Thatcham Research

K3 FDS
OUTSTANDING
SOFTWARE
SOLUTIONS

SAGE X3

sage

Sage X3 further strengthens the UK's experts in vehicle safety, security and crash repair

CLIENT PROFILE:

Thatcham Research provide independent, trustworthy and detailed information to the motor industry that drives standards in vehicle repair, safety and security. The not-for-profit organisation is continuing to grow with over £15m turnover in 2012 and 180 staff working at offices in the UK. Their main business objective is to work on behalf of UK motor insurers in influencing the design of motor vehicles to be safer, more secure and more economical to repair. This work has a direct impact on containing the cost of motor insurance claims and increasing driver safety.

Thatcham Research are relied upon for the accuracy and reliability of their information, reports, databases, training and guidance. It is of the highest importance that they are able to record and distribute accurate data flawlessly.

QUICK VIEW:

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Increase productivity and knowledge-share
- Create opportunities for innovation within the organisation
- Find a scalable, robust and user-friendly ERP system
- Reduce ongoing costs

RESULTS

- Improved alignment of business departments
- Increased productivity through streamlined processes
- Provided more ways to do business
- Positive feedback from staff

Thatcham Research already had an ERP system in place but due to a complicated implementation process had failed to get buy-in from staff, consequently the system was ineffective at bringing the business together.

A team including representatives from the finance and IT departments got together to review their needs as an organisation and therefore what they would be looking for in a new system to meet those needs.

Working smarter

With so much valuable insight and information within the organisation, it was important that individuals and departments were aligned in order that processes resulted in maximum productivity and that knowledge-share could be achieved.

From a financial perspective the team were keen to look at ways to innovate online financial transactions and be smarter with purchases. From a sales and marketing view the key objective was to eventually integrate a more effective CRM system.

It was this, coupled with the desire for a user-friendly system that could streamline the entire organsation and increase productivity that led K3 FDS to recommend Sage X3 as the perfect solution.

Scalable functionality

In the consultation process other systems were shown as a demo, but Sage X3 stood out largely due to the amount that came as standard and also because of how scalable the system is.

Scalability was crucial to allow Thatcham Research to roll out functionality over time, developing with the business and preventing the same frustration from staff as they had experienced with previous systems. Thatcham Research had a great deal of knowledge and expertise on reporting and the reporting functionality that already existed within Sage X3 meant they meant they would not have to use and develop expensive reporting tools.

> " We found that Sage X3 was not only flexible to our needs but actually turned out to be the most cost-effective option too."

To top it off, Sage CRM was included in the overall solution, meaning that time and resource would be saved from investing in a separate system as well as the subsequent support and training required.

"Bringing all parts of the business together as well as offering additional functionality as standard meant going with Sage X3 was the easiest and most cost-effective decision". Ruth McRitchie, Financial Director at Thatcham Research and project lead on the implementation of the project says: "There were so many reasons Sage X3 was right for us but the biggest was that it was eminently scalable".

Working together

K3 FDS and Thatcham Research worked together to plan the implementation to ensure success. A dedicated internal team was put together for the project, as well as a full time project manager from the finance department to oversee everything from their side. This complimented the dedicated project manager and additional resources supplied by K3 FDS. Focus groups and workshops were carried out with all relevant staff.

> "K3 FDS advised on each milestone, assigning responsibility on each side for each department. They brought this expertise to the table with ease."

This inclusive working model ensured that staff were informed and consulted with before implementation, greatly increasing the buy-in for the product. It also meant that all departments of the organisation were able to fully understand what they needed beyond the standard reports and what expectation was on them from the process of implementation.

K3 FDS broke down the implementation into individual milestones and assigned responsibilities on each side for each department, this allowed Thatcham Research full clarity before they had even begun. They then worked up a plan with Thatcham Research to look at what the first live stage would involve and what could be enhanced or rolled out thereafter, limiting the amount of work to what was required for each live roll-out.

Preventing pitfalls

This working strategy meant that the team at Thatcham Research could comment as the implementation progressed allowing any potential pitfalls to be dealt with ahead of time and leaving everyone feeling very much part of the solution. It was decided that the first roll-out would major on finance.

> "K3 FDS sat with us from day one to make sure we were happy. The feedback has been really positive and the reporting will make visibility and management reporting easier."

One of the main technical concerns was to ensure that the two systems they were using; a self-developed CRM system and software to manage training schedules, would link seamlessly with Sage X3. The technicians at K3 FDS looked at both of these systems thoroughly to create a plan that would give the greatest opportunity for success.

Stress free implementation

Thatcham Research commented that K3 FDS's service was excellent, making them feel like they were a priority with consistency in advice and a dedicated team that got to know them and their organisation well. Everything worked well and the internal team remarked on how calm everyone was throughout the process – a rarity when implementing software that will affect the business to such a large degree.

There were no big issues and the internal team had organised an incredibly robust project team, motivating continually as well as highlighting the improved capability to each department.

Immediate improvements

Instantly noticeable were the email requests from staff for their expenses and order authorisations, greatly improving speed of delivery. Equally the team could immediately set up automatic monthly payments, something that had not been possible before, and to connect more easily with the CRM system they have in place allowing a better overview of the business.

Extending the system

There is also an appetite to use their own dashboards to interrogate data and look at what other reports could be written to allow them to meet their business objectives more easily. This all means that there is a hugely positive attitude from the entire work force using Sage X3.

What next for Thatcham Research? The next milestone will be to roll out the CRM system within Sage X3, with the help and guidance from K3 FDS the team feel fully equipped to make this as successful as the finance-focused roll out.

WHAT IS SAGE X3?

Sage X3 is a full-service enterprise management software system for mid-market businesses aimed at meeting the most elaborate business processes, while remaining cost-effective, quick to implement and simple to use. With a choice of languages, currencies, enterprises, locations and legislations, Sage X3 offers an efficient, multi-company solution.

Key features:

- Get up and running quickly and easily – Quick to scope, implement and roll out across your business

- Choose the technology that suits you – Work with your existing IT systems

- Manage your global operations easily – Manage multiple businesses across multiple countries

- Implement software that can grow and change with you – Have as few as ten or as many as 2000 users on one system

- Keep things simple for your users – Help your people to make the most of software that's simple to use.

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