Case study

Blue Group

Introduction

Blue Group is a specialist provider of materials processing equipment for the quarrying and waste recycling industries in England, Scotland and Wales.

Formed in 2004 with 8 strategically located offices throughout the UK and a turnover of over £100m they are dedicated to the highest levels of customer service regardless of whether you require a single machine or the design and installation of a complete processing plant.

Solution Overview

Blue chose to implement SAP Business One as they wanted a future proofed solution that could help improve efficiencies across the group of companies. A number of off the shelf and industry specific solutions were considered before Frontline were selected to implement and support the new ERP software.

The existing software was no longer being actively developed

Pete Lidbetter, Group IT Manager, states "the business had been using Ibcos Gold over a 6 year period however cracks had started to appear with the software not delivering in a number of key areas". Driven by 2 companies within the group, Blue Machinery Southern and Blue Fuchs, the directors wanted better visibility and more control over the company operations.

Blue were finding it difficult to extract data from the Ibcos software along with limited reporting functionality. In addition to this, it was becoming apparent that there was a lack of ongoing development to the software.

Blue needed a modern ERP package with improved usability and access to real time reporting along with a more efficient, integrated field service solution.

> "
>
> We looked at 3 or 4 field service management solutions and this was the most impressive.
>
> **Pete Lidbetter,** IT Manager, Blue Group

Enhancing the service functionality within SAP Business One

Due to the nature of their business, Blue needed an ERP solution that could deliver all of the back office functionality as well as manage their field service requirements.

The business looked at a number of ERP solutions in the marketplace including Microsoft NAV, Sage 200 and also some industry specific service oriented packages.

The paperless way to plan, manage, schedule and track your mobile workforce

Frontline has seamlessly integrate the full functionality of the industry leading JobWatch mobile workforce solution into SAP Business One giving users a range of functions including job management, inventory control, financial planning, dispatch and fleet management.

Pete goes on to comment, "we wanted one product that could cover 90% of our business requirements and then selected JobWatch to enhance the SAP Service Management functionality"

Prior to implementing SAP Business One and JobWatch, Blue were heavily reliant on manual processes when managing their field service requirements. Calls would be logged in the ERP system which would be added to an Outlook calendar and then the jobs would be sent to the field service engineers via text or email. The engineers would go on site and write out a Service Call Report which would be sent back to the office via their mobiles. This information would be re-entered into the ERP system and the customer would then be invoiced.

The process is now a closed automated loop. A job is raised in SAP which can automatically alert the engineer. Once the job is completed it is updated back into SAP through JobWatch and is ready to be invoiced without having to re-input any data.

Pete states, "we looked at 3 or 4 field service management solutions and this was the most impressive. It was a leap of faith but JobWatch is a fantastic system and I have absolutely no regrets about implementing it".

The business has improved efficiencies and significantly reduced administrative time due to their previously manual processes being automated. Time spent on a job, distance travelled, parts used, etc are all captured within the solution and the job card is automatically updated.

In addition to the field service functionality, SAP Business One allows Blue's team to interrogate the database and create customised reports without the involvement of Frontline's SAP consultants. Visual dashboards are also available and are being used by the management team to gain a high level overview of business performance.

"

It was a leap of faith but JobWatch is a fantastic system and I have absolutely no regrets about implementing it at all.

Pete Lidbetter, IT Manager, Blue Group

A future proofed software package from a leading ERP provider

"Until we spoke to Frontline we weren't aware that SAP did a 'baby brother' to the R3 (ECC6) solution" says Pete when he recalls his first conversations with Frontline. SAP Business One is SAP's ERP solution designed for SMEs and is being used by over 55,000 businesses worldwide.

Blue selected Business One as it had the backing of a well known global brand in SAP, giving them confidence in a long-term software development roadmap whilst being able to work with an experienced SAP Gold Partner in Frontline. Pete comments, "we had a good relationship with the Frontline consultant and also the wider resources at Frontline during the sales and pre-sales process".

The business is using off the shelf tools to enhance the native functionality within SAP Business One allowing for documents to be linked to specific machines and also providing a document management system. These additional tools have given users increased functionality without compromising on usability, "as far as the user is concerned, it is Business One, they are not logging into separate systems" says Pete.

When looking to the future, Pete discusses their plans to roll out the SAP Business One solution to another company within the group in the next 3 months and then an additional site 3 months following that. Blue also plan to have all of their customised reports available by the end of the year which will help with industry specific reporting requirements such as attributing costings to a machine.
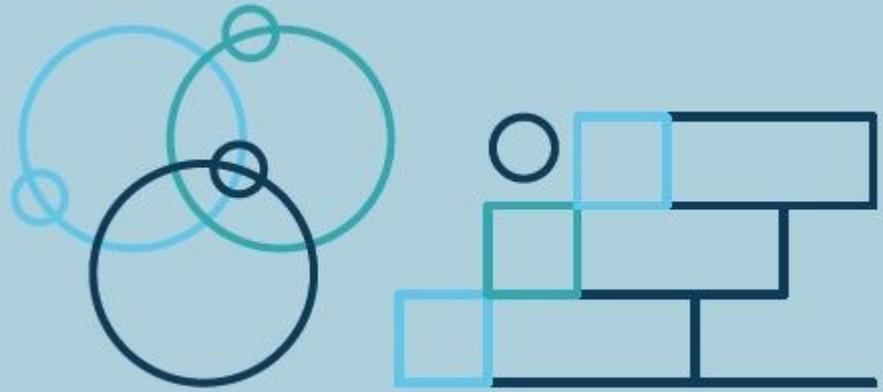
Our proven
Methodology

We deliver a business experience that simply gets better and better through our proven methodology of Connected Delivery.
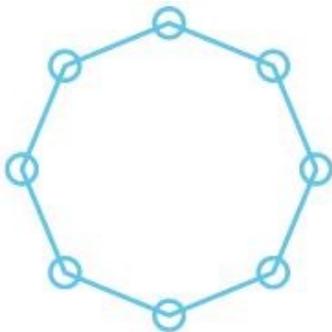
Connect

We deliver seamless integration between IT and business, you don't even know we are there – enabling you to focus on what you do best: your business.

It's critical that your IT partner understands your business, which is why we focus on delivering an ROI back on your application implementations so that your IT works harder for your business. Our focus is on helping your business to operate more efficiently, minimise disruptions and realise cost savings through IT.

Develop

Our team of 90 UK based application developers, solution architects and support staff have over 25 years' experience in the seamless integration of hosting and ERP services to businesses. **That's Return on Integration.**

We follow an industry recognised methodology when developing or integrating applications to ensure project success, starting with the Initiation and Planning phase, followed by the Execution phase, finishing with Control and Closure.
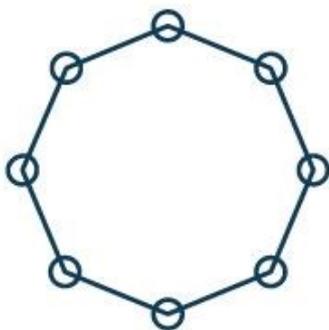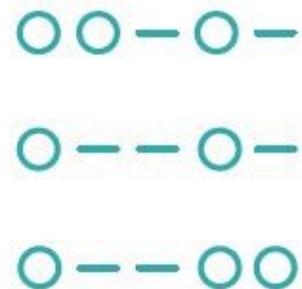
Continue

We adhere to a tried and tested methodology, the ITIL framework, to better align IT services with the requirements of business. This allows us to take a structured approach to IT changes to ensure service continuity is maintained with minimal disruption to business operations. Our continual monitoring and proactive approach makes your IT become invisible as problems and disruptions decrease to a minimal as we continue to evolve your IT for future business needs.

Northern Office

Frontline House,
Epsom Avenue,
Brooke Park Estate,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire, SK9 3PW

Frontline
IT Consultancy

Southern Office

Frontline Consultancy,
Gravel Hill Road,
Farnham, GU10 4LG

0333 323 2141

info@frontline-consultancy.co.uk
frontline-consultancy.com