

SAP Customer Success Story Telecommunications – Mobile and Fixed-Line Solutions



“By investing in SAP Business One, companies can be confident they have a solution that will grow with them and continue to provide the support they need in the future.”

Jamie Hughes, Managing Director, Pace Telecom Ltd.

AT A GLANCE

Company

- Name: Pace Telecom Ltd.
- Location: Wrexham, England
- Industry: Telecommunications
- Products and services: Mobile and fixed-line solutions
- Revenue: US\$18.6 million
- Employees: 50
- Web site: www.pacetelecom.co.uk
- Implementation partner: OneBusiness

Challenges and Opportunities

- Nonintegrated, nonharmonized business processes and software
- Lack of management information
- Inability to effectively manage growth

Objectives

- Obtain a 360-degree view of the customer via a single database
- Easily customize the system to integrate existing industry-specific solutions
- Integrate mobile and fixed telecommunications business systems

Solution and Services

SAP® Business One application

Implementation Highlights

- One of 1st go-lives in United Kingdom
- 3-month customization process
- 3 months of parallel operation prior to cutover

Why SAP

- Stable, reliable, long-term vendor
- Scalable technology
- Easily customizable, easy-to-use software

Benefits

- Ability to function with same number of employees in spite of dramatic growth (3x)
- Faultless integration of new acquisition with 7,000 customers
- Streamlined billing process (reduced time needed to provision new customers from 1 week to 20 minutes)
- Enhanced decision making

Existing Environment

Legacy software

PACE TELECOM

SAP® Business One Helps UK Company Overcome the Bottleneck to Growth

If your company is growing at a furious rate and your employees are still manually entering data into two dozen disparate computer systems, it's probably a good idea to rethink your IT strategy. A few years ago, Pace Telecom Ltd. of Wrexham, England, found itself in that situation – so it turned to the SAP® Business One application. As a result, the company was able to unify its operations and provide managers with the information they needed to run the business.

Founded in 1993, Pace Telecom is a total communications company, with successful divisions in mobile and fixed-line solutions. Focusing exclusively on the business sector, Pace Telecom has more than 16,000 customers throughout the United Kingdom, nearly 50 employees, and annual revenues of US\$18.6 million.

Disparate Systems and Spreadsheets

As with many new companies in their formative years, Pace Telecom was using a network of disparate systems and spreadsheets to run its business. Some were specialist telecommunications systems, such as a billing platform for recording and invoicing customers' usage. Others were more general, such as its finance and payroll systems.

However, with the company doubling in size every 18 months, it became clear this situation could not continue. “We were having to manually type information into 27 different systems, which was totally inefficient,” says Jamie Hughes, managing director at Pace Telecom. “We had no management information to speak of. It had gotten to the point where it almost wasn’t feasible for the company to expand, because the resources we needed to run the business would take up too much of our margin.”

Early Adopter

Pace Telecom drew up a list of requirements. Because it was anticipating the same rate of growth to continue into the foreseeable future, the company needed a scalable system from a vendor that would be around for many years to come. It needed software that was easy to use and customize – and that would tightly integrate with the company’s industry-specific solution. Another key consideration: a single database. “We needed a 360-degree view of our customers and suppliers so that we could manage the business proactively,” explains Hughes. “We felt the only completely reliable way of achieving that was to have a single database.” SAP Business One offered exactly what the company needed.

Pace Telecom then identified three potential vendors. “We were looking for companies that were financially sound and that were good geographical fits,” Hughes recalls. “We also felt that if they were a similar size to us, they would have a better understanding of the challenges we faced.” Following the vendors’ presentations, Pace Telecom chose SAP Business One from value-added reseller OneBusiness, which is now a part of Irish International Sales, the largest reseller of this application in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Pace Telecom became one of the first companies to implement SAP Business One in the United Kingdom. “It was a bit scary being a pilot company,” Hughes admits. “But the SAP brand gave us a lot of confidence, and we believed SAP and OneBusiness would make sure the implementation was a success, which they did.”

Special Requirements

Following the selection of SAP Business One, Pace Telecom drew up detailed specifications of its expectations. A critical aspect was the need to integrate its mobile phone system and billing platform, so that transactions from those two systems

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would flow directly into SAP Business One. OneBusiness made the necessary enhancements to the software, configured the system according to Pace Telecom’s requirements, and managed the migration of data from the existing systems.

Three months later, the software system started running in parallel with Pace Telecom's existing systems. Then, following an additional three months of testing, the system went live. "If we were implementing the system today, I think it would be a lot quicker," says Hughes. "You have to remember that we were one of the first implementations of SAP Business One in the United Kingdom. The software was new to everyone, so naturally we were cautious. But it went very smoothly, and people took to the new system very easily, which is one of its plus points."

Real Benefits

With SAP Business One in place, Pace Telecom could manage its growth far more effectively. "Our previous systems had become a bottleneck to growth," says Hughes. "SAP Business One helped us raise our efficiency levels substantially. Since the implementation, we've trebled in size without having to hire additional staff members."

The company also now has a 100% transparent view of its customers and suppliers – which is critical for the company to operate effectively – and managers have the information they need to make important decisions.

But SAP Business One has also helped Pace Telecom in other ways. "In June 2004, we acquired another company with 7,000 customers," explains Hughes. "Without SAP Business One, it would just not have been possible to successfully absorb that many customers into our business."

Since the implementation, Pace Telecom has set up a Web interface to its billing system. "Previously," says Hughes, "our partners would send us details of new customers, and we would enter them into the system and then provide details back to the partner.

Using that process, it would take us a week to provision a new customer. Today, the partners can do it themselves through the Web interface, and the information is transferred directly into SAP Business One. It now takes 20 minutes to provision a customer, which is a dramatic improvement."

Pace Telecom is clearly very pleased with SAP Business One. So what advice would Hughes give other companies in a similar position? "For growing companies, it is very important to put the right systems in place early on," he comments. "By investing

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in SAP Business One, companies can be confident they have a solution that will grow with them and continue to provide the support they need in the future. That's a much better position to be in than finding you've outgrown your systems and then having to face a disruptive new implementation."

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