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Grant Farrant , Director of Operations and Finance at Oak Hill College

Oak Hill College, founded in 1932, is an evangelical theological college in London welcoming people from around the world who wish to train for ministry in either the Church of England or independent churches.

The challenge

Oak Hill College forms part of a geographically distributed educational trust, each member of which operated a localised finance management system. This meant that centralised visibility of financial performance and budget oversight across the Trust was only possible through consolidated excel spreadsheets.

Coupled with this, increasing transaction volumes began to exert pressure on the incumbent Sage 50 accounts system on which Oak Hill depended.

Accelerating the decision to invest in a more scalable and flexible solution which could be integrated within a trust-wide finance management architecture was the obligation to become compliant with the UK Government's 'Making Tax Digital' initiative.

Solutions' approach

Though considering Sage 200 to be their preferred solution, decision makers at Oak Hill were constrained by limited access to IT infrastructure. The investment in hardware and supporting software services that would be necessary to support a Sage 200 implementation threatened to present a significant budgetary challenge.

Solutions for Accounting and CRM proposed a way forward which enabled Oak Hill College to leverage investments in infrastructure that had already been made by their own trust partners. By co-locating Sage 200 databases on a central server, Solutions made it possible for Oak Hill and its partner school to minimise capital investment and share resources whilst also providing remote access to staff who are now distributed geographically more than ever before.

In fact not only are College staff able to access key business systems from any location, the entire consultation, implementation and training for Oak Hill's new Sage 200 system was successfully delivered remotely during the Summer of 2020 when the majority of the country was working from home due to Covid-19.

“The implementation consultant (Mark Whitfield) from Solutions was brilliant. He helped our internal IT resources configure our setup for multiple access to Sage remotely with minimum interruption to our business activity.”

Grant Farrant, Director of Operations and Finance, Oak Hill College

“It was a smooth project, and everyone pulled together. The implementation and training were managed remotely, allowing our Finance Officer to remain working from home throughout. The process was seamless and has been hassle-free, compared to the many other challenges that organisations have had to face during 2020.”

The outcome

Since the migration to the new system, the wider Trust of which Oak Hill are a member has access to greater reporting capabilities. Through collaboration with its trust partners, Oak Hill College themselves are now able to embrace the extensive features and functions of a more capable system than might otherwise have been possible.

“This project was the classic example of a company who had outgrown Sage 50. Sage 200 not only offered an increased level of robustness but allowed them to run consolidated management accounts plus group VAT submissions via the MTD submission.

Earlier in the lockdown period we'd successfully enabled a customer to go live on Sage 200 with purely remote assistance to staff working from home in different locations around the UK. This allowed us to demonstrate to Oak Hill that what they wanted was not only possible but is rapidly becoming the new normal.”

Mark Whitfield, Head of Sage 200 Operations, Solutions for Accounting and CRM

“During the project there were some challenges. Covid-19 brought its own set of obstacles, as well as our own internal changes. However, Mark from Solutions made sure this didn't slow the implementation down and was fantastic at spurring the project on while ensuring everyone was involved and knew what was happening at all times.”

“It felt like the natural step to reach out to Solutions as there was already a pre-existing relationship with our partner school. We're delighted that we trusted our instincts as Solutions have really delivered. Our processes are more streamlined than before, and the reporting capabilities far surpass those that we were used to.”

To learn more about how Sage 200 can benefit your organisation, contact our experts on 0115 840 5075 or email enquiries@solutionscloud.uk