

Case Study

Enterprise vision for Specsavers

Client: Specsavers Opticians

Sector: Retail

Project: Implementation of a new finance and accounting package

Founded with a single store in Guernsey in 1984, a staggering growth of 40% per annum on average has today propelled Specsavers Opticians to high street presence in more than 370 locations, through a joint venture partnership that has transformed the spectacles market in the UK and Ireland. Specsavers Opticians is now market leader in the UK and has recently begun its expansion into mainland Europe, with several successful stores now open in Holland.

Specsavers has management offices in Guernsey, an IT centre in Eastleigh, Hants and a total of 6000 employees throughout the UK.

As part of an initial £350,000 project, Specsavers Optical Group selected Advanced Business Solutions to provide them with an enterprise class accounting solution to meet their long-term requirements beyond the year 2000.



Advanced Business Solutions demonstrated a full understanding of our complex business issues and were able to provide a sophisticated core accounting package, combined with tailored development. We now have a system to meet our own unique requirements plus the flexibility we need for future integration and development projects.

- **Mike Bachelet,**
Financial Systems Consultant

Specsavers had outgrown their Tetra accounting system and sought a solution that would offer significant productivity gains and more automated business processes. In particular, their existing accounting system could not be integrated with other operational systems and did not provide multi-company enquiry or reporting facilities for consolidation across companies.

Evaluation

Specsavers set a number of key selection criteria: ease of use; sophisticated integration facilities; the ability of the supplier to understand and resolve complex business requirements; the ability to handle the unique consolidation requirements using information from a large number of stores with diverse reporting requirements and differing year ends.

The selection process provided an initial shortlist of four corporate accounting solutions. Following detailed workshop sessions, the final shortlist was reduced to two.

Six-week pilot schemes were set up to run three months' data across core modules using a selected number of stores. During the pilot, OpenAccounts were able to demonstrate effective product and delivery capabilities. The OpenAccounts pilot was completed in four weeks, demonstrating the strength of usability, system integrity and ease of implementation. Advanced Business Solutions demonstrated their commitment and capability in managing and supporting the Specsavers project to meet their budget and timescales.

System implementation

The system for Specsavers comprises 125 concurrent OpenAccounts Financials users running on a Sun Server and Windows clients; a specialist module to cater for Specsavers' unique consolidation requirements and Integration with existing operational systems.

From commencement of implementation and training, Specsavers commenced live running at their Guernsey headquarters two months later, followed by a phased system roll-out.

Specsavers Optical Group's OpenAccounts system provides them with a number of benefits: A highly functional, yet easy to use corporate accounting system; powerful enquiry facilities that produce timesaving through drill-down to source documents, with on-line management information available as and when required; reporting flexibility which

allows users to build their own tailored reports easily without using third party tools; desktop integration facilities for users to build their own dynamic links from OpenAccounts into their PC applications; the OpenAccounts integration module, OpenLink, provides a fundamental part of the solution for the number of links required, demonstrated through data take-on and transaction interfaces.

A platform for the future

Following the initial system roll-out, OpenAccounts have worked with the Specsavers' project team to integrate their operational systems further, including:

- intelligent journal processing between stores, factories and head office to eliminate manual processing
- an internal 'treasury' system - automated Bank 2000 link
- the SOCRATES and PLATO retail store systems developed in-house

OpenAccounts has proved to be a valuable addition to the Specsavers' armoury of systems.

"The benefits of OpenAccounts to the company have been enormous, but equally important is the benefit it has brought to staff. Though it may have taken a little time to adjust, staff have been able to develop their skills as managers rather than as doers and have been able to focus more on customer care than on numbers", says Mike Bachelet.

"The ability to import information from one system to another is the key", Mike explains. "Tasks that would otherwise take several hours to complete can be done in a fraction of the time. A good example is the link between OpenAccounts and Iris, the specialist software used by the Audit team. They need information from OpenAccounts to produce statutory end of year accounts for each of the Specsavers 600 plus companies. In the past, this task used to take two and a half hours per company - a massive 1,500 hours in all. The import facility has reduced the time taken to process each company to a mere five minutes!"

Similar links have been made to allow information exchange between OpenAccounts and other departmental systems, with equivalent savings for all concerned. *"With the pace of change these days, we are never able to stand still. We are constantly looking for ways of improving our systems. OpenAccounts meets our own unique requirements with the additional flexibility that is needed for future integration and for development projects".*

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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

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 www.advancedcomputersoftware.com/abs

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