are fewer bad debts.
- We are saving resource in terms of both time and money.

- Analysis is more detailed and more specific, so we are able to make better decisions and are able to provide more detailed information to our donors and stakeholders.
- As a not-for-profit organisation every pound matters, so if we can reduce our expenditure we can help Deafblind people more, which is why we are here.

“It is early days, but I expect a significant longer term cost saving with SAP Business One. We can do so much more analysis with better data and have plans to integrate SAP Business One with the Progress charity database too. We are looking to grow as an organisation, but with SAP Business One we won’t need to grow the team.”

On ease of use Rod said: “Training is pretty straightforward as SAP Business One is very intuitive to use. The help functionality within the system is very good and it’s easy to reference the user manuals. You can move easily within the system – there is no need to close anything down, there are lots of drill downs and you can move through all screens without having to come out of others. As a result the team are able to answer queries from their desks, without having to spend time referencing files and hard copies of documents.

Working with Sapphire

“The fact that Sapphire recommended a sensible number of consultancy days is one of the reasons I would recommend them to others” stated Rod.

He went on to say “The Sapphire Project Management Team was very helpful during implementation and the support we get from Sapphire is very good; the consultants on the support desk have an outstanding knowledge of the SAP Business One and provide a superb service. It’s easy to deal with Sapphire: there is always someone at the end of the phone and turnaround times are very quick; for example we can have a confirmed booking for a consultant in just a few hours.

“Sapphire’s offices and infrastructure are very impressive and the Customer User Day held there over the summer was excellent. After sales care is very good and we find the Support webinars helpful. The website and communications that we receive are useful and our Account Manager is available all the time - he calls regularly and keeps us informed of webinars and other events we might be interested in.”

Advice and a recommendation

“My advice would be to always remember internal resource when it comes to implementing a new system – it is important to make sure that you’ve got enough and that everything is covered” said Rod.

“We are very pleased with the solution that Sapphire has implemented and I would certainly recommend it to other organisations of our size. SAP Business One is an incredibly user friendly and powerful system, it’s great if you can’t afford SAP R/3 or are a smaller or growing organisation and don’t want to compromise on functionality.

For more information on SAP Business One please call our Product Advisory Team on 020 7648 2000.
