

Case Study



Keeping track of projects at MIRA

Client: MIRA

Sector: Engineering

Project: OpenAccounts

The project and commitment accounting capabilities of OpenAccounts from Advanced Business Solutions Ltd are enabling MIRA to make better purchasing decisions and achieve an improved understanding of project costs. As a result, MIRA is more competitive when bidding for new business from automotive industry customers.

MIRA is a world leader in vehicle engineering and testing. Based in Nuneaton, UK, it provides product engineering, research, testing, information and certification services to automotive industry clients all over the world. These services are delivered using a blend of diverse facilities and expert staff, underpinned by ongoing investment in advanced technology.

MIRA is a project-based organisation. Its activities vary from simple tests lasting a few days to product engineering projects that go on several years. Procurement of goods and services is the responsibility of individual project managers. This way of working places certain demands on the company's financial systems.

"As a project-based organisation, we obviously need to be able to book time and expenditure to specific projects," explained Duncan Hill, IT manager. "In addition, a real-time view of budgetary commitments is vital, especially for larger, more complex projects."



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“Advanced Business Solutions did all the work of incorporating the requirements of the CIS into OpenAccounts and providing uplift routines, making life very easy for us.”

- Duncan Hill, IT Manager commented:

In the past, MIRA was hampered by a lack of support for commitment accounting. Its previous in-house financial system lacked the flexibility to accommodate business change. Maintenance relied heavily on the knowledge of a small number of individuals.

MIRA therefore looked for an industry-standard replacement that offered both project accounting and commitment accounting capabilities, and could be used by project managers as well as accountants. Integration was an important requirement because MIRA wanted to retain its existing project setup, timesheet and purchase ordering systems with their familiar interfaces.

Improved processes

Following a lengthy and detailed evaluation process, MIRA chose to implement OpenAccounts from Advanced Business Solutions. According to Hill, not only did OpenAccounts meet all the technical requirements but Advanced Business Solutions proved to be a very responsive organisation.

“Following the initial evaluation, we provided Advanced Business Solutions with a lot of feedback about the extra functionality we would like to see,” he explained. “Advanced Business Solutions listened closely to us and incorporated this functionality into the product.”

MIRA installed core OpenAccounts functionality with several additional modules, including Project Accounting, Commitment Accounting, Fixed Assets, OpenReporting and the OpenLink integration module. Advanced Business Solutions’ consultants advised MIRA on how it could improve its processes as it introduced the new system.

Today, OpenAccounts can be used by any of the 400 staff at MIRA. Only 15 of these are accounts staff, the remainder being project-related users, including not only managers but also engineers and technicians all of whom can review their own projects and make purchasing decisions.

Significant change

According to Hill, OpenAccounts provides MIRA with a solid platform for all its accounting and financial management needs. The most significant single change has been the introduction of real-time commitment accounting, which enables project managers to make better purchasing decisions and stay within their budgets. The system’s approach to project accounting is also of central importance.

“OpenAccounts’ support for a hierarchical project structure means that it can accurately reflect our various business models, leading to better financial control and management. Furthermore, an improved understanding of project costs and commitments allows us to make more informed decisions,” said Hill.

Financial processes are now more streamlined and more consistent across business areas. As a result, people are more productive and more information is available in the same time frame. The user-friendliness of OpenAccounts is another big advantage, making it suitable for use by everyone. Finally, MIRA's use of OpenAccounts simplifies the process of conforming to legislative changes such as the introduction of the New Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) in 2007.

"Advanced Business Solutions did all the work of incorporating the requirements of the CIS into OpenAccounts and providing uplift routines, making life very easy for us," [commented Hill](#).

New benefits

Additional benefits have recently come MIRA's way thanks to the launch of Version 6 of OpenAccounts. After participating in the beta testing programme, MIRA became the first Advanced Business Solutions customer to go live on OpenAccounts 6. Benefits include the ability to split an order line across different projects. This is proving very useful when items are purchased for shared use. Also, core users at MIRA can run multiple sessions simultaneously, enabling them to work on transactions while viewing other information on a different screen. Another significant benefit is the ability to select which information, in what sequence and sort order is displayed on screen.

MIRA now plans to use the Openlink interface and automatic billing capabilities of OpenAccounts to allow end users to raise sales invoices directly from the system. It is also looking at ways in which it can produce more sophisticated financial reports.

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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. It's 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

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