

DMC Case Study:

Future Drugs



Business Growth Solutions



Academic publishing is a highly specialised field. Within this, one of the most specialised areas of all is healthcare publishing. Jonathan von Abo is IT Manager of London-based Future Drugs, a company that keeps healthcare professionals up to date with cutting-edge advances and trends via a portfolio of journals.

Company:

Future Drugs

Region:

London

Number of Seats:

15

Product:

Sage CRM

Situation:

The decision to bring in DMC to install Sage CRM was originally made in 2006. As Jonathan explains, “The problem with a subscription-based company like us is that our processes are very different from, say, a straightforward sales company. We throw lots of variables into the mix. With us, you can’t just take a CRM product off the shelf, install it and use it right away. There is always going to be a huge amount of customisation.”

DMC were brought in following a less than perfect experience with another software supplier. “They were a standard ‘unwrap the box, install it and off you go’ kind of company”, Jonathan recalls, “precisely the wrong kind of partner for a specialised business like ours, which is why we started to look elsewhere and came across DMC.”

Understandably Future Drugs were sceptical about whether another supplier could deliver. For a start, “it took a couple of months just to switch over”. On top of this there was the re-write of the original supplier’s spec, not to mention the build itself which took “the best part of six months”.

But, according to Jonathan, DMC “seemed to know what they were doing, so we trusted them to get on with it”. And following a two-month test phase, the Sage CRM system went live in July 2006 “bang on schedule”.

As Jonathan recalls, “This gave us a couple of months to get used to it before October when we run our annual renewals”. Despite their bad experience with the other software company, Future Drugs were impressed. “We were naturally sceptical, but – yes – we were very pleased. Our expectations are high, but DMC did a huge job.”

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Solution:

Since 2006, business has been progressing and growing well. “We’ve become more efficient in our use of technology and our Sage CRM has had to change with us,” Jonathan explains.

“As a small company we need the ability to change direction very quickly. We have upgraded, as was inevitable, to the latest version of Sage and updated our user package for more people too. But those aren’t the big things,” he insists. “The important thing is how we have customised endlessly. The version upgrade was necessary because of the amount of development work we’ve had done on the standard system to suit our needs.”

Those needs are unique and complex as Jonathan explains. “For example we had to change our pricing structure recently. We had quite a complicated tiered price matrix which wasn’t really working too well for us and so we migrated away from that and moved more to a sort of price by line item. That way each item has a price point for sector and deliverable.”

Jonathan explains how, because the company sell to both UK and US markets, they need two deliverables. “One is in electronic format and one is in print. This means one has VAT and one doesn’t in the UK - and neither have VAT if charged in the US. On top of that some do have VAT in the UK but not if the buyer has a valid VAT number. We have so many different variables to take into account.”

But DMC rose to the challenge. “They’ve helped us customised our Sage so that the system intuitively knows what to charge, judging by the country and VAT number and the product type. You can imagine how much easier that makes everyone’s life.”

Benefits:

“It’s a never ending process,” says Jonathan. “As we evolve, we’re constantly customising and DMC have handled everything. We never reach perfection because we discover new needs and new things we want to achieve. So what may have been a good idea last year may not be this year. Changes in the competition and the way that we work mean the system has to adapt with us. And with DMCs help, Sage always does.”

DMC are regular visitors to Future Drugs’ headquarters in London. “It’s so much easier to work in one room, brainstorming and throwing ideas into a pot,” Jonathan explains. “Then we have a document of work drawn up which we sign off and we’re charged accordingly for the time and the work involved.

“The great thing about DMC is that they know our system so well that when we want something done, or something isn’t quite working the way it should, they invariably know exactly where to look to find the problem and fix it.”

So as changes occur, as they always will, Sage and DMC together give Jonathan the assurance that Future Drugs has a great and profitable future.