

Sterling university

Business



Company: Access Consulting Customer: Sterling University Submitted by:
Buffalo Communications Ltd The University of Stirling is one of Scotland's
leading Universities.

Its attractive campus University offers students flexible and high-quality
courses in the Arts, Human Sciences, Management and Natural Sciences.
The University of Stirling continually strives for excellence by pursuing new
ways of improving its offerings. This is not only an emphasis for educational
programmes but also for the University's internal processes and
management. One such area of focus was the human resources and payroll
departments, responsible for over 1, 800 staff. Recognising that all staff were
critical to its success, the University of Stirling embarked on an ambitious
project to improve its processes from the flow of management information
through to streamlining payroll.

Some of the issues faced were:

- the payroll and personnel departments were entirely separate, making
them administratively inefficient as personnel data had to be keyed in
twice;
- the flow of management information was hindered because the two
departments were separate;
- the HR and payroll staff were not confident that the data was always
accurate or complete, reducing the quality of service they provided
and resulting in general dissatisfaction;

- payroll was split between mid- and end of month payments and, for many employees, weekly payment, adding a further level of complexity and administration.

The University decided to overhaul the information technology supporting these departments and, at the same time, merge the HR and payroll departments. A stringent evaluation process was undertaken to determine the solution that would best fit the University's needs and replace the inhouse IT system. Out of 15 potential suppliers, the University chose SAP R/3 human resource software along with SAP's recommended strategic and implementation partner, Access Consulting. Prior to the final decision being made, the University of Stirling visited the site of an earlier successful implementation by Access at the University of Newcastle. Commented Kathy McCabe, Project Manager at University of Stirling: " With such crucial projects, not only is it important that the solution is right but also that the senior management involved in the decision making process, have confidence in working with the consultancy team.

We felt certain that Access could support our requirements now, and in the future." One of the first activities to be undertaken was the evaluation of the business processes by Access and the University's project team. Over forty processes were identified and mapped. The payroll processes in particular were key. By selecting an integrated software solution, the University was able to merge the two departments as well as streamline the payment process to just one monthly date for all employees. But adding to the pressure of an already complex project, the latest release of SAP R/3 HR module (version 4.

6) was due to be launched in February. This meant the Access team needed to configure the solution on the older version and then upgrade it in just one week to allow sufficient time for testing before the 'go live' date of 1 April 2000. Prior to the first payroll run, thorough testing was carried out on almost 800 cases, whilst at the same time, formal training amongst users was initiated." From day one we knew we were embarking on an ambitious project, mainly due to the tight time constraints in which we had to make significant business process changes. However, to the credit of Stirling University, we had a great inhouse team to work with a good blend of business and IT personnel. Despite the first payroll run coinciding with the bank holiday making it a short week, the process was successful," said John Barker, Senior Consultant, Access Consulting.

A number of benefits became apparent very rapidly. Obvious improvements from streamlining the departments and payroll dates aside, the University has enjoyed reduced administration, improved management information, value added features and user satisfaction and confidence." So many different areas have been improved by the new system, from the payment of external examiners to the management of annual awards, we've been absolutely delighted. Even for the regular activities, staff have expressed new found confidence in the data." Throughout the project, we found Access to be entirely professional, honest and straight-forward. We have no doubts that they are the best team to continue the work and make an equal success of phase two," concluded Ms McCabe.