

Building foundations for recovery



SAP Business One is the perfect solution for SME's operating in the current difficult economic climate. This powerful, responsive business tool helps drive down costs and deliver sales, it improves the management of customer service, inventory and purchasing. What more could you want in a recession?

Walter Dickson, managing director of Dublin-based Greenrock Technologies, a fully accredited SAP Business One Channel Partner, can vouch for the benefits delivered by SAP Business One.

"It's a really cost effective solution that delivers a rapid return on investment. It is highly flexible and allows companies achieve a high level of reporting, regardless of their business model and size".

Dickson quickly dispelled the biggest myth about SAP Business One: "There's a per-

ception out there that this solution is for bigger companies only, but nothing could be further from the truth. It's not expensive and what it does is to deliver a really efficient, transparent business tool that lets the company understand exactly how it is operating, in real time."

Every business operates within the context of finite resources: people, time and money. Therefore the key questions firms need to ask themselves are: is there a way to achieve more with the resources you already have? Could you handle your current workload with reduced resources? Is there a middle ground situation to help you achieve a combination of these outcomes?

The first of these questions assumes that we can somehow identify untapped opportunities or improve performance in an existing market. The second question is probably even more relevant in a contracting

market, where the opportunities for growth are limited and so the aim is to reduce costs and drive down overheads.

"Stakeholders need to ask themselves a few important questions too", said Dickson. As a stakeholder, what tasks absorb the majority of your time? Are you spending enough time doing the things that are important? Are your key people focusing the bulk of their time and their energies in the right areas or are they being distracted with wasteful and time consuming administrative tasks? Given the resources, what activity would you like to do more of, for examples would you spend more time with your customers or spend more time looking for new customers?

"Ask yourself if you could achieve more if you streamlined your business and put the right tools in place? What areas of your business are time consuming and difficult to



Walter Dickson, managing director of Greenrock Technologies.

manage? What areas of your business seem unnecessarily labour intensive? Are you getting the information you need when you need it?"

How can Business software help?

You may find that the solution to your problems crystallises around the replacement of your less than intuitive, disjointed solutions, delivered by multiple pieces of software that are generally labour-intensive and costly to maintain.

Having a system comprising lots of islands of information is

not desirable, it makes perfect sense at all levels to operate an integrated business software.

Truly effective business management software enables you to do more with less effort. The basic proposition of a solution like SAP Business One is that it allows you to bring all of the key operations of your business under one roof. As a result, you get a more complete picture of how your business is performing.

Why is one solution better than many?

There are many cogent arguments in favour of having one integrated software solution. It is cheaper to own and easier to maintain. You can reduce the level of duplication and this should make running your business less labour intensive.

Reducing the volume of human intervention in your business process helps to reduce your exposure to the potential risk of human error.

One software solution that covers the needs of all of the departments in your organisation generally provides the stakeholders with a more coherent picture of how the business is performing. Critical information is generally available earlier in the cycle so management are equipped to react more quickly to changes

in conditions

The Benefits
If the right software tools were in place you could get through more credit control calls and improve cash flow, which is critical at all times, as cash is king, but particularly at present.

You could monitor margins more carefully on a transaction by transaction basis and ensure that you maximise profits. Identify and manage problems with your suppliers earlier so that you can take corrective action and provide a better service to your customers.

You could manage your stock more efficiently, cut down on expensive errors and save money, reduce your stock holding and free up working capital and become more for- ensic in monitoring your sales pipeline with a view to maximising the return on the available market opportunities.

With the right software in place you could make better use of your people by ensuring they spend their time focused on the activities that maximise return and add to the bottom line. You could also free your key stakeholders and line managers from unproductive administrative tasks so that they can refocus their time and energy on doing the things that will keep your business healthy

How can Greenrock & SAP Business One help?

Greenrock Technologies understand the challenges facing the owners of small and medium sized companies. We have the right combination of people, knowledge and experience to help business owners address the real-world challenges they are facing on a day-to-day basis.

With SAP Business One, we have a very powerful piece of business software which is specifically designed for small and medium sized business. It's affordable, cost effective to own, easy to use and it can be implemented quickly.

What to do?

If any of the issues discussed are all too familiar to you, then perhaps it is time to act.

Right now, Irish business owners are living and working in a very challenging environment. Now is the time to put

the foundations in place, to enable you to take advantage, when recovery starts" said Walter Dickson.

It would be all too easy to see the hard fought gains of the last ten years slip away because you failed to tighten up the right areas of your business.

With the right approach and a strong business tool like SAP Business One, business owners can consolidate the gains they have achieved and put in place solid foundations for future prosperity.

Anything that is proven to help drive down costs, increase productivity and improve Cash Flow has to be good news whatever the economic backdrop.

To arrange a meeting to discuss any of the issues in this article, contact

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Commercial Profile: Digisound Audio Visual

Greenrock gets perfect reception from Digisound

Digisound Audio Visual has revolutionised its business by teaming up with Greenrock

AT A GLANCE

Company

■ Digisound Audio Visual

Solution

■ The SAP Business One solution, implemented and supported by Greenrock Technologies

Benefits

- Enhanced cash-flow. Credit control process accelerated by the ability to e-mail copies of delivery notes and invoices.
- Real-time picture of how business is performing. Better financial reporting, enables better and faster business decision-making.
- Increased stock control
- Better customer service

tion for unlimited support and after sales service, which it gives to its clients. With such a customer centric approach, Digisound appreciated that it needed to employ the most appropriate software solution, to allow it continue to deliver such a high level of customer service and after-care.

Technology advances at a rapid pace and Digisound Audio Visual realised more than a year ago that its incumbent application wasn't cutting the mustard. "Our previous system was incomplete. It wasn't strong enough in the areas of stock control, service management and financial reporting," said Smyth.

"We realised that we needed better reporting functions to help us make better and faster business decisions. We needed to improve customer service in order to maintain our market leading position, and we wanted the ability to track daily activities right across the whole business, in other words to introduce a more integrated approach to the administration of the business.

Although a tall order, Digisound was determined to find a solution that ticked all the boxes, together with a worthy partner to deliver the appropriate solution.

"We had a very clear idea of what the business needed. We reviewed the market, talked to customers, spoke to suppliers and met with our accountant. We identified a number of possible solutions and obtained information on each. After further research we narrowed our selection down to three options and invited the suppliers to meet with us to discuss our requirements.

"While we wanted to identify a solution that could deliver all of the features we wanted in one product, we were also heavily focused on finding the right supplier, one that would understand our business and our near obsession with customer service. The difference in approach between the various suppliers was quite noticeable," said Smyth.

Smyth and his team were immediately very comfortable with the way Greenrock Technologies approached the project. "We quickly developed confidence in their abil-



Ivan Smyth, managing director, Digisound Audio Visual

ity to understand our business and provide advice. We trusted them," said Smyth.

Before appointing Greenrock, Digisound sought client references. "We not only spoke to a number of Greenrock's customers, we even went to visit one. Product brochures are all well and good, but we wanted to hear first hand what the owner had to say about the product and the service providers. We were particularly interested in what they had to say about the implementation process, as we were anxious to know if the change had been unsettling for staff. Thankfully the feedback was very positive."

Digisound selected the SAP Business One solution and chose Greenrock to implement the new system. Asked what influenced his choice, Smyth said: "The product seemed more complete. The service management element really suited our business and we liked the way we

could track everything related to a customer through one system. The other thing that really appealed to us was the user interface and the fact that we could alter the screens to suit individual users. This made it easier for staff to adapt to the new software."

While Smyth acknowledged that the system wasn't cheap, overall, they felt that SAP Business One delivered a good balance in terms of value for money, given it could meet all of Digisound's key requirements.

The total solution was up and running within four months. Walter Dickson, managing director of Greenrock Technologies, said that from their perspective as suppliers what helped such a smooth implementation at Digisound was the "buy-in, commitment and enthusiasm of the senior management team, key departmental personnel and the financial controller. We were able to

develop a proper partnership with management and it made implementation very smooth."

Digisound had to meet some challenges head on during the implementation process. "We had a major exercise to complete in terms of organising stock data ready for input and we had a lot of obsolete items in our stock lists and incorrect prices", reported Smyth.

"We also experienced time pressures during implementation because we didn't have spare staff and besides, all of the critical steps needed the involvement of our own experienced people. This presented a constant balancing act during implementation. For me, the key was that we really worked hard and we stayed focused on the project end line."

Overall, Smyth recalled that the SAP installation wasn't as disruptive as he and his management team had

feared. "We had expected the worst, but actually the process was remarkably straightforward. I have to put this down to the partnership approach taken by the Greenrock team. Together, we planned and prepared for all eventualities at the start of the project. Time was always limited and while we did burn the midnight oil once or twice, on the whole, the changeover was relatively painless."

"Going live, thankfully, turned out to be pretty uneventful, with no major dramas. A huge amount of thought and planning was put into the configuration of the system early on and we had tested all of the really important elements before the opening balances were entered. In truth, we were actually pretty confident when D-day arrived.

We did encounter a few minor snags, but nothing that would cause any loss of sleep, and these issues were

smoothly ironed out.

"It wasn't so bad once we got started. If I could give one tip to other organisations, it would be this – plan very carefully and take your time during the planning process. I have absolutely no doubt that the amount of planning we did at the beginning paid dividends later on in the implementation – and that's why we avoided any major crisis," said Smyth.

Speaking about SAP Business One, Smyth said: "It has exceeded our expectations. We started out with a number of clearly identified requirements, but we quickly realised that the product could actually deliver quite a bit more.

The other great thing is that our team has really taken to it and everyone is using the product well."

Smyth is also very pleased with the return on investment. "Our turnover grew significantly following the implementation of SAP. Obviously, this wasn't exclusively down to the software, but it was definitely a factor.

"It has also allowed us revolutionise how we manage the service and warranty side of our business.

Our engineers can track their service calls really easily and they have full access to the history of every item we have supplied since we implemented the system."

Given the tough economic backdrop, Smyth was particularly pleased with the improvement in cash flow, thanks to the new system. "Our ability to deal with customer queries quickly made a significant difference. Simple things like being able to e-mail copies of delivery notes and invoices helped to speed up the credit control process. We have probably doubled the amount of credit control calls we can complete with the same number of people in the same amount of time."

"Prior to implementing SAP Business One I couldn't get a real-time picture of how our business was performing, but now I have all the information I need at the tips of

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my fingers. If I was starting a new business again tomorrow, SAP Business One would be the first item on my shopping list – and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Greenrock Technologies to implement the system."

For further information, contact Digisound Audio Visual Tel: 1800 305905 www.digisound.ie

