

Sapphire Case Study: Harrow Green

History on Harrow Green

Harrow Green is a provider of comprehensive business change services to companies throughout the UK and Europe. The group employs over 300 staff and, in 2003, experienced a growth rate of some 18%. Harrow Green leads its service sector, and is recognised as a pioneer in reshaping its industry profile from a 'blue collar' removal company to a 'white collar' service provider - matching the professional development of its clients. The company's forward-thinking, collaborative approach has been recognised independently, with five prestigious partnership awards since 1997, including one for its innovative training centre.

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: Professional Services

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Shankar Pillai

Independent Consultant

In 2004, Harrow Green's interiors division won a substantial contract from the Metropolitan Police to deliver furniture and ancillary services. This new contract generated order volumes far in excess of the initial estimates. In fact, within the first three months of the contract being signed, the volume actually exceeded initial forecasts for the entire year! The management team quickly realised that such a large increase in the volume of activity could have a negative impact on the quality of their customer services operation if not managed correctly and so, to counter this, they brought forward a review of existing logistics systems and processes. Another key driver for the review was to address the issues of an inadequate control infrastructure and lack of actionable management information – both of which were causing difficulties in expanding the business profitably.

At the project commencement, Shankar Pillai, an independent consultant specialising in business software solutions was appointed by Harrow Green to drive the project forward. The first task for Shankar was to undertake a detailed assessment of the business which included:

- Gaining an understanding of the organisation's operational needs – across every department within the business.

- Reviewing and developing process maps within the business to understand the key elements within the value chain.
- Assessing the dynamics of the external environment (e.g. suppliers) to ensure that key parties were included within the project plan.
- Developing an understanding of the major products within the marketplace that had the potential to deliver the required business solution.

These elements allowed Shankar to produce a comprehensive business case - used to communicate the business needs to Harrow Green's senior management team. Shankar comments "before embarking on a project of this nature, it is absolutely essential to have a good appreciation of the business as a whole. Conducting this assessment gave us a holistic understanding of the business which meant we could highlight any areas of weakness, gain a good understanding of what processes the solution should accommodate and it ensured that we stayed focussed on the key elements of what the project had to deliver".

Following an extensive review of the market, Shankar and the management team, which comprised the group's finance director, commercial director and IT manager and the general manager of the interiors division unanimously concluded that SAP Business One would provide the best fit for the business. Shankar explains "The breadth of functionality within SAP Business One far exceeded that of any other products reviewed. Despite an extensive search, we found that only SAP Business One was able to deliver the fully integrated functionality at a price-point suitable for our business". Other deciding factors included:

The SAP Name: "The pedigree of the SAP name, together with its unequivocal leadership in delivering best of breed enterprise applications is a major plus for us".

The desire for a long term solution that resolved the issues: "SAP has been around for over 30 years and is a dominant player within the applications marketplace. With the current climate of consolidation within the IT industry this factor gives us additional security that it will be around for many years to come. In addition, SAP spends millions of dollars in Research & Development and so we can be assured that support and development for SAP Business One will be delivered for the long-term."

The Supplier: "Sapphire's product demonstrations were excellent and, even at the preliminary stages of the selection process, we felt confident that they as an organisation would be able to deliver on their promises. In addition, Harrow Green had concerns about the lack of available IT resource internally - meaning that any major product implementation could hinder the day-to-day running - or even the performance and profitability - of the business. Sapphire was able to offer us expertise and support on a periodical basis to help us overcome this issue - something that all other companies that we reviewed within the context of this project were unable to deliver."

With 20 Users on SAP Business One, Harrow Green's interiors division currently uses the below application areas within SAP Business One:

- Customer Relationship Management
- Inventory Management
- Sales Order Processing
- Purchase Order Processing
- Financials

Shankar tells us "the data migration from our legacy systems was relatively straightforward and we used the SAP Data Warehouse Transfer tool to perform this task. During the implementation cycle we also undertook a system upgrade project and we moved offices! We would estimate that the entire process - including the implementation, migration, systems design, training and testing took us some 30 days to complete".

Without any formal training, Harrow Green's customer service agents within the division began using the system on 14 February 2005. Shankar tells us: "Our post-implementation experience so far has been overwhelmingly positive. With the advent of SAP Business One, the average number of orders we can process has increased three-fold within the first week of going live - even with new and inexperienced staff! Long term, we believe that SAP Business will allow us to increase this metric by ten-fold (and possibly much more) within a very short period of time". He continues "The organisation is now in a position to be absolutely confident that it can manage many substantial facilities management contracts simultaneously. This is, to put it simply, a remarkable turnaround."

In addition, Harrow Green has realised many other major benefits which include:

- Improved staff morale through the reduction in data duplication and subsequent elimination of errors.
- The capacity to expand the business with complete confidence that they have the infrastructure to bring in substantial new business.
- The provision of invaluable management information to aid decision-making and help run the business.
- Increased time for employees to perform more value added activities.

In terms of Sapphire supporting Harrow Green, Shankar concludes "the post-implementation support services we receive from Sapphire are outstanding - I can say this given that I was personally at the end of the phone to the support team! We feel that this is the kind of support which will enable us to win significant new contracts". In summary, Shankar concludes: "The interiors team are already seeing the benefits that an integrated business system can deliver and, even at this early stage, we can envisage SAP Business One being rolled out in Harrow Green's other service areas, helping the business increase profitability and driving new revenue opportunities".



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