

Paperchase

Paperchase notes performance improvements, enhanced reporting and time and money savings with Coda Dream

Customer profile

Paperchase, a retail brand leader in design-led and innovative stationery, is one of the most familiar names on the UK high street. During its forty year history Paperchase has expanded and today has over 100 outlets in the UK as well as stores in Ireland, Holland and the Middle East and concessions in House of Fraser, Waterstones, Selfridges and Harrods.

The situation

Like the majority of retail organisations, change is a reality Paperchase has to deal with and be able to respond to if it is to retain its competitive advantage and meet the changing demands of consumers. Paperchase is embracing change and in spite of a continuing slowdown in consumer spending in the UK, the company is building on its success and focussing on expanding its footprint on the high street with around 20 new stand-alone store openings already underway. In addition, Paperchase has embarked on a flourishing multi-channel strategy and newly launched online store which again prove the company's ability to innovate and adapt. Its aggressive expansion plans have been supported with investment generated from a £30m management buy-out which took place in July 2010.

The need

Plans which will fundamentally change the size, shape and structure of the company require investment in IT and core systems that will grow and adapt to mirror those changes. As a result, Paperchase required the support of a strong and flexible financial management system to ensure that accurate business critical information was easily accessible. Prior to selecting Coda Dream, Paperchase used Pegasus Opera but it was becoming difficult to extract the information required to enable accurate analysis and informed decision making. The diverse management reports demanded by the different departments within Paperchase were also time-consuming to generate and not in a format that could be widely used. As a result the finance team was spending a large amount of time simply inputting and extracting information rather than producing meaningful reports which allowed the timely and accurate analysis of company-wide performance necessary to grow the business. So in late 2007 Paperchase embarked on a tender process and evaluated 4 or 5 market leading solutions. From this process two were shortlisted and UNIT4's Coda Dream accounting software was selected. Today it is a central part of Paperchase's IT infrastructure and supports the ongoing change faced by the company.

Kevin Heath, Deputy Finance Director at Paperchase, comments: "Paperchase needs a system that is flexible, intuitive and easy to use, as well as giving excellent visibility over the database, especially during a period of sustained growth and change. Coda Dream, with its fully integrated ledger system, meets our requirements exactly and has proven to give us a stable base to work from, creates efficiencies across the department, allows us to easily interrogate the data and drive an informed approach to decision making."



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The benefits

The implementation itself was simple and straightforward. It took just three months from purchasing the solution to going live and the project also came in on budget. Kevin explains: "Paperchase has not looked back since we implemented Coda Dream. It is a first class solution and the fact that it was up and running so quickly and easily is testament to UNIT4's knowledge and understanding of what we need as a retailer operating in a highly competitive trading environment. In addition, we have peace of mind that as the software uses the latest Microsoft SQL Server and .NET technology, the solution is future-proofed and will grow and adapt as we do." Improved visibility of financial data means not only can Coda Dream produce standard reports but also the team can extract information requested by any department at any time and produce a detailed and bespoke report; all at the click of a mouse. It really is that easy.

Coda Dream is also designed to interface with other core applications, empowering management to make decisions based on real time data from across the business while also delivering the best possible business value from Paperchase's broader IT investment as the company grows.

From a user perspective Coda Dream has been welcomed by the teams at Paperchase. Training on the system was painless and feedback positive. Because Coda Dream is a single integrated system, users can move around the system quickly and easily without having to jump from module to module. This single view also ensures Kevin's team works in a methodical, logical way which boosts productivity and reduces the margin for error, thereby improving the accuracy of the information generated. Since implementing Coda Dream Kevin estimates that the month end process period has been reduced from two weeks to just one. In addition, although the volumes of invoices processed have increased significantly since the early days following implementation, the team has not had to increase headcount in that area. Coda Dream takes the strain and leaves the Paperchase team to focus on analysing the information generated.

The self service nature of the solution is also important to Kevin and his team. "Given the dynamic nature of retailing today we need to be able to adapt our systems quickly if we

are to get accurate performance information and make timely and informed decisions. Coda Dream is so intuitive and easy to use that we can make changes to the system ourselves and we are not reliant on costly external consultants doing the work for us. In addition, we can manage the changes we need to make at our own pace. This flexibility allows us to be responsive and quick to change as our business and the wider economic landscape demands."

Kevin and the team are in communication with other Coda Dream users, something he feels is invaluable: "We share information on our experiences, generate ideas and learn new ways to use Coda Dream to maximise our utilisation of functionality." He also believes that the approach of the UNIT4 team has been instrumental in the success of the project: "Culturally our two organisations are very similar – the customer is king. I know that when I call UNIT4 I will get a person on the end of the phone that knows about our project and understands the retail background that our queries stem from. Unlike some larger suppliers, they always put us as the customer first, while also offering sound advice and tips on how we can get more from our solution without a big price ticket or costly consultancy hours. This knowledge and personalised service is, in my experience, second to none. Combined with the rich functionality I would have no hesitation in recommending Coda Dream and UNIT4 as a company to other organisations."

Key business benefits

- Change embracing system supporting rapid growth
- Month-end completed in half the time from two weeks to one week
- New stores and channels added easily at no cost
- Rich financial management functionality Group wide
- Boosts productivity and frees up resource
- Customer service focus from UNIT4 is invaluable

ABOUT UNIT4

UNIT4 is a global business software company that creates, delivers and supports adaptable software and services worldwide, to help dynamic organisations manage their business needs effectively. We strive to set the global standard for business solutions that help dynamic organisations to embrace change – simply, quickly and cost effectively.

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