

“Data is turned into information,
which becomes knowledge and, ultimately,
business wisdom.”

Rurik McKaiser, CEO Phoenix Group

Case Study

The Phoenix Group

Incorporating Val-U-Flavours, Val-U-Chem and Val-U-Warehousing.

Business Info: The Phoenix Group

Type: Distribution, warehousing and logistics

No. of Employees: 19

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A growing number of small- to medium-sized companies are turning to sophisticated software to drive business efficiencies.

A good example is Cape Town-based company, The Phoenix Group, a fast-growing 100 percent BEE company with 19 employees. The group is involved in the distribution of food ingredients, enzyme systems and emulsifiers as well as the provision of warehousing and logistics services.

Until recently, The Phoenix Group was operating using a combination of spreadsheets and assorted software. The resulting duplication of effort led management to decide it was time to consolidate systems and make them more efficient. The Phoenix Group is planning for significant growth and intends to list on the Alt-X Board of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange within the next 12 months.

“In order to facilitate our planned growth,” says Rurik McKaiser, the group CEO, “it was essential that we implement a solid software platform on which this growth could be based.”

The company chose SAP Business One as its software solution, and Bluekey as its implementation partner. SAP Business One is an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system aimed at small- to medium-sized businesses. Bluekey Software Solutions was formed two years ago specifically to sell and implement SAP Business One software and is a recognised leader in the small- to medium-sized enterprise sector.

The results have been spectacular - decision-making is much faster and executives have instant information about their business, as opposed to needing to wait for management reports to be manually compiled.

“At a click of a button, we now have all business intelligence we require, allowing us to focus outwards on growing the business instead of expending effort on unnecessary internal processes like reconciliations,” says McKaiser

The benefits The Phoenix Group has derived are tangible and a lot of slack has been removed from operations. In one case, what used to be a four-day process, once a month, has now been reduced to a three-hour process. This has effectively given a key employee 20% more time in a month to utilise talents in other areas that directly empower the company.



SAP is better known as a globally tried-and-tested ERP system and the wealth of experience that this carries can be applied instantly to businesses of all sizes.

When SAP launched SAP Business One its intention was not only to provide software for SMEs, but to create a business eco-system within which small and larger organisations can conduct business electronically, reducing costs, time and errors.

Says McKaiser: “A huge advantage for us is that SAP Business One offers integration with our customers’ and suppliers’ computer systems, especially those running on SAP software. We believe that SAP Business One will be able to evolve with us as our business requirements grow and as we seek to gain ever greater business efficiencies”.

The implementation process of the SAP Business One system took 40 days from beginning to end. Bluekey’s role was to interpret the business requirements of The Phoenix Group and apply and implement the appropriate technology. By initially completing a detailed specification of requirements, Bluekey came to understand what The Phoenix Group wanted. Then followed a prototyping process where Bluekey built a model of The Phoenix Group’s business and used the model to simulate how the business would run. This process was refined over a period of time so that by “go-live” day, all the best practices were in place.

The beauty of the SAP Business One solution is that it can be moulded to suit companies operating in many sectors. Different companies have different management styles and operate differently - flexibility is important in the SME market. Companies like The Phoenix Group, which are on a fast-track growth path, need the security of knowing that the software they have invested in will be able to accommodate their future requirements.

SAP Business One is helping The Phoenix Group to realise its vision for the future on a daily basis. It is doing so by providing the people who work there with the ability to make better business decisions.

“Our data is turned into information which is turned into knowledge which ultimately gives us business wisdom,” says McKaiser.

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BLUEKEY specialises in the implementation of SAP Business One, the market-leading business software solution for small to medium sized companies.

We offer a total solution, from networking through data take-on and system setup to management reporting. Our business is to make your business more productive and profitable - through the implementation of the best software technologies.