

Case study: SmartestEnergy



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Kellie Knight
Finance Manager



About SmartestEnergy

SmartestEnergy is the leading purchaser and supplier of independently generated electricity in the UK. The company deals with both power purchase from a wide range of independent generators, and the supply of renewable electricity to large industrial and commercial UK businesses. SmartestEnergy is licensed as an electricity supplier, a natural gas supplier and a natural gas shipper.

The company began trading in October 2001, primarily to enable smaller embedded generators of primarily renewable energy to gain access to the deregulated energy market in the UK. Today it is the leading consolidator in the UK for the independent generation segment of the market and offers a range of products and services aimed at meeting the changing needs of the sector.

Background to the case and why SAP Business One was chosen

The Finance Team at SmartestEnergy had been using a mid-level Sage solution for accounting, but had a requirement for a solution with more flexibility and analysis capability. In 2006 the Finance Director at the time evaluated suitable replacement solutions including options from Microsoft, SAP, Access and Sage. He identified Sapphire as part of a web search.

At the time the company was experiencing growth and was evolving; SAP Business One was a good fit as it has the scalability to grow with SmartestEnergy and adapt to their changing needs, hence the decision to implement the solution. A further factor in the decision was the investment that SAP put into research and development and the fact that SAP is a strong brand.

SAP Business One is a customisable solution with the flexibility to cover what the team wanted from a back office system.

Sapphire was chosen as a business partner due to the company's experience in the energy sector and understanding of SmartestEnergy's requirements.

Working with SAP Business One

"I have worked with several accounting packages and the main advantage that we have with SAP Business One is that it is so customisable" said Kellie Knight, Finance Manager at SmartestEnergy. "With SAP Business One we are benefiting from a good accounting package that is extremely customisable and is very well supported – the team at Sapphire really know their stuff. We additionally use the Vision solution for enhanced reporting". SAP Business One (version 2007) is in use at SmartestEnergy's offices in both London and Ipswich. The company has 20 users, with around 8 users logged in at any one time. As SmartestEnergy has evolved and grown as an organisation, so too has the use of SAP Business One by the team.





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Several applications have been integrated with SAP Business One and several other systems feed information directly into SAP Business One – removing the issue of data duplication and re-keying of the same information.

On training Kellie advises: “When training new users it is important to have a good guide – particularly since SAP Business One covers so much more than just accounting.”

SmartestEnergy have taken advantage of Sapphire’s comprehensive training provision that covers public as well as private, tailored, training courses.

Working with Sapphire

“We find Sapphire very easy to deal with and the high quality of the Services team would be a key reason for me to recommend the company” stated Kellie.

With regards to the Support Desk, Kellie says, “Our solution required a high degree of customisation, so it is important for us to be able to work with people who really understand our business and the idiosyncrasies of the way in which we operate. Sapphire do just that.”

Sapphire enhancement solution: eXtended Analysis Module (eXam)

SmartestEnergy have recently implemented eXam, an additional module for SAP Business One developed by Sapphire. The benefits of this will include “cost centre reports for budget managers and additional analysis work, which will be really useful” says Kellie.

Operationally, SmartestEnergy has two sides to the company - the Power Purchase business purchases electricity from the independent generators and on the supply side is a business-to-business supplier of electricity to large industrial and commercial customers. In order to manage this, two separate databases were originally set up in SAP Business One. With the implementation of the eXam module, it has been possible to streamline and simplify the process and SmartestEnergy now operate one database, whilst still reporting at entity level. The eXtended Analysis Module from Sapphire offers enhanced functionality to the core SAP Business One application by providing additional powerful analysis and superior management reporting on financial data and information.

Once installed, the eXtended Analysis Module provides additional analysis fields on all Sales Order document lines, all Purchase Order document lines and every Inventory Movement line. These additional fields of data are posted directly into SAP Business One Financials as line level analysis on the journal entry. The advantage of this is that the Financials can now contain up to ten levels of journal line level analysis posted automatically from the Distribution modules of SAP Business One, compared to the two levels of journal line level analysis available as standard from SAP Business One.

The additional analysis codes can be numerical (i.e. Quantities, amounts, percentages), date and time fields, fixed drop down lists, extendable drop down lists or even free format text. Once this analysis is recorded in the Financials Module it enables the finance team to run management and financial reports by these ten levels of analysis.

And finally

In conclusion Kellie said “If you are looking for a system that can be easily customised to the specific requirements of your business, I would recommend SAP Business One. And if you’re going to use SAP Business One, you should use Sapphire. They are customer-focused, always willing to go the extra mile and a pleasure to work with.”

