

## Case Study

# OpenAccounts meets multi-national web accounting needs of Per Una - up and running in 6 weeks

**Client:** Per Una

**Sector:** Retail

**Project:** OpenAccounts Financials, and eFinance

### GLOBAL ACCESS

**Per Una is the company behind the highly successful George Davies womenswear range of the same name launched at Marks & Spencer (M&S). A requirement to exploit the Internet for 'anywhere' global access for Per Una management and suppliers alike, led Per Una to select OpenAccounts Financials and eFinance application software as the best fit for its very modern back office accounting and supply chain integration needs.**

On January 7th 2002, when The British Retail Consortium reported a boom in pre Christmas sales on the high street of around 6 percent compared with the same period last year, pundits were predicting double this increase at M&S, with clothing sales up 15 per cent on the previous year. How much of that increase was down to Per Una is difficult to say, but the range saw the return of the crowds that had so long been missing from M&S. Per Una is a resounding success going from a standing start to a multi-million pound business in just a few months.



...the Advanced Business Solutions team was quick to respond and, in particular, demonstrated that it had the necessary e-business technology and experience to deliver.

- **Andrea White,**  
**Financial Director**

Per Una is a separate company to M&S with its head office in Hong Kong and subsidiaries in Hong Kong, the UK, Italy and Turkey. In spring 2001, when M&S announced to the City that George Davies would be designing, sourcing and manufacturing a new range of womenswear, exclusive to M&S, targeting the 25-35 year old age group, the signal was given for Per Una to get up and running. Time was of the essence as Per Una had just six months to create the supply chain and administrative support that would enable the new range to reach the top M&S stores within six months.

Chartered accountant, Andrea White, was appointed financial director. Her top priority was to find and implement an accounting system to support the business as soon as possible.

The key requirements were to be able to access one common accounting system from anywhere in the world and provide a selfservice facility to suppliers for adding their own invoices and monitoring payments via the Internet. Speed of implementation and low total cost of ownership were also paramount considerations for an operation that may be multi-national, but certainly did not want to carry high administration overheads. Initial research for a suitable accounting suite drew a blank, even with auditor colleagues.

*"We didn't want to buy an enormous system that would be complex and time-consuming to implement, we simply didn't have the time. But we did want to embrace the Internet to simplify the whole system of invoicing and payment for suppliers who we knew would be scattered around the globe,"* said Andrea White.

Per Una's main design operation is based in Italy; a smaller design team in the UK moderates the more extreme Italian style for British taste and materials and manufacturing are primarily sourced in Turkey, Italy and the Far East, and to a lesser extent from the rest of Europe. The main warehousing and logistical operation is based in the UK. Per Una controls every part of the supply chain including the presentation and branding of the range within the stores. A key strength is speed of reaction, with goods set to make it from design idea to shop rails in a few weeks, rather than months.

## eBUSINESS TECHNOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE

Following some initial research, a visit to the Softworld exhibition, where many accounting systems were on display, proved fruitful. *"Several companies looked interesting, but the Advanced Business Solutions team was quick to respond and, in particular, demonstrated that it had the necessary e-business technology and experience to deliver."*

## Case Study

The way that OpenAccounts Financials embraces the Internet, where it can add business value, was also a major attraction for Per Una as [Andrea White found](#): *"While other software houses have web-enabled everything in sight, I like the way OpenAccounts retains a solid core of back office functions for the usual ledger, management and company accounting, and reporting operations and harnesses the Internet through its eFinance options to improve integration with third parties, reduce the paper chase and improve all-round productivity. OpenAccounts' thin client options also provides the web browser interface to the system from any Internet - connected system, which keeps me in touch on the move."*

[Although not an IT specialist Andrea knew the importance of the database of the application and checked out Progress.](#) *"I have seen too many Access-based projects go pear-shaped and quite a few Oracle projects turn nasty to know the significance of the underlying technology. It was very gratifying to hear the relief and positive reaction from IT colleagues on learning that OpenAccounts is developed with Progress and uses the Progress database."*

Advanced Business Solutions has been a Progress partner since 1990 and today uses the Progress OpenEdge(tm) platform for building e-business and enterprise applications. It couples the scalability and low cost of ownership of the Progress database, with a standardsbased messaging infrastructure and a rapid development framework, to provide serious application developers, like OpenAccounts, with everything needed for building sophisticated business, web-enabled applications.



## Case Study

### SELF SERVICE FEATURE REDUCES WORKLOAD

Per Una selected OpenAccounts and went live just six weeks later. Much to their surprise they left the first implementation planning meeting not just with a plan, but with the application fully installed on a laptop.

The eFinance module enables Per Una's top 50 suppliers around the world to key in purchase invoices to the system in their own language. The self-service features in eFinance also enables suppliers to check the authorisation procedure and see when their invoices fall due for payment, greatly reducing the workload for Per Una. Smaller suppliers without Internet access send invoices to Per Una's offices which currently access the central OpenAccounts system via Citrix web-browser technology.

M&S operates a self-billing system and generates invoices that are imported into OpenAccounts Financials. The system also integrates with the supply chain system to record stock figures in the accounts.

Per Una is impressed by the speed of implementation and the approach of Advanced Business Solutions: *"They are the best software company that I have worked with," says Andrea White, "The solution is not only easy to use and flexible, but really works via the Internet to improve efficiency and accessibility of information. The underlying Progress technology has also proved highly reliable and we are now investigating using it to develop our own, tailor-made, overseas warehousing system in-house."*

### About Business Solutions

Advanced Business Solutions, an Advanced Computer Software plc company, provides leading integrated business applications and services that enable public, private and third sector organisations to retain control, improve visibility and gain efficiencies whilst continually improving corporate performance. Its award-winning software systems comprise core financial management, procurement, human resource and payroll systems, integrated with a range of collaborative, document management and business intelligence solutions. It also provides managed and bureau service options.

Advanced Computer Software plc is the UK's leading supplier of software and IT services to the health, care and commercial sectors. It comprises 3 main divisions and has 7000 customers and 800 staff worldwide.

### For more information

Advanced Business Solutions is a brand name of COA Solutions Ltd. registered in England, company number 03214465.

Registered office: Munro House | Portsmouth Road | Cobham | Surrey | KT11 1TF.

t: +44 (0) 08451 606 162 f: +44 (0) 1932 584 001 e: [marketing@advancedcomputersoftware.com](mailto:marketing@advancedcomputersoftware.com) [www.advancedcomputersoftware.com/abs](http://www.advancedcomputersoftware.com/abs)

COA Solutions Ltd. recognises the trademarks of other companies and their respective products in this document.