

Sapphire Case Study: POWERLITE

History on POWERLITE and background to the case

Powerlite are a UK-based manufacturer of high-quality lighting products. The company was formed some 20 years ago, and today specialises in providing products that include inside lighting, such as in retail environments, offices and art galleries; and outside lighting, such as for building signage and in car parks - along with a first rate scheme designing service that generally is free. The company has a coveted reputation for style, cutting-edge technology along with cost saving and environmentally friendly incentives, which is the back-bone of their success today. As both designer and manufacturer of their own products, Powerlite's merchandise comes with a built-in guarantee of high-quality, as well as being tested to BS EN 60598 and quality-assured to ISO 9001.

In a competitive market, speed of service and providing quality goods sets Powerlite ahead of the crowd. Their substantial warehousing facilities store thousands of finished fittings and component parts, allowing them to meet the often demanding timescales of their customers.

Business Profile

Number of users:

- ▶ 17 Professional
- ▶ 17 SQL
- ▶ 1 Vision Toolset



Version used: SAP Business One

Sapphire customer since: 2008

Sector: Manufacturing



"I know Sapphire to be a trustworthy organisation who are very knowledgeable and focused on the solutions that they support. Basically I knew that they could do what I wanted, and do it well."

Alistair Wright

Financial Controller

Alistair Wright joined Powerlite as Financial Controller in November 2004 to find an old UNIX system that was very outdated coming to the end of its useful life. He tells us "The reporting was extremely poor and drill-downs were non-existent; for example, we couldn't go into a customer's account to look at a payment and see what it related to. The interface wasn't very user friendly – there was no Windows, it was purely DOS, and to top it all off the cost of maintenance was extremely high."

Alistair had bought a financial accounting solution from Sapphire in a previous position after visiting the Softworld IT exhibition, so when he needed to research a replacement solution he asked Sapphire to discuss Powerlite's requirements. He commented, "I initially planned on just discussing the system I had bought from Sapphire before. However, after running through our business requirements, which extended outside the scope of financial accounting, the Sapphire representative I was speaking to suggested that SAP Business One would be the best fit for Powerlite, and introduced us to a colleague who could help us

with that. I was impressed that getting the right solution for us was more important than just making a sale."

Following a careful review process Alistair and his team at Powerlite short-listed SAP Business One and Oracle. "An upgrade of the old system was considered," said Alistair, "but only for about half an hour! It would have been very expensive and ultimately not very good. During the initial phases of finding the right business solution Sapphire were very helpful and answered all of the questions we put to them in a professional manner."

The decision was subsequently made to implement SAP Business One from Sapphire with Alistair giving cost and flexibility of the solution as key deciding factors. He adds "One of the benefits of implementing an SAP system is upgradeability - as SAP continually develop and upgrade their solutions, making SAP Business One a sound long-term investment. Also, the ease of reporting - particularly with the Vision reporting tool -

is excellent and makes life a lot easier. One of the product features that attracted us to SAP Business One was stock control: we have 7000 lines of stock to manage.”

Commenting on the decision to work with Sapphire Alistair said “I know Sapphire to be a trustworthy organisation who are very knowledgeable and focused on the solutions that they support. Basically I knew that they could do what I wanted, and do it well.”

During the implementation and design process Alistair said “The Sapphire consultant who worked with us was friendly and very approachable – he patiently went through all of our queries, some of which I expect were silly little things!”

Now that SAP Business One is in place Alistair says “The solution is working extremely well.” In explaining the benefits that the solution is bringing to Powerlite he says “Firstly, the reporting is great: it is easy to write reports – even without Vision, and I particularly like the transparency of information and the drill-downs. It is great to have the ability to print off an invoice as and when you want it, and being able to manipulate forms is a bonus too; for example, you don’t just have to use a standard invoice, it is possible to move things around as necessary.”

SAP Business One is used at both Powerlite’s factory and their head office by a total of 16 users who are typically all

concurrently using the solution. Speaking on the development of the solution at Powerlite since implementation Alistair says “We are already using a lot less paper than we did before and we are looking to implement the functionality to automatically fax and email invoices, which will mean we save even more paper. Our SAP Business One solution is integrated with Microsoft Excel to facilitate quick download of data, and our next project will be to integrate with Microsoft Outlook. We also plan to develop SAP Business One further in the long-term by integrating the solution with our online ordering system.”

Alistair advises others implementing a new system to plan very well in conjunction with the software supplier, adding “Do lots of testing in all aspects of the business that you will be using the system for and try things out. In SAP Business One there is a lot of functionality and using test data you can really learn a lot – don’t be afraid to give new things a go. The solution is very easy to use and new users will find it quite straightforward once they are shown what to do and give it a try.”

Commenting on Powerlite’s working relationship with Sapphire Alistair says “We have absolutely no problems working with Sapphire, the Support Team are fantastic and we are on first name terms with the guys on the Support Hotline. We are very pleased with our decision to implement SAP Business One from Sapphire; it is working very well for us at Powerlite.”



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