



Sage ERP EVision

Case Study: Apollo Group Integration

Sage Construction integrates Apollo's reactive maintenance processes with their financial and business management system.

Apollo Group has worked in the public sector for over 30 years offering a comprehensive range of services to its clients; from responsive maintenance at an individual property level, through to the delivery of complete estate regeneration and the building of award-winning schools.

The Apollo Services division of Apollo Group deals with responsive and planned maintenance projects for Housing Associations and Local Authorities. Apollo Services provides its clients and their residents with a consistently high quality and reliable service by employing a direct labour force that includes a broad spectrum of multi-trade and skilled employees.

Recognising the need for responsive maintenance software

In order to maintain these high standards in the face of increasing work volumes, Apollo Group recognised the need for

a software solution that would integrate with their clients' housing management and call centre systems; one that would automate the process of passing a high volume of tasks from the client systems to Apollo Services and ultimately to provide efficiencies in dealing with the increasing number of responsive maintenance projects that are being awarded. In particular, a new contract won in October 2010 for Lambeth Living, the company set up by London Borough of Lambeth to manage and improve its housing stock, stipulated that such a system needed to be up and running before the contract commenced in April 2011.

This short time frame meant that Apollo Group needed to move fast. Impact Response, a piece of software specifically designed to support the management and delivery of repairs and maintenance projects, was identified as the preferred solution. However, an important part of the implementation of Impact Response was to find a way of recording and tracking costs and revenues through the company's financial systems at an individual task level, and at high volume.

Integrating responsive maintenance software with core ERP

Making this possible meant Impact Response had to be integrated with Apollo Group's core Sage ERP EVision financial and business management software. With a tight deadline in place, and with such a technically advanced project, Apollo Group called upon the expertise of the Sage Construction team to assist in creating the relevant interfaces.

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Paul Richardson,
IT Director, Apollo Group

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Led by Stuart Juner, License and Configuration Manager for Sage Construction, a team of developers created interface links between Impact Response and Sage ERP EVision. The links built ensure that when a call from a tenant is received and logged in Impact Response, the unique incident number generated is automatically created in Sage ERP EVision against the relevant contract record. All labour and materials costs and VAT sales invoices that are recorded in Impact Response are then seamlessly updated in the Sage ERP EVision ledgers, with the contract, sales, VAT and general ledgers and payroll records updated accordingly. All financial transactions recorded in Sage ERP EVision against Apollo Services contracts are then available within the Sage ERP EVision contract ledger, analysed at individual task level.

Providing a two-way flow of data

The integration between the two systems also allows data to be transferred in both directions. For example, Sage ERP EVision dictates to Impact Response which suppliers and/or subcontractors can be used for each reactive maintenance task. Only those suppliers and subcontractors which have been tagged as 'approved' in Sage ERP EVision will appear available for selection in Impact Response. By only using approved suppliers and subcontractors, Apollo Group can ensure that tasks are completed to the high quality standard they pride themselves on.

Eliminating errors and reducing response times

Developing a system is one thing, guaranteeing that this system maintains optimum accuracy is another. So Sage Construction developed an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) that would ensure all relevant data is synchronised between the two pieces of software and updated at pre-defined intervals. The EDI exchanges data between the systems

in a push/pull fashion, with extensive validations built into the process. The sophisticated validations allow Apollo Services to quickly identify any possible inconsistencies between the two systems without the accounting ledgers being erroneously updated, and then to take appropriate corrective action and re-process the file transfer without having to put either system off-line.

The integration between the two systems therefore eliminates human error and helps reduce the response time of Apollo Services' reactive maintenance team by removing the need for duplicated entry of large volumes of data whilst also minimising associated paperwork.

Delivering on time and to budget

Paul Richardson, Apollo Group's IT Director said, "For the contract with Lambeth Living, Apollo were able to deliver a fully functioning end-to-end solution in a test environment ahead of schedule and in advance of other partnership contractors. This progress proved invaluable as we were able to take the lead in user acceptance testing for the whole partnership and inform our customer and technology partners of any changes or bug fixes in advance of the successful and timely 'go-live'".

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Sage Construction: committed to maximising our customers' efficiency

Wes Simmons, General Manager of Sage Construction said, "We're committed to automating our customers' business processes, making their operations as efficient as possible. This is what Sage has been doing for over 30 years. When Apollo Group came to us with the task of developing automated interface functionality for their responsive maintenance system, we knew we could provide a solution.

"Already having an understanding of the Apollo Services business was really important. We knew that their primary objective was to respond quickly to calls and resolve issues at the first visit. Delivering an integrated solution that would help Apollo Services achieve this objective was our main goal and the team worked really hard to deliver a system that does exactly that. We're very proud of the outcome."

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