



Learning From Peers

e-Business Cases

Best practices amongst European SMEs



European
Commission

e-Business Cases - Learning From Peers

European Foreword

European SMEs represent a major source of entrepreneurial skills and creativity and make an important contribution to economic and social cohesion. They hold the key to innovation and are also emerging as global players, by participating in worldwide production and supply chains. In the challenging race for competitiveness and excellence, where new technologies and innovation play a central role, no European SME can afford to lag behind.

That is why in December 2008 the EU Member States endorsed the European Commission's "Small Business Act" for Europe, to help SMEs succeed in our increasingly globalised world. Among the means to achieve this is through the improved integration and innovative use of Information and communication technology (ICT). ICT is the most important driver of innovation and competitiveness. However, the potential of ICT-enabled innovation and new business models is still under-exploited by European SMEs.

SMEs are often inspired and led to pursue their e-Business transformation by peers' and competitors' ICT experiences. Concrete, well documented and plausible success stories of those who dared to do it first, are therefore ideal material for inspiring and guiding SMEs towards a more innovative attitude. That is why DG Enterprise and Industry launched this project to collect and disseminate best e-Business practices among European SMEs.

The case studies presented in the portal do not offer examples which can simply be duplicated unchanged. The optimal solution for each enterprise lies in a strategic ICT policy approach that should take into account the particular characteristics and business partners of an individual SME, as well as the changing nature of e-Business. Having this in mind, I trust that these case studies will provide excellent material for reflection on how to improve your enterprise's future ICT policy, and I'm sure you will enjoy reading them.

Françoise le Bail
European Commission
Deputy Director General DG ENTR



e-Business Cases - Learning From Peers

Credits

Booklet

This booklet summarises the results of the “e-Business cases – Learning From Peers” project, jointly conducted by P eriscope and Adetef, through a service contract with the European Commission, Enterprise and Industry Directorate general (n  SI2.449074), within the e-Business Support Network (eBSN) framework.

The objective is to identify good e-Business practices among European SMEs in the field of ICT, and publish the top 50 in every official European language.

The present booklet aims at promoting modern management practices in the field of e-Business in Europe.

This is the English edition with Gaelic and Maltese supplements.

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e-Business Cases - Learning From Peers

Executive summary and thanks

This booklet presents the top 50 SME e-Business cases, from among 400 e-Business cases collected in the 27 European countries with the invaluable help of a network of coordinators listed on pages 61-63. These cases were selected using a rating method based on four main criteria: innovation, impact, ease of transfer and clear return on investment.

200 cases were selected for the web of which 82 were chosen for the booklets, including 48 “core cases” translated into every European language and 34 other “national cases” published in the national pages of some of the 23 booklets. These 200 words summaries are just a sample of the e-Business cases available in English on the websites <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e-bsn> and www.epme.eu

A widget has been developed to help select a case in any given language on an appropriate European website. For each case in the booklet, useful information is given in a header about its main characteristics. Three tables of content make it possible to find a case easily by country, economic sector or technology.

A smart tag has been included at the end of the booklet, to find cases on the web from a mobile phone or another device.

We are grateful to all the coordinators who have contributed to this booklet as well to all the 400 entrepreneurs who have paved the way for new e-Business practices and who are helping all of us learn from our peers in the field of e-Business.

Alain Ducass, head of the Digital Economic Affairs Department at Adetef
Michel Declunder, CEO of PÉRISCOPE

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Tables by economic sector and technology

• Economic sector



Agriculture and



Industry:

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Clothing & design:	p. 9, 42, 55
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Engineering & system:	p. 17



Services:

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B2B - Services to industries:	p. 8, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 45, 50, 56, 59
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• Technology

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Pictograms and abbreviations

General Information

-  Name & surname of contact
-  Phone number
-  Mail
-  Website
-  Number of employees (*micro*:  <10 - *small*:  <50 - *médium*:  <250)
-  Turnover (K€)
-  Tag (*refers to technologies*)

Main sector of activity (*appears on footer*)



Abbreviations

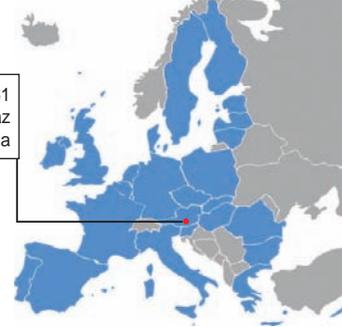
- B2A: Business To Administration
- B2B: Business To Business
- B2C: Business To Commerce
- CRM: Customer Relationship Management
- eCl@ss: Product classification standard
- email: Electronic mail
- ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning
- IP: Internet Protocol
- RFID: Radio Frequency IDentification
- PDA: Personal Digital Assistant (Mobile phone...)

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Kovac Schrott deals with scrap metal and waste and also provides demolition services. It recycles metals and processes hazardous and non-hazardous waste. It needed an easy-to-use system to help it comply with its obligations for environmental protection, workplace health and safety and quality management.

SOLUTION

PROMIS is a web-based tool designed to help SMEs structure their business in an organised and systematic way, leading to de facto compliance. The PROMIS integrated management system organises and stores company documentation to meet international standards.

BENEFITS

The company maintains practically paperless ISO9000, ISO14000 and health and safety system certifications. Annual savings are around €25-30,000. Relationships with local authorities have improved and accidents at work continue to fall.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Initial set-up.** The system demands minimal maintenance effort, but the initial set-up and data input is demanding for an SME working on their own. Fully trained support from PROMIS is on hand to help in this process.
- 2. More insight.** Integrated management not only maintains compliance, but makes business information more accessible and processes more transparent.



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Web B2B

CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Etilux is based in Liège, but 45% of its turnover comes from outside Belgium. A new B2B website was launched to increase sales of stock products and improve customer service. With this new distribution channel, Etilux also hoped to reach new foreign customers.

SOLUTION

The website had to provide access to 6000 products in six languages. By integrating the website with the company's ERP in real time, the solution would provide each customer with the terms and prices they had already negotiated with Etilux.

BENEFITS

Etilux views its website as a new distribution channel to complement traditional channels (e.g. telephone). However, the website offers customers several advantages: management of negotiated terms, order tracking and alternative payment methods.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Website sales are mainly limited to the local market.** Etilux exports to more than 40 countries, but online orders come mainly from Belgium, France and the Netherlands.
- 2. Customers still prefer human contact.** Etilux finds its customers still prefer human contact. The company tries to 'humanise' its website - through improvements such as images of human faces and 'click to call' and 'click to chat' tools - to establish a climate of trust with users.



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Web B2C



CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Quatuor is a small retailer (500m² premises) of contemporary and modern furniture. The shop needed an efficient but inexpensive communication strategy for a highly competitive market. Quatuor decided to develop a strong presence on the internet where there were fewer competitors.



SOLUTION

It created a comprehensive online catalogue to reduce the cost of printed catalogues and enable quick, 'real-time' updates. Now the website delivers a full e-commerce solution.



BENEFITS

Launched in April 2004 with around 300 visitors per month, the Quatuor.be site had more than 30,000 unique visitors per month in 2006. The online shop generates more than 30% of Quatuor's turnover and attracts foreign customers.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Transparency and accuracy of information are key to customer loyalty.**
The website is updated at least daily to maintain customer confidence.
- 2. Usability and code compliance serves the marketing strategy.** Quatuor.be complies with W3C guidelines. This helps to create user-friendly navigation, and makes it easier to update the website and improve its compatibility with search engines.



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Compass produces sterilised meat and meat-and-vegetable products. Its three main product lines are meat pates, sterilised ready meals and sterilised meats. The company wanted to optimise its production capacity and strengthen its customer relationships.



SOLUTION

Compass decided to participate in internet-based reverse auctions held by big chain stores for the production of their private label products. Bids are held online at a specific time. Whilst bidding, Compass can see its current position, but not the prices offered by other bidders. The bidder who offers the lowest price within the allocated time wins the contract.



BENEFITS

Bidding is typically for annual production of top products, so the volume is substantial. During the bidding Compass is able to compare itself to competitors. Winning contracts of this size helps Compass to optimise its production capacity.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Plan your bidding in advance.** Have a strategy on how to estimate your lowest possible bid. Emotions must not lead to cutting prices below the agreed target price.
- 2. Reduce costs.** Compass could use its experience to run reverse auctions with its own suppliers and reduce costs.



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CRM

CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Fractal launched as an online travel agency, but refocused on the business travel sector in 2003. To support its growth without expanding its workforce, the company invested in process automation and a client education program.

SOLUTION

Automated back office applications include advanced reporting, sales force support and business intelligence. Fractal has a combined CRM and call centre system. Demand for client workshops has far exceeded expectations.

BENEFITS

From CZK70 million in 2003, sales reached CZK250 million in 2008 without any external investment. Nearly 90% of sales are made online. Customer loyalty is high: the monthly acquisition conversion rate sometimes reaches almost 30%.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Back office automation improves productivity and customer service.** Staff are not needed for run-of-the-mill transactions so they are more available for customer service and solving client problems.
- 2. Interact with customers and build loyalty.** Fractal's customer workshops are extremely popular and clients appreciate their personal nature, interactivity and learning how to use Fractal's services more effectively.



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RFID

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Avus Services, a German IT company, develops Java-based software and implements server infrastructures for small and medium companies. The company has diversified into RFID technology to differentiate itself from its competitors. It wanted to develop a cash-free payment system for company canteens.

SOLUTION

In partnership with porcelain manufacturer Bauscher, Avus Services incorporated an RFID transponder into canteen chinaware. Payment for meals is fully automated because no-one is required to man a cash register.

BENEFITS

The RFID system means that canteens can operate as normal and staff do not need training. The system has a return on investment after 24 to 30 months. Decreased costs allows companies to have higher margins or lower prices in their canteens.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. RFID can have a quick return on investment.** RFID can make labour intensive processes much more efficient. The return on investment can often be within two years.
- 2. RFID is 'invisible' technology.** Staff do not need training on how to use the RFID technology. Often business processes can stay as they were.



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116



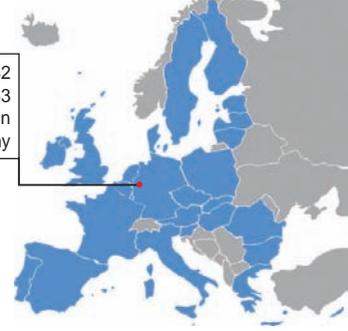
30 000 K€



Web B2A



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

P.J. Dahlhausen manufactures and distributes surgical instruments. Its product range includes more than 3 500 items for hospital use. Increased pressure on costs and efficiencies in the healthcare sector mean more and more hospital orders are being processed electronically.



SOLUTION

Dahlhausen set up a central product database that linked up to the two transaction platforms used by hospitals for e-procurement. It also introduced an electronic communication system for orders, order confirmations, dispatch notifications and invoices.



BENEFITS

Dahlhausen has made significant cost and efficiency savings with the introduction of its central product database and electronic messaging. Collaboration with customers has been improved and the company says it has saved €150,000 on printing costs.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Allow for exceptional costs.** Creating a central data system for the first time costs both time and money; this should be planned into any budget and schedule.
- 2. Cooperation gives an advantage.** The development of the new system required close cooperation between Dahlhausen and its client base, giving it a clear competitive advantage.



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Empur specialises in surface heating systems. The company used several databases and software tools to update and retrieve information, but this often led to a duplication of data. As the company grew the system could no longer cope.

SOLUTION

A product database was implemented for central data management. Electronic catalogues can now be generated as easily as printed catalogues. EDI was also introduced for order confirmation, delivery notes, the reference number of the dispatch unit and invoicing.

BENEFITS

EDI has meant quicker and more efficient order processing; orders can be transferred within 15 minutes. Setting up the new systems cost €138,000, but their introduction has reduced operating costs by around €80,000 a year.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Allow for admin.** Restructuring systems can take a lot of administrative work, but once the ground work has been done, data can be retrieved much more quickly and economically.
- 2. Look out for funding opportunities.** Empur's project received funding from Germany's Federal Ministry of Economics, which wanted to promote e-Business to small companies.



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 Intranet



CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

GreenCare makes industrial and domestic cleaning products. Legal compliance means it has to make information on the transportation and storage of its products available to its clients, because some goods are potentially hazardous. The company wanted to be able to provide this data electronically.



SOLUTION

The implementation of a database means that data about hazardous substances are available centrally; everyone has access to the same information. Trade customers can also access the master data and transfer it to their own software. This means that orders and invoices can also be processed electronically.



BENEFITS

The standardisation of GreenCare's technical processes have increased its competitiveness and reduced operating costs; the eradication of manual data entry means errors no longer occur.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Work closely with partners.** The extensive data mapping of all its products required GreenCare to cooperate closely with the other project partners.
- 2. Keep an eye on costs.** The cost of converting to the new system was higher than GreenCare anticipated; careful budgeting is important to produce a good return on investment.

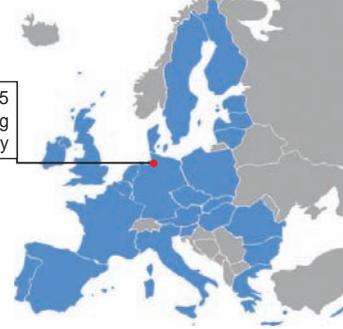


Krause Meat

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Krause Meat is a meat processor, cutting and portioning a variety of meats into steak and barbecue products for the food retail sector. The company defines itself on the quality of its products and wanted to make its business processes more efficient and further increase customer satisfaction.

SOLUTION

The company decided to participate in a project to pilot an RFID system complying with the EPCglobal standard. This made it possible to use RFID across the supply chain to track 15,000 shipping crates. RFID readers logged each crate as it was received or issued along the supply chain.

BENEFITS

For Krause Meat, the use of RFID (which achieved near 100% readability) helped to prevent the dispatch of incorrect loads through automatic checking and verification. It also cut down on printing costs for shipping labels.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Seek RFID systems using open standards.** By standardising RFID information, the technology can be used by all partners in a supply chain – and costs can be shared.
- 2. Transparency and traceability.** RFID makes it easy to see the location of shipping and packaging equipment. This makes it easier to use equipment more efficiently.

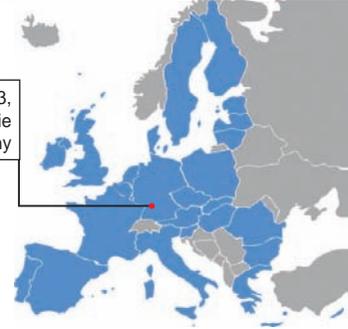


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ERP / Intranet



CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Renner produces pumps and filtering devices, often to individual specifications. Customer enquiries were processed manually, but the company wanted to introduce an automated system to free up staff for other tasks.



SOLUTION

The personal information management (PIM) system allows sales staff (who need product data for tender preparation) to have access to data from any work station. Renner can also add its products to the electronic purchasing systems of its customers, as well as reaching new customers via purchasing portals.



BENEFITS

With the master data management system Renner can generate spare parts lists and data sheets for around 6,000 products. It can also give product options in several languages at the push of a button and has improved the presentation of product data.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Outsource certain tasks.** The first step was to cleanse existing data, which was time consuming, so Renner got help from external service providers.
- 2. Inform staff of goals.** The company had to educate staff that the changes would become an integral part of the business' day-to-day running.



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Simon Hegele is a German transport and logistics company, but operates internationally as an outsourcing specialist for challenging logistical services. The company wanted to replace its manual system for packaging requests because it was time consuming and led to mistakes.

SOLUTION

The company decided to implement RFID-based kanban technology to streamline and automate the system.

BENEFITS

The company now operates just-in-time replenishment processes and makes more effective use of its storage space. The system has eliminated double readings of requests. The return on investment for each kanban board is less than one year.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Automation reduces errors.** The RFID-based kanban system has totally eliminated the problem of duplicate entries on the manual system.
- 2. Quick return on investment.** The initial outlay in new technology can be recouped rapidly in significant cost savings.



NITA e-Invoicing



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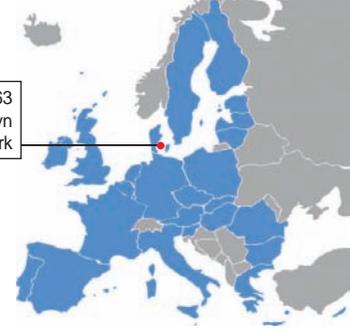
 www.en.itst.dk

 --

 -- K€

 Web B2A

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

The remit of the Danish National IT and Telecoms Agency is to drive the 'digitalisation' of Denmark. The Agency wanted to help Danish businesses, most of which are small, implement effective e-Business solutions, especially to comply with public procurement and e-invoicing legislation.

SOLUTION

Providing an open source infrastructure and basic software for e-Business, the 'NemHandel' initiative allows private companies of any size to participate in electronic supply chains and other e-Business interactions.

BENEFITS

Although no formal marketing activities have been carried out as yet, some 8000 businesses are already using the NemHandel infrastructure. Commercial IT and software vendors are integrating it into products and services.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. E-Business depends on interoperability.** Document and data exchange must be based on open international standards. NemHandel makes this easy.
- 2. Product development works best with communication.** NemHandel is based on business needs gathered through open dialogue with public authorities, trade associations and IT vendors.



Disfrimur

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Disfrimur specialises in the transportation of frozen and refrigerated goods. To provide a competitive, high quality service, it needed a technology that could guarantee the traceability of merchandise, remotely control temperatures in its trailers, and demonstrate an uninterrupted cold chain.

SOLUTION

The Cold-Trace service, proposed by Easytech, is an on-board PDA-based system. It connects via Bluetooth to numerous sensors in the vehicle and to the corporate servers via GPRS. It gives the company regular statistics on service performance and real-time interaction between drivers and fleet managers.

BENEFITS

Remote-controlled pre-cooling saves Disfrimur over €2,000 per driver per year (about 6% of labour costs). Optimisation of routes and cargo could save as much as €1,600 per truck per year.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Consider tracking technologies.** GPS-based tracking is now relatively straightforward to implement, and offers competitive advantage and productivity gains in many sectors.
- 2. Continuous monitoring cuts claims.** Cold-Trace has cut the number of claims against Disfrimur because potential problems are avoided in real time. Customer relations have improved.



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Micuna manufactures and distributes children's furniture and childcare articles. It has recorded a significant growth in turnover over the past few years. However, the company was suffering because its traditional manual methods of warehouse management could not deal with such growth.

SOLUTION

The company used an off-the-shelf warehouse management system with RFID technology to manage and monitor stock levels. A virtual private network (VPN) with radio-based technology was used to improve communications between the group's separate manufacturing and warehouse sites.

BENEFITS

Delivery times have fallen from 15 days to five days thanks to the streamlining of operations. Process automation has reduced errors in product delivery.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Choose the right tools.** Micuna opted for a straightforward, easy-to-use warehouse management tool, but it had to change its VPN from ADSL to a radio-based network.
- 2. Keep improving the system.** The project still needs tweaking as problems arise, but this improves the warehouse management system's functionality.



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Nexica is an IT services provider offering managed services across security, ICT support, application hosting and business continuity. The company wanted to reduce power consumption and increase space in its data centre, without having an impact on service quality.



SOLUTION

Nexica selected IBM's Blade Centre technology which helped the company to consolidate its IT environment and establish uniformity. The company has so far adopted more than 100 IBM Blade Centre HS21 servers and expects to further increase this number.



BENEFITS

The IBM Blade Centre has increased space and reliability, and allows for easier server maintenance. It has also improved Nexica's resource efficiency and quality of services, while increasing customer satisfaction.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Consider technical specifications.** The electrical and cooling requirements of data centres can be high; only specifically designed data centres can host Blade Centre technology.
- 2. Practice what you preach.** Nexica encourages its clients to adopt new technologies; it also wanted to be seen at the forefront of technological improvements.

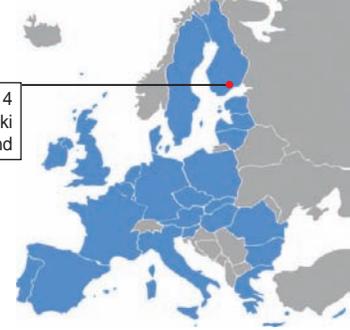


AEL Oy

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

AEL is the largest provider of further education and training for Finnish workers in industry and commerce. It runs more than 2,300 training events a year. The company decided to use its strong market position to offer distance learning and training via the internet.



SOLUTION

AEL set up an e-learning platform, KnowPaths, in cooperation with technical partner Prowledge Oy. KnowPaths is a comprehensive and ready-to-use learning tool, which uses multimedia, hypertext and simulation models and can even be set up to provide tailor-made programs.



BENEFITS

By offering this sort of training, AEL is increasing its online presence and services. AEL has a strong offering because it can supply training to end users at their convenience. Clients do not have any travel or accommodation costs.



LESSONS LEARNED

- The price of quality.** The best online courses are expensive to produce, so mass uptake is important if they are to remain a relatively low cost alternative to the end user.
- Ensure topic suitability.** AEL spent time identifying which topics can be properly taught through e-learning. Instructor-led learning cannot always be replaced.



Cybermassif

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Web B2A



CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Cybermassif was established in 2002 to drive the uptake of ICT in businesses in the Massif Central and ensure the region benefited from new technologies. It offers advice and support through a network of 14 resource centres.



SOLUTION

The Cybermassif association demonstrates the benefits of ICT to businesses and supports them in implementation projects. It acts as a 'go-between' to help companies access national and European programmes and finance. It also organises and participates in numerous ICT diffusion projects.



BENEFITS

Cybermassif has set up special programmes to drive e-commerce and the uptake of solutions in the trade and tourism sectors. Its Cybermassif 2010 programme focuses on security issues. More than 9000 companies have used its services.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Uptake of ICT is never guaranteed.** The benefits of ICT have to be demonstrated. Small businesses particularly need to be convinced and supported to invest in new technology.
- 2. Coordinated action.** Cybermassif play an important role as a single point of contact for businesses that would struggle to access otherwise fragmented ICT initiatives.



ISI

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 50
 12 000K€ Other



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

ISI is an engineering firm that designs and installs specialised machinery for clients in a wide variety of industry sectors. The company wanted to differentiate itself from competitors by helping them to collaborate in design projects and monitor their progress more closely.

SOLUTION

IT provider PI3C implemented a collaborative working environment on its application service provider (ASP) platform. The new work methodology encourages online exchanges between ISI and its clients and ensures that projects have a full audit trail.

BENEFITS

ISI has used the interactive platform to shorten the product development cycle. Contractors know they can access confidential, real-time data from anywhere. Travel costs have been reduced.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Less travel, more work.** Online collaboration tools can help businesses work more closely with their clients, improve outcomes, yet reduce the amount of travel.
- 2. Choose a provider carefully.** PI3C provided more than software. It also supported ISI in change management and offered to optimise its tools for different teams.

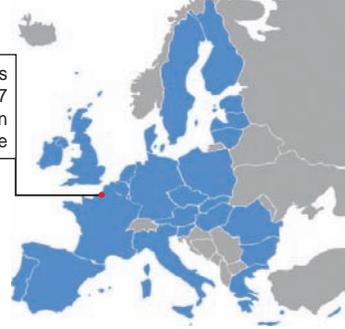


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Web B2C

CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Paris-Normandie is a regional French newspaper, now part of the Hersant media group. In 2008 it decided to embrace new media channels and hired local journalist, blogger and technophile Sébastien Bailly to lead the project.

SOLUTION

The newspaper decided to set up a Twitter account, a so-called 'microblogging' service that takes posts of no more than 140 characters sent via the web or SMS texts. The publication also increased its visibility and connections on social networking sites like FaceBook.

BENEFITS

Articles mentioned in Twitter posts are read more than others. Use of Twitter gives the publication a young and dynamic image and makes it closer and more responsive to its readers.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Twitter takes time.** Using Twitter requires new ways of working and an investment of time and effort to find relevant and timely subjects for 'tweets'.
- 2. Twitter is now mainstream.** The rapid adoption of Twitter has quickly made this a mainstream tool. Even if benefits aren't obvious, it is probably better to be 'in' than 'out'.



Relais Saint Roch



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 Web B2C / e-marketing

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Relais Saint Roch is a luxurious castle hotel in the little known Lozère département of Languedoc-Roussillon, France. With tourism to the area in decline, the hotel wanted to use its website to attract more customers and build up a customer database.

SOLUTION

It took just three months and a few thousand euros to add an online 'slot machine' to the website. Visitors can play and enter a prize draw for a free stay at the castle – in exchange for their contact details. Players are also invited to subscribe to the hotel's newsletter.

BENEFITS

The hotel now has a database of more than 15,000 contacts. Prize winners often stay for extra nights, so generate income for the hotel. Since launching its game, the hotel's turnover has grown by 5–10%.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Not just fun.** Online games can give a big return on investment by attracting website visitors, increasing traffic and moving the website higher in search engine results.
- 2. Remember customer service.** A game may attract website visitors, but a telephone call goes a long way to converting interest into sales.



Rêves de Fées

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 Web B2C / e-marketing

CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Rêves de Fées (Dreams of Fairies) began life as two home decoration stores located in Val de Marne, France. But the business realised that online trading had more potential for growth. The company wanted to launch a webstore, but only had a limited budget.

SOLUTION

Rêves de Fées uses an e-commerce solution developed by Store Factory. The platform powers a professional looking webstore with a range of payment options and features to improve quality of service and customer loyalty. The platform is provided for a fixed monthly fee.

BENEFITS

Monthly turnover from the webstore now exceeds €45,000 – higher than the combined income from the two physical stores. With 45,500 unique visitors each month, the site has customers in France, Belgium and Switzerland.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Allow plenty of time.** The structure and content of the site was quickly agreed, but it took two months to input all the necessary product data and content.
- 2. Find a flexible provider.** Store Factory responds quickly to queries from Rêves de Fées and has added new features and functionality to its platform at the request of its client.



Rue du Commerce



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Rue du Commerce is the leading online retailer of high tech goods in France. Renowned as an innovator, the company decided to access a new niche and release a mobile application for consumers to compare and buy products on mobile devices.

SOLUTION

The IT firm Anywhere Business developed a J2ME mobile application that lets shoppers browse and compare products, fill a shopping basket, receive special offers and purchase products. The application is compatible with more than 170 mobile devices.

BENEFITS

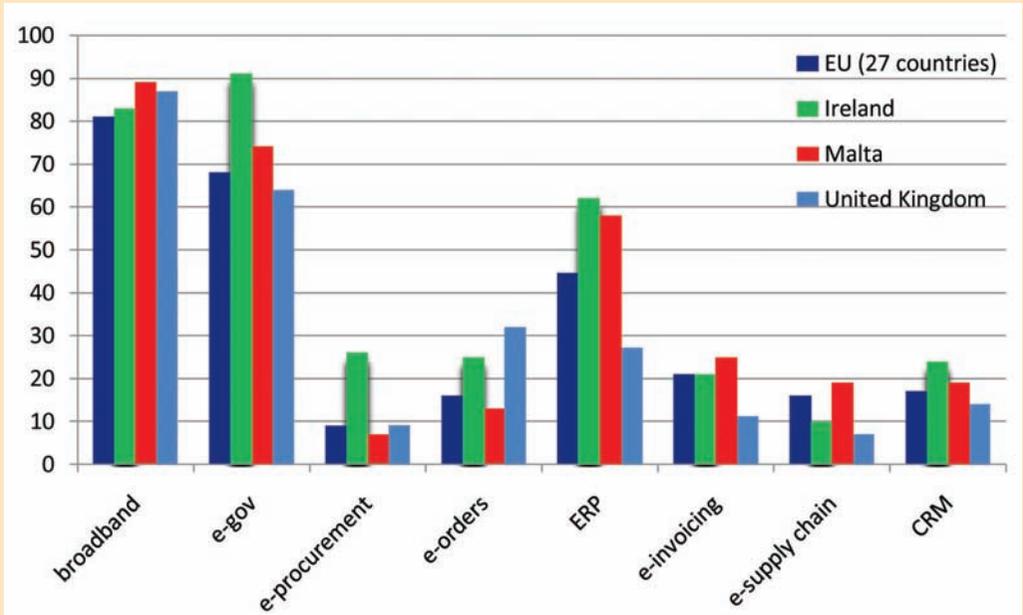
The application is another demonstration of the company's innovation and marks an early move into a growing retail channel. Rue du Commerce is able to monitor the behaviour of mobile customers and position and price products accordingly.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Full convenience.** The mobile application is an example of a solution that is usable any time, anywhere and on any device.
- 2. Mobile is the future.** Although sales volumes via mobile devices may be small today, this is likely to grow into the biggest sales channel for many retailers.



% of enterprises using advanced e-Business services*



- broadband** having a broadband connection
- e-gov** using Internet for interaction with public authorities
- e-procurement** using Internet for submitting a proposal in a public electronic tender system to public authorities
- e-orders** having received orders on-line
- ERP** using applications for integrating internal business processes
- e-invoicing** sending and/or receiving e-invoices
- e-supply chain** enterprises whose business processes are automatically linked to those of their suppliers and/or customers
- CRM** using software solutions, like CRM to analyse information about clients for marketing purposes

*These statistics are based on Eurostat 2008 survey. They cover all enterprises with 10 or more full-time employees, having their main activity in specific NACE sections (see epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu)

This page tells about the main partners of the United Kingdom given that the Irish and Maltese partners are presented in the Gaelic and Maltese section



UK Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS, previously DTI)

Building a dynamic and competitive UK economy by: creating the conditions for business success; promoting innovation, enterprise and science; and giving everyone the skills and opportunities to succeed. To achieve this we will foster world-class universities and promote an open global economy.

WEB: www.bis.gov.uk



The National B2B Centre, International Digital Laboratory, The University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL

Provide expert, impartial e-Business advice and support to growing businesses to enable them to successfully adopt and exploit technology, creating real business value from the Internet.

Telephone: 02476 574 384 **WEB:** www.nb2bc.co.uk



Business Link

Business Link is a free business advice and support service, available online and through local advisers.

Telephone: 02076 373 845 **WEB:** www.businesslink.gov.uk



AccreditUK

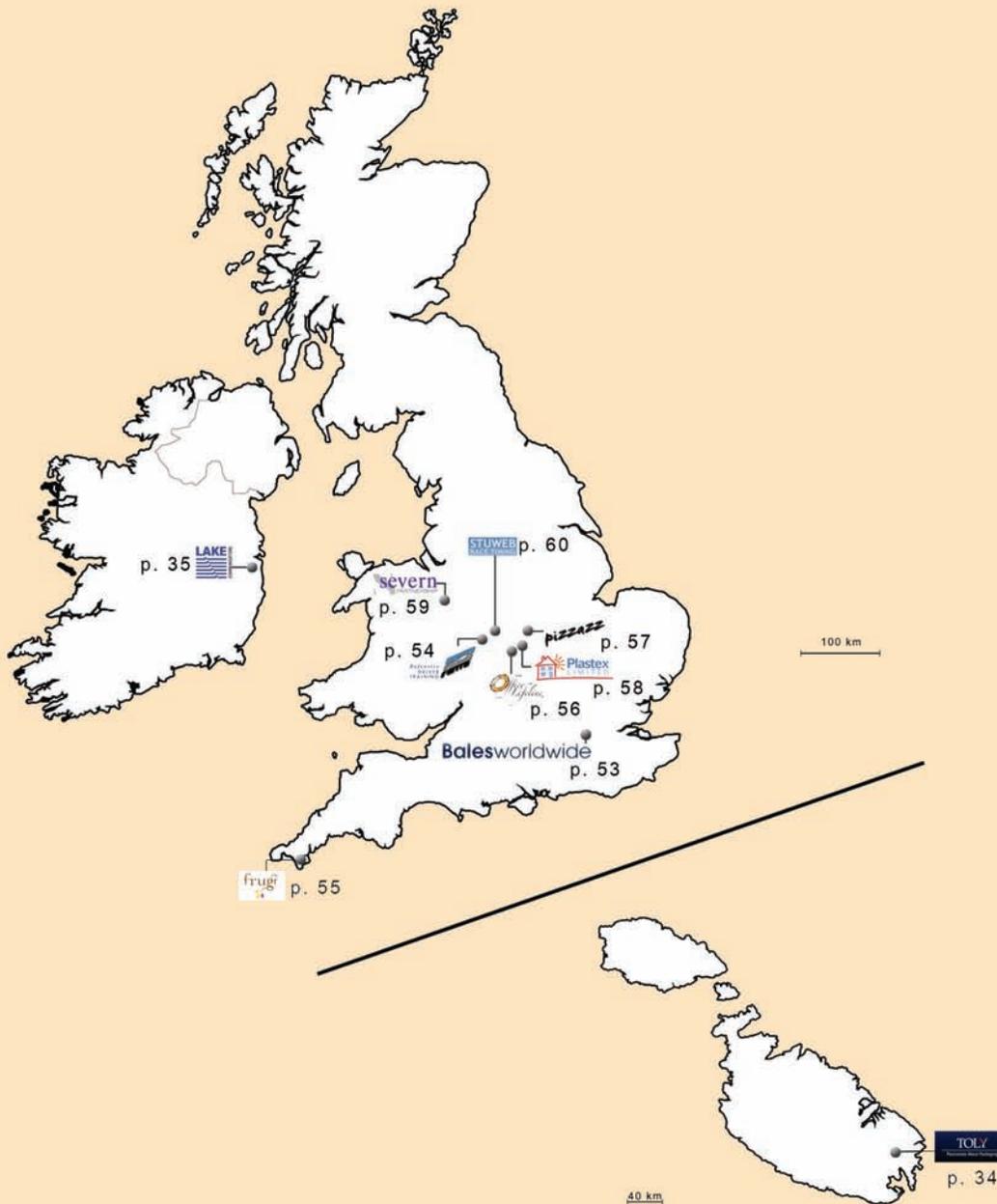
Hundreds of ICT Suppliers are enhancing their long term future with the help of Accredit UK. With this highly-regarded badge of excellence they are standing out from their competitors and continually improving their business

AccreditUK, Westwood House, Westwood Business Park, Coventry, CV4 8HS

Telephone: 02476 496217 **WEB:** www.accredituk.com

e-Business Cases - Learning From Peers

Map



e-Business Cases - Learning From Peers

National foreword

Dear SME manager and policy maker,

We are grateful to the European Commission and the Enterprise and Industry Directorate general for allowing this compendium of e-Business cases to be published in English as well as in the 22 other European languages. Its “Learning from Peers” initiative gives us an opportunity to develop e-Business practices through real-life testimonials from across the EU.

For England, Ireland and Malta, you will find:

- ICT key indicators from Eurostat, to get an idea of the national situation in the field of e-Business (p.30-31);
- several national e-Business cases with a map showing where the cases come from (p.32, 34-35);
- a special page including the main national contacts for SMEs with special e-Business skills (p.31).

We hope you find this helpful and we wish you an enjoyable read.

Martin King-Turner



	EU	UK	Ireland	Malta
Population	497 455 000	61 186 000	4 401 000	410 000
GDP per capita	100%	117%	144%	78%
Labor productivity per employee	100%	112%	138%	89%
SMEs density / 1000 inhabitants	40	26	21	n/a
e-Business readiness index	26,46	27,89	33,20	n/a
Rank in the EU	/	10th	3rd	n/a

Toly Products



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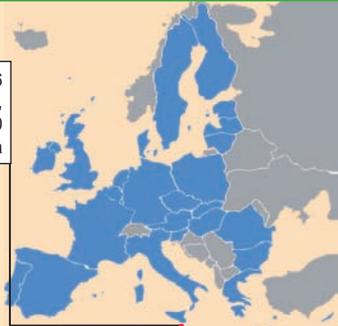
300



17 875 K€



BLB06
Bulebel Industrial Estate,
Zejtun, ZTN 3000
Malta



CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Toly Products is a luxury packaging manufacturer in the cosmetics, fragrance and skin care industries. The company needed a specialised CRM system to improve information flows between the manufacturing plant and sales offices, and thereby respond more quickly and accurately to customer needs.



SOLUTION

As it was already using Lotus Notes and Domino systems, Toly decided to build a central Lotus Domino database. The company also introduced standardised information flows to create an audit trail of all correspondence between different sales offices.



BENEFITS

Toly staff can collate and analyse data rapidly, compare performance at different sales offices, and significantly reduce both workload and costs. This has cut administrative costs and also contributed to improvements in performance.



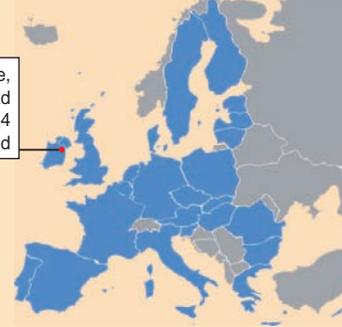
LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. A custom-built application gives more flexibility.** In the long term, it is also cheaper than customising a bought solution.
- 2. Starting from scratch takes time.** However, a bespoke solution is likely to meet the needs of end-users more effectively.

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Lake Communications supplies wireless and wired communications products for the residential and small office markets. British Telecom, its biggest customer, wanted more control and automation of the supply chain.

SOLUTION

Lake has integrated its ERP with its manufacturing and distribution partners so that the entire ordering, manufacturing and delivery steps are fully automated and trackable.

BENEFITS

Orders can be tracked through to delivery, helping to improve customer service. Lake now operates 'just in time' manufacturing, eliminating stock storage costs. Sales and admin staff are more productive and spend their time on more rewarding, value-adding activities.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Combined effort, joint rewards.** Supply chain integration requires input from all partners. This can slow down the process, but collaboration often also improves business relationships.
- 2. Automation improves productivity and service.** Staff are freed from repetitive admin tasks. Real-time information helps to deal faster with customer queries.

Tarlant Champagne



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Web B2C / e-marketing



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Tarlant is a French wine and champagne producer. Competition in this sector is relentless and the well known company wanted to differentiate itself with a worldwide publicity campaign, but without having to make a heavy investment in marketing.



SOLUTION

In 2001 the company launched a multi-lingual website and in 2004 it also began a Champagne blog. The cost of the blog is a mere €149 each year.



BENEFITS

With minimal investment Tarlant has seen an increase in customer loyalty and is more in touch with the consumer. The website and blog (which has around 400 visitors per day) help the company inform and captivate its customers.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Websites and blogs are complementary.** A website should contain all the essential information of a company, its products and contact details. A blog lets a company be more personal and share its passion.
- Blogs keep customers.** A website increases market exposure, but a blog makes existing customers more loyal.



Livanis Publishing



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 CRM / ERP

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Livanis is a book publisher based in Athens. The company estimates that it holds a share of around 9% of the Greek book market. The field of publishing is intensely competitive with around 500 publishing houses in Greece, so increasing efficiencies and reducing costs is crucial to remaining competitive.

SOLUTION

The company implemented ERP and CRM systems in 2006, which automated many internal procedures including payroll, production management, financial management, human resources and customer support. It also improved coordination and cooperation within the company.

BENEFITS

The company is now observing a return on its investment in a range of ICT solutions. It saw a 15% reduction in the cost of production in the first part of 2007.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Be an early adopter.** Livanis implemented many ICT changes early on, allowing it to reap the benefits before many of its competitors – giving it an advantage in the market place.
- 2. Take advice.** The company implemented its ERP and CRM projects in conjunction with other changes across the business, so it brought in consultants to help and advise.

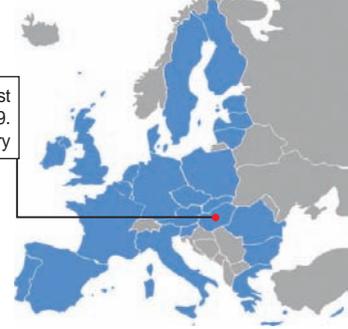


Budapest Wine

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

The Budapest Wine Society (BWS) has 10 retail stores and supplies Hungarian and international wines to individuals and via a wholesale arm to supermarkets, restaurants, hotels and caterers. It also organises wine tasting and tours. The company wanted to use the internet to offer its customers a valuable online service.

SOLUTION

The online store was developed internally. It offers a wide range of payment and delivery options, including picking up purchases from a local BWS shop. A stock management system makes sure the wines people order are in stock at a shop.

BENEFITS

Since launching the web shop turnover has risen by 40–50% every year. Around 6000 customers are registered on the website, although many more people visit. The company now sells and delivers to other EU countries.

LESSONS LEARNED

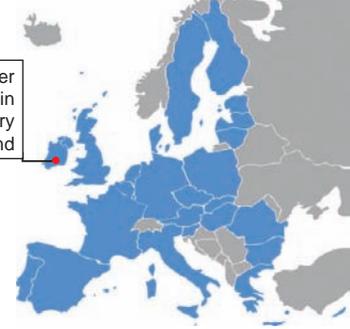
- 1. Multiple channels increase sales.** By offering customers a variety of ways to buy, including an online store, a business can effectively increase its turnover.
- 2. Give customers great service.** The internet provides an opportunity to give customers innovative services that will help them remain loyal.



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Gulliver was formed to develop a centralised tourist information system that could be used by tourist offices across the island of Ireland. It needed advanced databases and rich content and booking systems to power websites to connect the Irish tourism industry with holiday-makers at home and abroad.

SOLUTION

Gulliver's Destination Management System (DMS) provides a rich array of detailed local and theme-based information, special offers and booking facilities for prospective visitors. The GullNet extranet service gives clients (tourist boards, tourism service suppliers etc.) access to booking records and to update information/prices.

BENEFITS

The DMS now powers more than 50 websites and sold over 710,000 bednights in 2004. Marketing initiatives sponsored by Fáilte Ireland are helping to promote websites using Gulliver's technology.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. **One 'size' does *not* fit all.** The DMS powers many websites, but a bottom-up approach is required so that each solution is tailored to meet each site's target audience.
2. **Crafted content.** Website content must engage readers. It is worth using world class content management experts and writers.

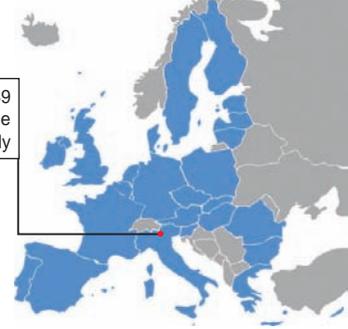


Campus Consulting



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Campus Consulting is a business consultancy firm that helps clients to improve their competitive advantage by making better use of their knowledge and intangible assets. The company decided to use advanced software to improve its analyses and provide clear reports and feedback to clients.

SOLUTION

Two software packages help Campus map, measure and visualise the informal networks between people and departments in an enterprise. Standard office software and business intelligence tools are used to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in a company's organisation and knowledge management.

BENEFITS

The software has helped Campus to speed up its data analysis and provide its clients with clear reports containing concrete recommendations and advice. The quality of Campus' evaluations has improved, with a greater emphasis on future strategies.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Software is just part of a solution.** The organisational and 'motivational' side of a consulting programme is equally crucial to its success.
- 2. Numbers are good.** The software tools allow Campus to provide quantitative and 'objective' evidence and evaluations, lending weight to the credibility of its analyses.



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Web B2C



CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Proced distributes office products to around 8000 customers across Italy. With about 250 suppliers and processing 4000 orders each year, the company's supply chain is complex to manage. Proced decided to use a software solution to automate the way it ordered stock from its suppliers.



SOLUTION

Smarter's lungo platform automates Proced's ordering system. It sends a templated email to suppliers triggered by strict ordering rules related to incoming orders and stock levels. The supplier can read and reply to the email as normal, but Proced's server automatically extracts and processes data from the email.



BENEFITS

Proced has gradually reduced the time it spends opening and reading orders and can respond more rapidly to altered orders. The company stores smaller inventories and fulfils orders more quickly. lungo also generates reports for strategic analysis.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Email is easy.** By using email as the primary interface for automation, Proced ensured that its system would be adopted without large investments or much collaboration from the suppliers.
- 2. Free up employees.** Processes like ordering are ideal for automation, freeing up employees to focus on more rewarding activities.



Quality Biella

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Quality Biella mends and staples fabrics and finished garments for several of the many textile firms in the Biella area. It wanted to integrate its information system with suppliers so it would receive advanced notice of incoming work orders to improve its planning and provide clients with progress reports.

SOLUTION

Without changing its existing information system, the company added mapping software to import and export client data and render it into the standardised Moda-ML format. XML files can be sent to, or received from, clients; data in Moda-ML format can even be embedded into emails.

BENEFITS

The company receives notification well before the work is delivered. Managers can plan the next day's work much earlier; staff do not have to stay late and are less stressed. The company has saved the equivalent on one full-time employee.

LESSONS LEARNED

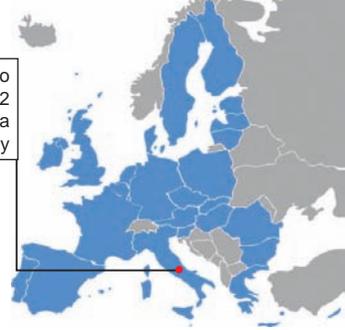
- 1. Wellbeing at work is important.** Telling workers in advance about what they will be doing helps to reduce stress and improve work quality.
- 2. Simple integration using standard formats.** A simple mapping process can help partners integrate their existing information systems using XML with minimal disruption.



Terradue

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Terradue builds distributed spatial data management and high performance collaborative data analysis applications based on grid/cloud computing. The success of its *gridify* solution in the field of earth sciences has encouraged the company to expand into other markets.

SOLUTION

Large amounts of data and processing resources can be shared across geographic and institutional boundaries using *gridify*. Several research projects will help Terradue adapt solutions for new markets.

BENEFITS

Terradue's products have a proven track record in the earth science sector. Its grid and distributed computing systems could help industry to reduce research and development cycles and shorten the time to market for new products.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Invest in research.** Terradue commits 40% of its resources to participating in industrial and pre-competitive research.
- Combat resistance.** Terradue participates in activities to raise awareness, promote grid computing and break down barriers to the new technology.



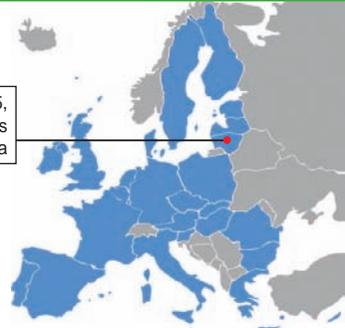
Terra Animalis

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eCl@ss

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Terra Animalis, better known as KIKA, is a leading retailer in the pet care sector. Due to its success and growth, the company found that its inefficient, labour-intensive and paper-based warehouse systems were a bottleneck in its operations, affecting sales, costs and profitability.

SOLUTION

The company introduced the Vision warehouse management system (WMS) from Equinox. The system uses barcodes to control and log all warehouse activities from receiving stock to shipping orders. The layout of the warehouse was redesigned for more effective storage and to optimise the movement of goods.

BENEFITS

The accuracy of warehouse picking is now over 99% – much higher than the industry average. Operational performance increased by 30% during the first few months of using the WMS system. More than 400 items can be picked in under four hours.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. ICT is essential for full control of warehouse operations.** All staff activity and movements of goods are automatically tracked; managers can immediately access information about the inventory.
- 2. Efficiency is grounded in the real world.** A WMS must be complemented with facilities laid out for optimised operations.



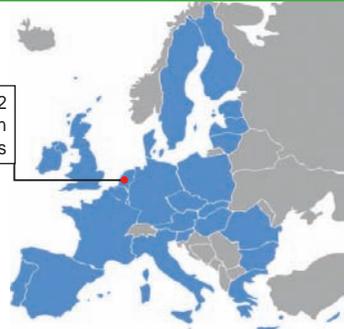
De Jong & Roos BV

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 15 000 K€

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

De Jong & Roos is a wholesaler, supplying fastenings, technical equipment and other products related to industry and construction companies. The company wanted a system that would reduce mistakes in customer orders, save the company time and would integrate into the construction industry supply chain.

SOLUTION

The company reengineered its business processes and adopted the unique product identification system developed by GS1. The wholesaler now uses XML to standardise orders from its webstore and product information in an electronic catalogue.

BENEFITS

Orders via the company's website take just 30 seconds to cross check, saving up to 105 hours each week. The electronic system has reduced the number of incorrect orders, saving the company the time and costs involved in dealing with returned goods.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Uniform article codes reduce mistakes.** A standardised cataloguing system can save a company time and money, automate back office functions and let companies integrate their systems with others in the supply chain.
- 2. Small companies fear transparency.** The large number of small construction firms makes it difficult to build the critical mass necessary for supply chain automation. Companies fear that standardisation encourages clients to compare prices. In reality, they just want ordering to be faster and more accurate.





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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Sadpol is one of the largest European producers and wholesalers of soft fresh berries. It employs a small number of permanent staff, but seasonal employee numbers can reach 3000+. The need for a computerised system became clear when the company was unable to efficiently control and co-ordinate fruit picking during the summer.

SOLUTION

The solution was a quick and reliable input method, using bar code scanners to eliminate manual data entry. Fruit and worker data is entered in the field and wirelessly transmitted to a central server for processing.

BENEFITS

The system enables real-time monitoring and precise recording of the output of all field workers and the quality, quantity and location of picked fruit. Wages are accurately calculated and paid without delay.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. The human factor is important.** People, especially in traditional labour-intensive production firms, tend to be reluctant towards new ICT tools. They need to be properly and patiently trained.
- 2. Bar codes save time and money.** Bar code scanners are user friendly, easy to operate and minimise the need for training.



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Web B2C / ERP

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Żabka is a chain of 2000 small convenience retail stores in Poland and the Czech Republic. It offers food and other goods in town centres and busy residential areas. Adopting a novel business model, it aimed to use ICT to centralise operations, procurement and logistics, providing economies of scale to its network of stores.



SOLUTION

Żabka adopted a vendor managed inventory (VMI) model to facilitate a seamless information flow and efficient inventory management. Every outlet submits data to a central database on product sales, stock levels and order volumes. Ordering, logistics and supplier management is performed centrally.



BENEFITS

Information flows automatically in the company network, allowing it to monitor stock in every outlet and optimise ordering and levels of reserve stock. Outlets do not run out of stock, so customer satisfaction is good. Less capital is tied up in reserve stock.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. ICT offers a powerful competitive advantage.** With a novel business model, supported by modern ICT tools, Żabka secured a solid market position and growth.
- 2. ICT deals with the complexities of business processes and supply chain management.** Żabka's system turns multiple linear supply chains into a flexible and efficient supply chain network.

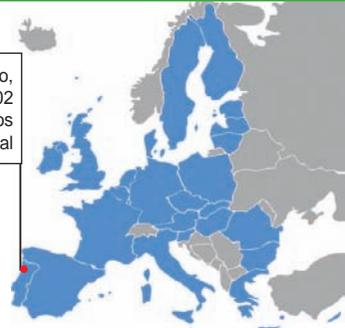


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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Agilus is an IT consultancy that implements business intelligence solutions for public organisations and private companies. Its R&D institute actively participates in European-funded research. Agilus R&D wanted to increase its number of successful proposals for EC Framework Programme projects.



SOLUTION

The Get-In software tool (GiST) builds on the expertise and best practice of organisations from across Europe with high success rates for their research proposals. The tool provides a simple and fast way to write proposals, based on a tried and tested, step-by-step methodology.



BENEFITS

Agilus can now submit up to four project proposals each year. GiST has helped Agilus to increase the quality of its proposals and reduce the time they take to prepare. Soon after implementing GiST, Agilus gained approval for a €1.2 million project.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Follow best practice.** GiST is based on best practice in proposal preparation, so gives its users a much better chance of success.
- Training is vital.** Staff need training on how to use GiST; this must be allowed for when planning the tool's deployment.

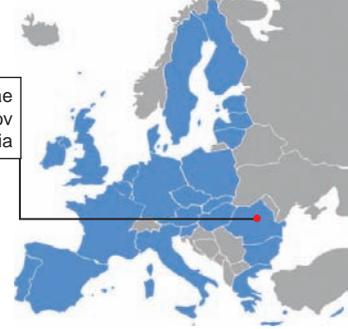


Adama

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 ERP



CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Adama is a real estate developer working in Romania and across Central and Eastern Europe. The complexity of processes and increasing information generated by business operations created the need for a new tool. It became necessary to centrally manage data to give stricter control of all operations.



SOLUTION

Adama decided to replace its old accounting system with an ERP solution, adapted to its business, but able to support rapid development of the company. The solution consists of a finance module, a management module for fixed assets, reporting tools and budgeting instruments.



BENEFITS

The software provides consolidated accounts across multiple companies, countries and currencies and complies with all tax regimes. Management has more control, with a vision of each client and project in terms of cost, revenue and profit.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. ERP gives insight and control.** A consolidated, real-time view of clients, projects and financials across the group helps management to have more control of business operations.
- 2. ERP increases investor confidence.** Up-to-date, accurate information gives investors more confidence in a company's management.



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Web B2C

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

KEPS began as a small Czechoslovakian company, servicing and distributing coin dispensers. With the introduction of the Euro the company wanted to access an expanded market. It needed an ICT solution to raise its profile and communicate better with a larger number of potential clients.

SOLUTION

KEPS deployed a website with a corresponding email address, which was available in several languages. Email make communication fast, efficient and traceable. The website is the company's primary vehicle for promotion, advertisement and sales activities.

BENEFITS

The website has contributed to some of KEPS' 5% annual growth in sales and services, without having to employ more staff. This growth would not be possible without the latest ICT and web technologies.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Smaller companies get bigger benefits.** The latest ICT and web technologies give small and micro SMEs relatively bigger benefits without any increase in employees.
- 2. International potential.** Even the smallest SME can use ICT and web technologies to reach customers outside of their home and local communities – and access an international market.



Adriatic Slovenica

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 257 000 K€ CRM / ERP

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Adriatica Solenica is the second largest insurer in Slovenia. It offers a range policies, including car, health, travel, property, life and pet insurance. Customer data was fragmented and the firm needed to centralise and ‘normalise’ its data and integrate its legacy systems into a new CRM solution.

SOLUTION

IT provider Avtenta integrated a CRM system and call centre management software with the company’s legacy ERP and telephony platforms. The new system provides call centre staff with a full overview (dashboard) of each customer. It manages telephone operations and logs all customer interactions.

BENEFITS

Adriatica Slovenica has improved the way claims and calls are handled between its call centre, branches and agents. Customer satisfaction has increased because the firm responds faster to claims and enquiries.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Do more with data.** Now that the company collects, analyses and uses its data more effectively it is able to provide better customer service. Customer satisfaction has increased.
- 2. Don’t forget training.** The new system meant big changes in work practice for call centre staff, so it was first piloted with five staff before being fully deployed.



Växjö Energi

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 100 000 K€  Web B2A

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Växjö Energi is an energy company owned and operated by the municipality of Växjö in southern Sweden. Växjö – officially the greenest city in Europe – is aiming to reduce its energy consumption by 5% and wanted to develop ways to help households and businesses change their behaviour and cut their consumption.

SOLUTION

Working with IT services firm Logica, Växjö Energi developed EnergiKollen, a web-based tool where end consumers could access data on their electricity consumption. They could also participate in competitions to reduce their consumption over a week.

BENEFITS

About 25% of domestic customers have used EnergiKollen. Customers using the tool are four times more energy efficient than those who have not logged on to the tool. After providing the tool to businesses, around 100 firms signed supply contracts.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Big changes start small.** Trying to get people to change their habits is hard. But an easy-to-use, web-based tool that gives them information to make intelligent decisions is a good start.
- 2. Competitions create a buzz.** Competitions are a great way to engage and interact with customers. But it is not always easy to get them to go on the web to play.

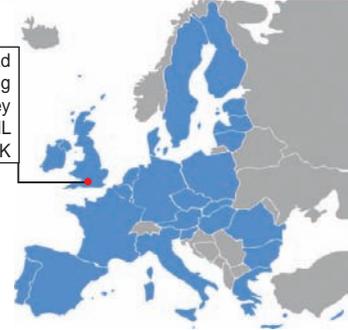


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 e-marketing

CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Bales Worldwide is a tour operator with more than 140,000 customers in the UK. The company wanted to interact with its regular customers more often. Email looked like the perfect channel, using personalised messages to target customers' holiday preferences.

SOLUTION

Installed in a couple of hours, a cross-channel marketing optimisation solution lets Bales build a single view of each individual in its customer database and automatically generate personalised content.

BENEFITS

Opening rates of emails have risen from 8% to 89%; response rates to customer questionnaires rose to between 14% and 22%. Sales have increased by a remarkable 5%.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. User friendliness of the solution is key to adoption by users.** Staff will embrace a new system if they do not need too much prior knowledge, or specialist training.
- 2. Personalised email: a good practice to be retained.** Bales has analysed the success metrics of standard content against personalised content and also inferred content campaigns from the analysis. Personalisation definitely has positive outcomes.

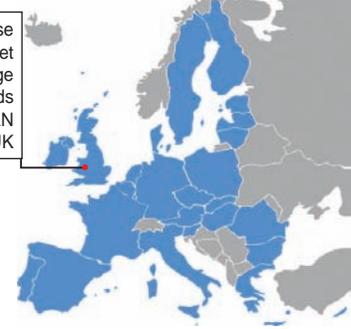


Defensive Driver Training

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 Web B2B / e-marketing

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Defensive Driver Training works with companies, local authorities and government agencies to train their staff to be safer drivers. In 2004 the firm had to make large scale redundancies and slash its £24,000 advertising budget to nothing.



SOLUTION

After meeting a web developer, co-director Paul Beresford used Google's "Pay Per Click" keyword advertising service so Defensive Driver Training would appear with search results when users entered appropriate keywords.



BENEFITS

Within three months, the level of enquiries for driver training had doubled and the conversion rate had trebled. Turnover has increased by £250,000 with the same staffing levels. Annual sales and marketing spend is £12,000 compared to £60,000 previously.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Pay per click advertising is simple to set up.** All Paul had to do was select the appropriate keywords for his advert and set his maximum and daily spend for the campaign.
- 2. E-marketing can cut costs.** Paul used to spend days cold calling and drove 90,000 km each year to follow up leads. Lead times are now also much shorter.

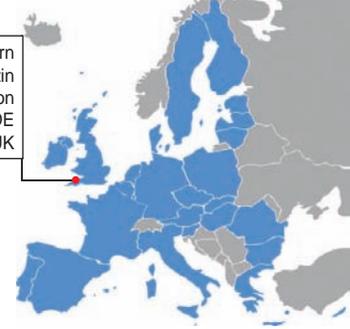


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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Cornwall-based Frugi produces a range of organic clothes for mothers, children and babies. It has had an e-commerce website since it launched in 2004, but its founders wanted to build on its success. They wanted to develop brand loyalty, using Web 2.0 tools and social networking to build a closer relationship with its customers.

SOLUTION

The company uses FaceBook and Twitter, along with its blog, to facilitate two-way, open communication with customers. New and updated content has increased traffic to the main web store. Search engine optimisation has also helped to improve search engine rankings.

BENEFITS

Frugi has direct conversations with its customers, who feel more part of the brand. Customer feedback feeds into the design of new products. A sense of customer ownership and brand loyalty is a strong, competitive proposition.

LESSONS LEARNED

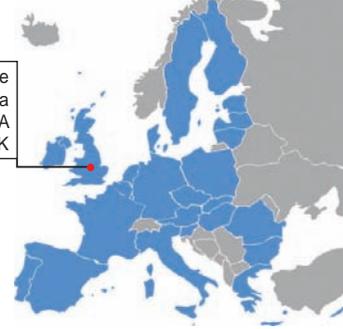
- 1. Web 2.0 is about communication, not technology.** It is important to update and post content regularly and have open, honest discussion with customers.
- 2. Customer-led product design.** Close customer relationships make it easier to get feedback and develop more market-focused products.

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 Web B2B

CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Anna Isaacs launched Office Lifeline in 2007. Her company uses sophisticated collaborative working technology to provide clients located all over the world with personal assistant (PA) services.

SOLUTION

Using e-collaboration tools and services, Anna runs the whole business with a number of integrated applications on her computer to monitor emails, type documents and invoices and manage diaries. VoIP and a private branch exchange (PBX) manage inbound and outbound calls for clients.

BENEFITS

Since starting up, Anna's revenue has doubled and she now has three part-time associates serving a number of high-flying business clients. Office Lifeline can turn around work overnight by using associates located in other time zones.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Powerful e-collaboration is not expensive or difficult to maintain.** Anna uses open source solutions, web services and desktop applications. She received grant funding and collaborated with three local IT firms to get the system up and running.
- 2. Internet technologies make international expansion easy.** The location of contacts makes no difference to Anna. They communicate using web and VoIP systems. She uses PayPal to handle international invoicing.

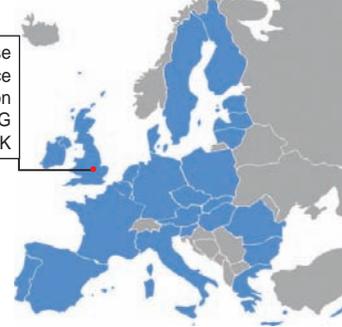


Pizzazz Retail

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Bryn Evans set up his online store – www.pizzazz-retail.co.uk – to sell accessories for readers and musicians. He also sells through an Amazon.co.uk shop. Bryn decided to grow Pizzazz slowly in order to ensure the site was exactly how he wanted it before beginning to market it.

SOLUTION

Pizzazz uses the open source e-commerce system Zen Cart, a free website design and online merchant program that helps companies set up a cost-effective store. Pizzazz also adopted a CRM solution to track client purchases and upsell new products and services to current clients.

BENEFITS

The Amazon shop provides the bulk of sales, but drives customers to the stand-alone Pizzazz online store. CRM improves marketing lists, targeting those most likely to buy. Staff have been recruited and the company is expanding via Amazon's German website.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Open source e-commerce is cheap, but effective.** Using Zen Cart has put Pizzazz in touch with people who can train them to use it, without needing to spend thousands of pounds.
- 2. Use an online marketplace.** The Amazon shop has secured strong sales, but also has a positive impact for Pizzazz's own online store.

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Plastex Ltd makes plastic replacement windows and doors. A manufacturing review highlighted potential cost savings by improving production and using ICT to drive process efficiencies.

SOLUTION

With a £40,000 budget Plastex deployed PDAs for its surveyors. An application guides them through each step of a site survey, checking for consistency and allowing them to make voice notes or capture photos. Plastex also introduced a CRM system which will be integrated with the mobile surveying system.

BENEFITS

A re-organisation of the shop floor, cuts in production waste, and the PDA surveying tool deliver around £50,000 of annual cost savings. Mistakes in surveys have decreased, production and installation is more efficient, and customer satisfaction has improved. Staff are more available for customer support.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Mapping techniques put ICT in context.** ICT solutions must fit within the business and complement other improvement initiatives.
- 2. A good supplier-customer relationship can have surprising results.** ICT suppliers should act as consultants and help companies develop 'best practice' business processes and well as their ICT.

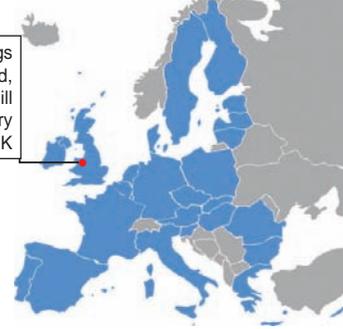


Severn Partnership



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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

The Severn Partnership carries out surveying work in a variety of market sectors. To differentiate its quality of service the business needed to use information more efficiently in business processes. It also wished to reduce the non-chargeable time of staff.

SOLUTION

CRM manages client interactions more effectively and reduces the manual processes within the business. Online collaboration tools (e.g. Google Docs) help staff share information and work remotely. The company also restructured its website to improve search engine performance and reach new markets.

BENEFITS

The CRM system provides an efficient, managed, and structured process, and improved service levels. Electronic costing has reduced the time required to generate quotes, whilst simultaneously increasing accuracy. The new website helps the company tap into new markets.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Examine the business.** All the steps in the business operation were examined and workflows were planned out prior to implementing.
- 2. Use CRM actively and wisely.** Staff use the CRM software as they talk to clients so they know exactly who they are and what work the company has done for them. The data is kept up-to-date, allowing users to access accurate information with ease.

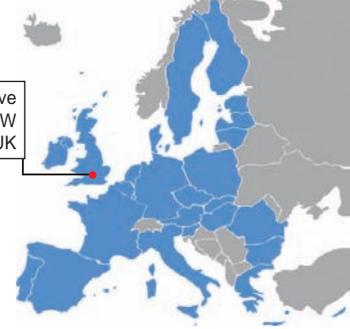


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 RFID

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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

Athlete Stuart Steele set up StuWeb in 1999 to provide organisers of sporting events with the capability to time individual runners accurately, effectively and provide an 'on the day results' service. The company grew rapidly, but in 2006 it lost a contract because it was unable to supply an RFID-based timing system.



SOLUTION

StuWeb implemented an RFID solution within a matter of months, and also gained funding for the project. Now participants are given an ankle tag at registration; the times are recorded via electronic mats around the racing circuit.



BENEFITS

The upturn in business has been rapid. StuWeb has been contacted from across Europe. Stuart has made further investments in equipment and more permanent staff. High traffic to the company website makes advertising revenue a possibility.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. RFID solutions can be implemented quickly.** It took StuWeb just a few months to implement its RFID solution.
- 2. RFID may require a significant capital investment.** Financing the cost of the new technology was difficult, but the implementation was supported by a grant. The long-term benefits and return have far surpassed expectations.



e-Business Cases - Learning From Peers

Koordinatororen - Coordinators - Координатори - Koordinatorer - Coordinadores
Koordinaatorid - Koordinaattoreita - Coordinateurs - Coimhordaitheoiri - Συντονιστές
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Tim BARTRAM, *Prozeus*



Caterina BERBENNI-REHM, *Promis*



Bruno BOUTTEAU, *Independent Internet Professional*



Michel DECLUNDER, *Périscope*



Alain DUCASS, *Adetef*



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e-Business Cases - Learning From Peers

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Illias Vlachos, *Agricultural University of Athens*



Dana ELEFThERIADOU, *eBSN Project Officer*

e-Business Cases - Learning From Peers

To know more

A data matrix code is a two-dimensional matrix bar code consisting of black and white "cells" that can encode text and raw data. Data matrices are becoming common on printed media such as labels and letters, as they provide rapid access to multimedia software. The code can be read quickly by a mobile phone that is equipped with a camera and appropriate software which can be downloaded for free from websites such as get.beetagg.com.

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