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COMM Group’s Tie to the Tropics Gets Brighter Thanks to SystemLink

Tell a person to think about vacation and it will likely produce images of sandy beaches, palm trees and an umbrella drink, all under a tropical sun. Then tell them to make the arrangements and they will start thinking about their bank accounts. That is exactly where COMM Group comes in with CheapCaribbean.com, offering luxurious tropical vacation packages to the Caribbean and Mexico at the lowest price possible. With a firm commitment to palatable prices coupled with a simple reservation process and the highest level of customer service, COMM Group truly aspires to provide a relaxing experience.

COMM Group Gets Heatstroke

These ideals brought a good deal of success to COMM Group. However, as they grew, their business processes stayed small inevitably costing them significant amounts of time and money. For instance, running all of the accounting on QuickBooks and producing all of the reports and analysis on Excel may work fine for a small business—but as CheapCaribbean.com took off, running the business kept looking less like paradise and more like a turbulent plane ride.

A number of major inconveniences characterized COMM Group’s work through their old systems. For one, reporting was very vague. Reports had to be prepared manually, a process that became both labor intensive and prone to error—producing major deficiencies and very little accurate information. According to Lois Mack, Controller for COMM Group, “We just couldn’t get some of the information we needed, and it wasn’t worth the manpower to figure it out.” On top of that, Excel could not handle the capacity that COMM Group required. Files had to be broken down in order to fit into the system. Something had to change. “It was not a matter of *if* we would get a new system,” remarks Lois, “it was just a matter of which system to get, and how soon could it be implemented.”

Made in the Shade With SystemLink

Once they decided that it was time for an upgrade, COMM Group jumped in head first. Some of their officers had experience with other software packages and they did a good deal of online research for more options—they even did a partial implementation with another product which ended up falling short of COMM Group’s complex requirements. However, they had also been contacted by Sage during their searching process and, after some additional research, Sage Accpac

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appeared to be the best option. That’s when COMM Group was introduced to SystemLink for implementation and support.

According to Dave Beck at SystemLink, the implementation for COMM Group held a high risk. They required a system for vacation reservations, another for credit card processing, and a number of others that all needed to be integrated into Sage Accpac in order to produce seamless operations. Despite the number of systems integrated, says Dave, “we got through it all cleanly.” In fact, as Lois remembers it, “implementation went even smoother than I expected.” While their needs were unique, SystemLink’s expertise allowed for a cohesive solution.

The key factor, according to Dave, is that Sage Accpac lends itself to integration. COMM Group did not even have standard data files to be uploaded into the new system, they only had information from Excel—but SystemLink still made it happen. With their skill set in Sage Accpac customization and business operation expertise, SystemLink assisted COMM Group in achieving their goals. “They brought a wealth of business experience,” says Lois, “they made everything go smoothly.”

Business is a Day at the Beach for COMM Group

Today, their business finally runs smoothly thanks to SystemLink and the full integration of all systems into Sage Accpac. Everything is user friendly and fully automated; saving COMM Group a significant amount of time and money. For example, they used to produce reports daily through Excel, a time-consuming and labor-intensive process. Now, similar reporting is produced in about 5 minutes. In addition, they had formerly allocated at least five hours every month in order to lay out the financials—information that they now have instantly! At one point since the implementation, COMM Group had an employee leave the company and they were thrilled to realize that they did not need to replace the position—they simply did not require the manpower any longer.

Above all, COMM Group has benefited from significantly increased control and understanding of their business. As Dave puts it, “they have better information faster.” Lois calls herself Sage Accpac’s biggest fan because of the increased information flow. She, along with other leaders in COMM Group, are incredibly pleased with the level of control and efficiency afforded to them—they are taking their business and running with it.