

# ACCOUNTING FOR CUSTOMER CARE AT PAPERCHASE



## THE CLIENT

Paperchase is the undisputed retail brand leader in design led and innovative stationery in the UK. Trading for over 30 years the company now has 61 outlets at home, one branch overseas and there are plans for further expansion this year. In its two flagship stores (Tottenham Court Road, London and St Mary's Gate, Manchester), Paperchase carries an unbeatable and often exclusive range of unusual papers and art materials as well as stationery, greetings cards, gifts and gift packaging.

Paperchase trades nationwide from its own stores and also through concessions in Borders Books and Music, selected House of Fraser stores and Selfridges.

## BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The company's changing financial and accounting IT needs have reflected the growth in recent business. Paperchase's Management Accountant Aongus Curran heads a team of eight in the company's financial department. The section draws on support from IT supplier Transputec. "We are not a huge company but we needed an accounting system that can cope with changing business needs without the need for in-house support," said Aongus.

"We don't always need formal training courses or expensive consultancy but we do require our IT provider to offer a sound understanding of how our business works and the best way to plan for the future. We need flexible support, sensible advice and value for money."

## OVERVIEW

### The need

The company required consultancy and support for its financial and accounting systems. Developing a data warehouse in the long term was also required. Guidance was needed on procuring a report writer and procedures for generating corporate level reports as well as managing budget data inputting.

### The solution

Consultancy, supply, implementation and support of Pegasus Opera II software by Transputec. Supply of Crystal Report writer, Pegasus XRL reporting tool, onsite training.

### The benefits

- Cost effective, high value consultancy.
- Onsite training geared to individual needs.
- Generation of reports in Excel format.
- Streamlined budget data inputting.
- Proactive IT Support.

*Customer feedback*

Aongus required support in upgrading to a new version of the Pegasus software, implementing a report writer and developing the infrastructure for a data warehouse. The eventual aim would be to generate corporate level reporting for financial and management information.

## THE SOLUTION

The relationship with Transputec has evolved over five or six years and includes hardware supply, provision and implementation of the accounting software, support and consultancy. Transputec supplied Paperchase with the original Pegasus accounting software and recently managed the migration to a new version, Pegasus Opera II. "Transputec managed a smooth upgrade, the process was very straightforward," said Aongus. "Accounting systems are at the heart of commercial procedures, it's critical to minimise disruption to normal accounting routines – we were in safe hands."

Transputec also advised on the procurement of a tool to extend the company's reporting capability. Based on an assessment of data volume, the recommendation was for a Crystal Report approach. Pegasus XRL was selected to replace a cumbersome third party reporting tool which had been unable to handle live reports and required unwieldy data exports for each procedure. XRL is an Excel add-in which allows users to slice and dice data from the Pegasus Opera II system and write back information such as budgets, stock taking and price updates.

## THE BENEFITS

For Aongus and his team it is the very nature of the relationship with Transputec that brings value. "In terms of IT consultancy you normally associate high spend with high care: the more you pay, the more you get," said Aongus.

*"Transputec's support and consultancy fees belie the high level of care and excellent customer service we have enjoyed over the years."*

Aongus Curran, Management Accountant, Paperchase

"With Transputec it's different because the emphasis is squarely on what we actually need, not what we can be persuaded to buy. It is not unusual for Transputec to quote for two day's consultancy and then for everything to be completed in one day. That's partly down to good customer service and efficient working but also due to an in depth understanding of our company."

The absence of consultancy over-sell also applies to formal training courses. "If I don't need to attend a full training course, Transputec won't recommend it. If I already know the basics, Abraham will talk me through the rest - saving us time and money." Abraham Atsbaha is the main Transputec contact at Paperchase and has worked with Aongus and his team, as the need arises, for a number of years. Training is often provided 'on the fly' and geared specifically to immediate or upcoming projects and procedures.

Implementation of the Report Writer has also resulted in a saving of time and money. Inputting the annual budget data had previously required a temp for three weeks but importing the budget reports straight into Opera II has eliminated the need for extra help.

"Abraham came in just before the year end and guided us through the procedure so that in the next week I was able to complete the whole process without a hitch," said Aongus. "The support is always on hand if we need it but there is an understanding that we want to be as self sufficient and cost effective as possible. We're getting no nonsense, practical, hands-on support."

Use of Pegasus XRL means live data is integrated with Opera II and avoids the need to run a complete upload every time report formats need to be changed. This means that monthly management reports, for the Board for example, can easily be generated in Excel format. "We're all used to working in Excel, it's a familiar environment so the XRL plug-in is an ideal choice."

Aongus is guided by Abraham in assessing future needs and flagging up likely requirements. "He highlighted the need to upgrade to Opera II for example, based on our current and predicted pace of growth. It's reassuring to know that they are looking ahead and anticipating our

#### *Customer feedback*

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requirements. At any one time we know we have plenty of breathing space so that we can't out grow the system."

In terms of choice of accounting package, Angus is happy with Pegasus Opera II. "One of the plus points of Opera is its simplicity. The software is also very stable and extremely robust. As it does not require daily care, in-house support is unnecessary. Transputec provides all the support we need and much of that is achieved remotely."

Angus concluded: "Transputec's support and consultancy fees belie the high level of care and excellent service we have enjoyed over many years."

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## THE PEDIGREE

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Since our inception in the mid-1980s, Transputec has had the trust of Britain's foremost IT users, including the Ministry of Justice, Samsung, Danone, Camelot, Chubb Insurance and DP-DHL/ Williams Lea to name but a few. Vertical sector experience covering banking & finance, media, third sector, technology, retail, SMEs and health care adds further value to IT users in the form of industry-specific knowledge.

### *The human component*

The pace of change in ICT is so fast that what was cutting edge technology just a few years ago we now need to refer to as *traditional IT* in order to differentiate it from what we're doing today and tomorrow.

Among the **Managed Services** offered by Transputec are Remote Infrastructure Management, Always On Helpdesk Support, and IT Outsourcing.

Please visit <http://www.transputec.com/it-support-service/> for more information.

A business like Transputec is as much about its people - their experience, customer-focus and expertise - as anything else. From initial assessment to delivery of turnkey solutions and day-to-day customer care, these professionals take solutions from Transputec's hardware, software and professional services business units and ensure they're a perfect fit.

Throughout our supply chain we have exceptional relationships with the world's premier hardware and software brands, giving us a competitive edge to make everything from economies of scale to mission-critical architecture judgment calls.

## ENVIRONMENT AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

While Transputec might well be said to have its head in The Cloud, our corporate feet are firmly on the ground. Our Green Data Centre in Iceland boasts impeccable eco-credentials that embrace natural free cooling up to 24kWh and zero carbon footprint.

One of the biggest power consumers in any business is the hosting of their IT equipment. It runs 24/7/365 consuming vast amounts of power – every business needs to look for ways to deliver Green IT.

For a comprehensive guide see <http://www.transputec.com/green-it/>

## TRANSPUTEC

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