

Solutions

Autumn 2016

www.solutionsforaccounting.co.uk



Welcome to the Solutions newsletter

This issue presents a view of how Solutions are preparing to support your business as you face the opportunities and challenges of post-Brexit Britain. Whether this means gearing for growth or tightening financial controls and management processes to drive profitability, we want to be a partner in your success.

The Autumn issue predominantly focuses on getting to know the Solutions team and how Solutions can help with all your business software needs. We look at recent software launches, both new and long serving employees, Solutions support, charity fundraising and how Solutions can take some of the stress out of your business growth with minimal disruption. The issue is also focusing on the hugely anticipated launch of Sage 200 Extra v2016 as well as our Solutions Additions making your software both industry and business specific.

Solutions are currently going through an incredibly exciting expansion period with ongoing recruitment and software additions in the pipeline. We are very happy to be in a position where both our employee and client list is growing.

We are looking forward to our annual Solutions Showcase again this year (although slightly later in the year than usual.) This year it is being held at Nottingham Racecourse and we hope to attract our highest ever delegate rate. If you are interested in learning more about our products and services or want to know how Solutions can help with the growth of your business then come along and see for yourself with face to face interaction, live demos, seminars and workshops.

We hope you find the newsletter helpful and interesting and if you have any feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. I would love to hear your thoughts.

Bethan Wright

Marketing Manager
bethanw@solutionsforaccounting.co.uk

Launch of Sage 200 Extra v2016

Sage 200 Extra v2016 was released in May this year. This latest version of the class leading Accounting and Business Management application has been extremely well-received, due in part to the fact that its enhancements and new features have been introduced primarily as a result of customer feedback.

Notable improvements in Sage 200 v2016 include:

- Extended facility to make and take payments providing tighter control of cash flow.
- Sales, Marketing & Service (SMS) modules offering a centralised customer database with a 360 degree view of your business, enveloping all customer-facing operations
- Usability enhancements that minimise the probability of human error, saving time and maximising productivity.

Sage Integrated Payments:

'Sage Payments' is now available as an integrated option for both Sage 200 Extra v2016 and Sage 200 Extra Online. This new service empowers you to make payments to suppliers directly from within the Sage 200 system. Furthermore, the Sage 200 Services solution that is already available with Sage 200 Extra becomes available for Sage 200 Extra Online and on premise subscriptions.

Sales, Marketing and Service (SMS):

The launch of the SMS module is a key feature of the version 2016 release. SMS is designed to deliver a range of benefits including:

- The capture of accurate customer data across the business supporting collaborative working, creating broader visibility and enabling managers to make better decisions with confidence.
- The provision of an excellent customer experience to drive customer loyalty and maximise revenue through repeat business and referrals.
- The effective coordination and management of the activities of multiple teams via a single centralised solution, avoiding duplication of effort whilst empowering staff to be more productive.

Included in this issue



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24 hour support for all your software queries. P2
- **Meet Michael Jones**
Get to know a long standing member of the Solutions management team. P3
- **Newest members of team Solutions / Solutions Showcase 2016**
In our growing company, meet the latest additions. P4
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- **Long serving employees / sponsorship**
1/3 of the Solutions team have worked here for over 9 years. Find out what makes Solutions us such a great place to work. P6
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Solutions Support

Solutions Support is one of the key services that differentiates us. With our friendly approach to business and our commitment to customer service excellence, we are delighted to have been a consistent winner of the coveted Sage 'Circle of Excellence' award year after year. This award is especially treasured as it is a reflection of the opinions of our clients themselves, and a testament to the quality of service that we provide

We pride ourselves on providing a first class service and are constantly looking for ways to improve our customers' support experience. As a consequence, we have recently created a new role enabling us to be even more proactive by making regular contact with our customers to ensure that the software solutions that they have invested in are delivering real business value..

All of our technicians and consultants are fully accredited to support the variety of Sage and Swiftpage products in our portfolio. Many of our support technicians and consultants have been working with Sage and Swiftpage software for a number of years; some have also worked in the accounting industry having gained various accounting accreditations, and our CRM team members are from a sales, marketing or customer services background. Customers can feel safe in the knowledge that we are well equipped to understand business needs and offer the right software solution and ongoing support in each case.

Our experienced in-house development team understand that every business is different and work with our clients to create bespoke packages that not only meet their current needs but also prepare their businesses for growth.



We also support industry-specific operational needs in environments such as manufacturing, construction, retail and warehouse management (to name a few). All software installation and training delivered at the customer's site will be undertaken with minimal disruption as we recognise that a business must continue to function efficiently during a period of system transition.

The Solutions for Accounting head office is based in Nottingham and we have office locations throughout the UK, enabling us to help businesses Nationwide and overseas to reach their full potential.

Our technical support services include:

Telephone helpline: Monday to Friday 08:30-17:30

Email support: You can email us with a query and our support team will respond promptly.

Online remote access support: Using the latest web tools, our technicians connect to your server or workstation and see the problem that you are encountering first hand.

Advice: We encourage our customers to seek our advice regarding the use of their software and also the potential benefit of updates and upgrades.

What makes us unique?

96% of calls to the Solutions helpline are answered within 10 seconds.

We understand that personal attention, empathy and immediacy is important to your business, therefore professionalism and efficiency is paramount to how we work.

Solutions understand that Accounting and CRM systems are important to your business and that downtime is incredibly inconvenient at best, and potentially damaging in some circumstances

We take the time to understand the urgency of your request for assistance, enabling us to prioritise calls so that a timely response with the most appropriate consultant or technician may be organised.

86% of issues are resolved within the initial phone call. All cases are tracked and a detailed history of progress against each client request is maintained in our Case Management system.

We regularly self-assess our own performance and are constantly working to improve our process and the quality of service that we are able to offer.

We support:

Sage 200, Sage 50 – Business management software

Sage CRM – Customer relationship management/
Business management solutions

Swiftpage Act! CRM – Contact and customer manager

Pan Intelligence – Dashboard software

Datalinx – Barcoding and warehouse management solutions

Spindle Document Management – Document automation

Credit Hound – Credit control

Counterpoint – Point of sale

Orbis Task Centre – Business process management and automation

What our customers think of us:

“It was my first time dealing directly with Solutions for Accounting and Gregor Imrie (Support Technician) was friendly, helpful and patient. Very Impressed.”

“As usual, a prompt, effective solution provided by the Solutions Support team.”

‘Thanks to Brian for providing excellent advice and report templates which resolved our problem and helped me understand the Sage system better. Appreciate him also being able to call back at a time to suit me.’

‘Joe Paton was so understanding and patient during the enquiry. He is a real asset to your company!’

‘Top Class Service’

Meet Michael Jones, Support Manager



Having worked at Solutions for Accounting for 10 years, there isn't much about Sage Software and Solutions that Michael doesn't know. Managing our support team, Michael is committed to ensuring that all communications with our customers are dealt with in a timely manner and to a high standard. Over the past decade, Michael has seen Solutions grow in experience, capability and number of employees.

What is your favourite part about working at Solutions for Accounting?

We have excellent personalities working at Solutions and some great customers. I enjoy interacting with clients, some of whom I have now known for years and have built up a great rapport with over time.

Tell us about yourself...

I like doing all sorts of activities outside of work and have numerous interests. My favourite hobbies are angling and going out for good food with a drink or two of course!

What is your favourite film?

One of my favourite flicks is 'The Green Mile'

What is your ideal job, other than the one you have?

Wildlife photographer, footballer or artist/illustrator.

Do you have a bucket list?

Not as such but I do plan to visit New Zealand and skydive at some stage.

Solutions Showcase 2016



Our annual Solutions Showcase will be back again this year (although slightly later in the year than usual.) Our previous showcase events have proved to be a huge success and we are thrilled to be holding one again, this time at Nottingham Racecourse.

At Solutions, we like to hold a day every year that is specifically tailored to our customers, both current and prospective. It is a day for you to meet the Solutions team, Sage personnel, and trusted third party suppliers and talk face to face, view live demos as well as attending seminars and workshops.

"The Solutions Showcase is a fantastic opportunity for both current and prospect customers to come along for the day and see what we are about. They can meet the team and put names to faces as well as being able to personally interact with our business partners, view live demos and question our experts. We ensure there are always multiple seminars and workshops throughout the day that cover all of our products and a variety of topics. Each year we are looking to outdo the previous year and welcome feedback from the attendees."

"If you want to know what else you can get out of your software and have questions then the Solutions Showcase is the perfect opportunity to seek advice, speak to industry experts and see how beneficial it can be to your business growth."
Iain Barker, Managing Director.

To register for the event please go to www.solutionsforaccounting.co.uk/events or contact Bethan Wright directly (contact details on page 1)

Newest members of team Solutions



Katherine Fisher

Katherine started at Solutions in April 2016 as a Sage Accounts software consultant, primarily specialising in Sage 200 but also with an interest in Sage 50 and Sage Payroll. Katherine has considerable experience of Sage 200 having been a user of the system within one of our client organisations for over 5 years.

Katherine is a keen volunteer, giving up her time to support her local Girl Guide unit by leading hiking and camping expeditions. She has also worked with Elephants in Thailand and Lions in South Africa

Stephen joined Solutions in March 2016 as a CRM Consultant. He specialises in the Swiftpage Act! and Sage CRM product ranges. Prior to Solutions, Stephen worked for a global heating manufacturer implementing database projects, and brings with him extensive CRM experience and a deep understanding of systemising business processes.

In his spare time, Stephen enjoys bouldering (a form of climbing with no ropes apparently - we have been assured he is very safe) and being a proud father to his son.



Stephen Stublely



Bethan Wright

Bethan joined the Solutions team in May 2016 as Marketing Manager. She has been tasked with helping to drive the growth of the business through raising the awareness of our brand. With ambitious plans for our future growth, Bethan is likely to be kept pretty busy!

A marketing professional, Bethan studied Media, Communications and Society at Nottingham Trent University before starting her career as a Sales and Communications Coordinator for a leading East Midlands Waste Management Company.

In her spare time Bethan enjoys cooking, hiking and has a love for all things vintage.

Michelle's career at Solutions began in May 2016 as Human Resources Manager. Michelle is keen to implement best practice in HR across the business, while providing ongoing support and guidance to all staff and management.

In her spare time Michelle enjoys arts and crafts, spending time with her children and the occasional bit of weeding in the garden



Michelle Martin



Jody Stapleton

Jody Joined the Solutions team in July 2016 as Customer Service Representative, Jody's role involves making regular contact with all of our customers to ensure that they consistently receive the level of service that they expect and deserve. This is a new role at Solutions and we are excited to see how Jody can help us to deliver world class customer service.

In her spare time Jody enjoys reading, going for walks, attending festivals and spending time with her friends and family.

Will became the newest member of the Solutions team in July 2016 as an Apprentice Support Technician. Will has just finished his A Levels having studied Engineering, ICT and Business studies and is now looking forward to applying his skills in the 'real world'. He will be working alongside the support team, supporting our large base of Sage 200 Clients.

In his spare time Will likes listening to music, watching football and socialising with friends.



William Imrie

Solutions Additions



Our bespoke additions service is predominantly used by Sage 200 customers, but can also be used with Sage 50 and Sage CRM. Irrespective of whether you are a Solutions support customer or not, we are confident that our modules will help your business to save time and money by reducing duplication and automating manual processes.

Sage 200 add on modules:

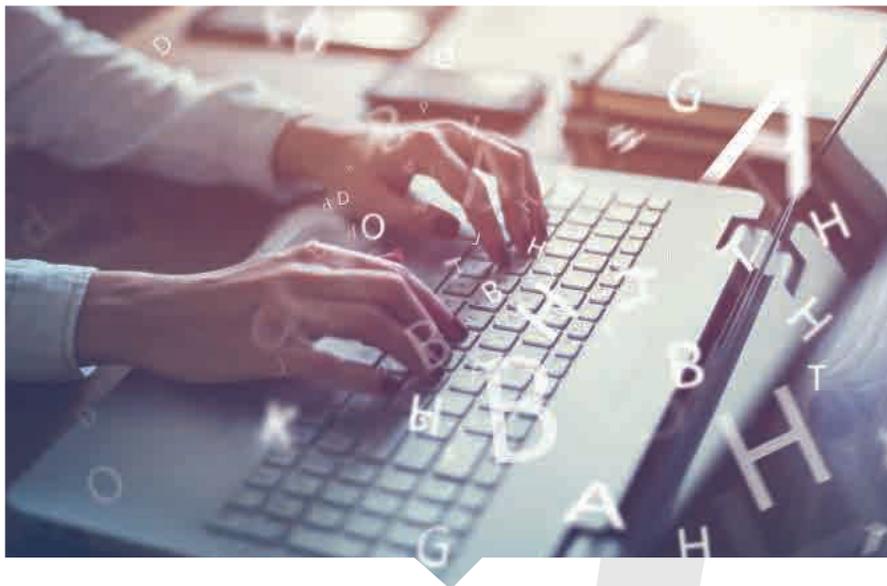
Our range of modules enhance the functionality of Sage 200. Key modules include:

- Direct Debit
- Purchase requisition
- Excel journal import
- Stock transfer

Sage 50 add on modules:

In your Sage 50 system our Sage developers can provide solutions which enhance, save time and improve profitability.

- Direct Debit module
- Integration module
- Sales Order Import module



Why choose Solutions for your business software needs?

For many good reasons, Solutions for Accounting has been the first choice for growing organisations seeking a Sage partner to support them as they grow.



Since its formation in January 1998, Solutions for Accounting has developed to become a leading UK strategic partner of Sage and Swiftpage with many hundreds of successful Business Management, Accounting and CRM implementations to its credit. Amassing a wealth of talent and experience over the years, there are now almost 40 employees, each making a vital contribution to the further development of the business. Within the last 5 years alone, reflecting the hard work and dedication of our staff, we have been successful in doubling the turnover of our business, and we plan to achieve a similar rate of organic growth again over the next 5 years.

As a leading business development, implementation, training and support partner for Sage 50, Sage 200, Sage CRM and Act! CRM, we have access to the latest software products which we are able to carefully configure to integrate seamlessly into our customers' businesses.

Our success is built upon a reputation for in-depth business knowledge and outstanding customer service and we pride ourselves in delighting our customers, many of whom have depended upon us to support them for well over a decade.

We're proud of our award-winning project planning, installation, training and support services, all of which are designed to help build efficiencies into growing businesses, enabling management to maximise productivity and profit.

Our business partner promise:

As a Solutions customer, we want to work in partnership with you, to help you get the most out of your software and to support you as your business grows, enabling you to focus on your determined priorities. We promise to make our relationship with you simple, rewarding and stress free.

"As usual, a prompt, effective solution provided by the Solutions Support team."



Sponsorship

Solutions pride ourselves extensively in supporting local charity events and fundraising. This year we are very proud to be sponsoring, 'Ice Hockey Player of the Year' at the Nottingham Sports Awards 2016 and 'Bright Young Thing' at The Nottingham Post's Heroes Awards 2016. Both awards ceremonies will be taking place in October 2016 so keep an eye out for us in the Nottingham Post.

Solutions have a long standing affiliation with Ice Hockey in Nottingham, having sponsored the Nottingham Panthers for 16 years and the Nottingham Lions for 3. We find the matches are great for customer relationship building and staff bonding activities along with our corporate advertising at games..

Solutions are also delighted to sponsor the 'Bright Young Thing (U18)' category at the Nottingham Post's Heroes Awards. We recruit a number of apprentices, predominantly in our support and technical teams, enabling them to learn on the job at the same time as studying for a vocational qualification

We also sponsor two local football teams, Gedling Southbank FC and Whitmoor FC, which two of our employees voluntarily coach at. Gedling Southbank FC recently won the prestigious award of 'National Charter Standard Community Club of the Year' from the FA. We are so pleased to see the team receiving recognition for all their hard work and dedication.

'The success of Solutions has been built upon its loyal employees and their dedication to the company. Our employees know our products inside out and care about our business and its reputation, but just as importantly, they care about our customers.' Iain Barker, Managing Director

Iain Barker (MD) started his working life as a Trainee Accountant in 1989 for Nottingham based firm Page Kirk, where Iain is now a partner. Computers and software was just a hobby but after getting his accounting accreditations and working as a qualified accountant for 9 years, Iain decided to combine his love of computers with his vocation and consequently started Solutions for Accounting.

Originally Solutions did just that, software and consultancy for accountants. However, in recent years, the company has branched out into a broader range of business software, therefore significantly widening their target audience. Solutions pride themselves on being a one-stop provider of integrated systems, offering advice, project consultation, installation, training and ongoing support. With a richly diverse customer base reaching across retail, construction and manufacturing industries, there is real substance behind the company's mantra 'Think business software, Think Solutions'.

The latest significant milestone for Solutions was the acquisition of CRM specialists, BluebirdCRM, in April 2015. As a consequence, Solutions now sees itself as the leading provider of Accounting, Business Management and CRM systems across the Midlands region.

When asked what they like about working for Solutions, staff responses were:

'To put it simply, it's the people! My role is varied which keeps me interested but it is working within the team that is what I predominantly enjoy. Although we have mixed ages, interests and backgrounds we all to get on very well!' Joanne Barker, Office Manager (Solutions employee for 12 years)

How has the company changed over the time you have worked here?

'Fourteen years ago there was just one person in my department, me! But now we have development a team of six, this means we're now able to focus on quality and speed of delivery as well as providing excellent support.' Nick Hempshall, Head of Software Development (Solutions employee for 14 years)

When asking the Directors what the future holds for Solutions:

'Having laid ambitious plans to double the size of our business again within 5 years, a balanced team is going to be critical to our success. With a rich blend of experienced professionals and energetic developing staff, we're confident that the company is perfectly structured for growth.' Will Ingleby, Director

Upgrade from Sage 50 to 200



A growing business can mean that you are also outgrowing your current software. If you require more from your Sage 50 Accounts solution then perhaps now is the time to explore Sage 200 Extra v2016.

If you are a current Sage 50 user, it is easy to upgrade to Sage 200 Extra v2016 and start enjoying the benefit right away. Sage 200 is able to effortlessly handle more than 100,000 transactions, providing greater financial insight including open and closed period accounting, three-tiered nominal cost centre and departmental reporting, multi-currencies and much more.

Perhaps you have been having trouble keeping track of your customers? The new Sales, Marketing & Services (SMS) module helps to automate sales and marketing processes, while maintaining detailed customer records. One of the key features of Sage 200 Extra v2016 is how it adapts to your unique business requirements and the needs of different roles within it.

Integrating the applications that you already use can be a simple process. If you have been using Sage 50 Accounts, you will find that Sage 200 Extra v2016 looks very familiar, just with greater functionality and even more features. Moreover, due to the fact that it is based on modules, it can grow and adapt to suit your changing business.

Migrating your data from Sage 50 Accounts can be accomplished quickly and seamlessly.



Pedalling for a Solution – a wheelie good result!

26th June 2016 was a milestone for the Great Notts Bike Ride, celebrating its 35th Birthday. Their first event in 1982 had just 250 cyclists taking part. Fast-forward 35 years and it has turned into an entire weekend event with thousands taking part over the two days.

16 of our employees set themselves the challenge of cycling either 25 or 50 miles in the Great Notts Bike Ride to raise money for charity. After the monsoon-like conditions of the week prior, it is needless to say the team were slightly apprehensive of their challenge, but in good spirits they took to the tarmac and burnt some rubber.

This year Solutions chosen charity was the Alzheimer's Society, a charity close to the hearts of a number of Solutions employees. This unfortunate disease affects 850,000 people in the UK alone, not to mention those it affects indirectly. It can be devastating to watch the person you love slip away into a shell of their former self, no longer able to be independent or fend for themselves.

Biking through the Nottinghamshire countryside they uncovered a number of challenges: boggy conditions, mud baths and a flat tyre to name but a few. However, Team Solutions were letting nothing get in the way of their end goal; they would not be defeated.

“That was by far the hardest thing I have ever done physically! To say I am stiff is an understatement, but I am proud of Team Solutions!”
Sentley Wilson, Account Manager.

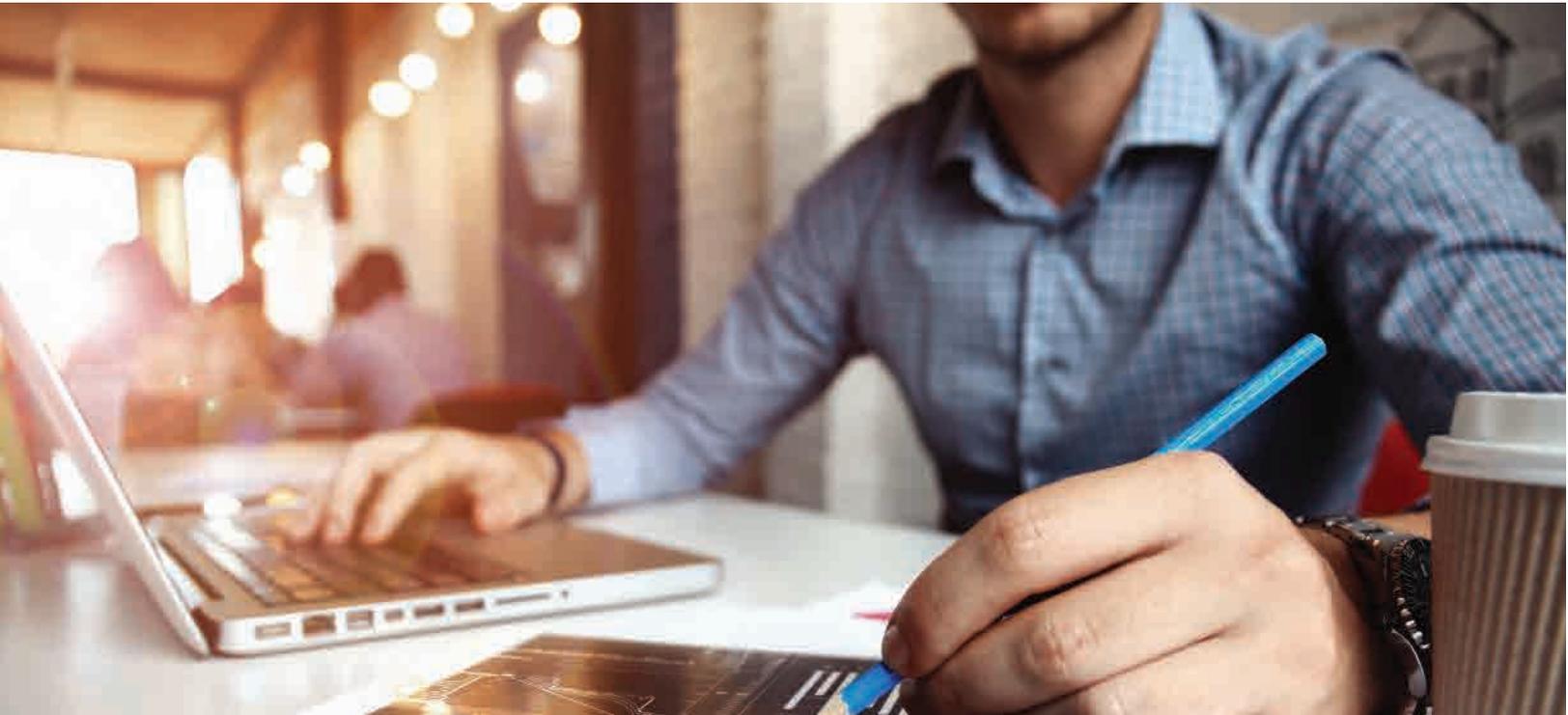
“Despite a few unavoidable hurdles along the way, everyone did incredibly well and kept going, even when we were faced with challenges. I am incredibly proud of Team Solutions, this is an event we would like to participate in annually to raise money for a fantastic cause.”
Iain Barker, Managing Director.

Through various fundraising activities and campaigns, to date, Solutions have managed to raise over £2,000 for the Alzheimer's Society. A big thank you to our customers, business partners, family members and others within the Solutions family for being so generous and supportive. It couldn't have been done without your encouragement.

We are incredibly proud to have taken part in our second year of the Great Notts Bike Ride and are looking forward to making this a company tradition. We already have 20 employees signed up to the Great Notts Bike Ride 2017. 10 will be cycling 25 miles, 4 have signed up to the 50 miles and 6 will be attempting the 75 mile route for charity!!

CASE STUDY

Solutions Additions (DD module)



“Not only has this software removed the element of human error, it has also cut out approximately 3 hours of work a month from our finance department.”

Emma Ritchie, Assistant Accountant at Voyager.

Voyager are a leading provider in recruitment software, providing an advanced and fully integrated end-to-end solution for recruiters. With their software having been written by recruiters, Voyager pride themselves on their high quality software with an edge, having this first-hand knowledge of the industry challenges reflected in their product.

Many of their customers pay monthly, annual and quarterly subscription fees using direct debits as a way of managing their cash flow. It is also effective to offer this method of payment to their clients as it eliminates the administration burden.

Voyager's direct debit processing was relatively manual in the past. They used an internal system to pick up the amount to be collected, and as a result faced a lot of accuracy issues, therefore having to complete additional precision checking before being able to process the DD collection. In addition, they also had to allocate each customer's payment manually in Sage which was not only time consuming, but very tedious and open to human error.

Once the decision was made to progress forward with an automated system, a demo was arranged with Solutions.

‘We found it very interesting and were able to ask questions and discuss ways in which we would use the software for our business.’ Emma Ritchie, Assistant Accountant at Voyager.

Once the decision was made to go ahead, the process went very smoothly. A member of the Solutions support team logged into Voyager's PCs externally to install the software and a desktop demonstration was given, including a short training session.

‘The direct debit add-on is extremely user friendly, we found it so easy to use and navigate around, it also integrates seamlessly with Sage. Not only has this software removed the element of human error, it has also cut out approximately 3 hours of work a month from our finance department. I would highly recommend this add-on to any business who wants to collect direct debits from their customers in a quick and accurate manner.’ Emma Ritchie, Assistant Accountant.