

“Thanks to Datel, we’re very comfortable with Sage 200 and look forward to exploring more of its functionality to further increase our business efficiency. Organisations who have only ever worked with Datel may not fully appreciate the benefits of their project management approach. Having had such a contrasting experience with a previous business partner, we’re not just satisfied with Datel, we’re over the moon.”

**Vicki Askham**

Financial Controller

Lancaster University Students' Union



customer review



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**Vicki Askham is Financial Controller of Lancaster University Students’ Union (LUSU). Over a hundred LUSU employees provide comprehensive support for the student community to ensure their welfare and representation while at Lancaster.**

**As part of its wide range of activities, LUSU has a trading subsidiary that includes two retail outlets, a nightclub and off-campus accommodation, as well as a marketing function for local businesses to reach the student population. Turnover is in the region of £5.5 million.**

*How did Datel first enter the picture?*

We originally invited Datel to look at developing a bespoke solution to handle the management of our off-campus housing stock. We shelved the idea when Datel pointed out potential problems but were impressed with the experience of their consultants and their honesty in acknowledging the risks of this project.

We decided to take the opportunity to upgrade our Sage system to provide more support to our finance team and involved Datel, who suggested Sage 200 Financials and Commercial.

*What technology had you been using previously to run LUSU’s finances?*

We had another mid-range Sage system in place, Sage MMS, supplied by another business partner. It had been installed a couple of years previously as the best fit for our requirements, but, to be honest, we had found it very unsatisfactory.

It appeared that a lot of the functionality we’d expected either wasn’t contained in the software or the business partner hadn’t set up the software correctly for us to use it. The problems included not being able to

deliver the type of financial reporting we’d hoped to as a fundamental support for controlling our diverse business.

Given the size of our organisation, the solution represented a not insignificant investment for us; so it was very disappointing to see the limited return.

*So what has been your experience with Datel?*

It’s been a completely different story! Datel were a breath of fresh air right from the start. Their structured approach to project management demonstrated their experience. They’d clearly done it all before and it showed.

They took time to understand our requirements and devised a project plan for our agreement, outlining aspects such as the scope of the work, timeframe – which they adhered to, incidentally – and responsibilities. We hadn’t experienced anything like that before and quickly realised that the issues we’d had previously were not inevitable.

Datel also identified significant errors in our original set-up: it turned out that we’d been at serious risk of losing data which should have been archived.

*Having decided to move to Sage 200, how did the implementation go?*

I was very pleased that it proved an almost seamless process. We didn’t choose the easiest time to make the transition, scheduling it between our year-end and the auditors’ visit! We were quite nervous but Datel were very reassuring. It’s a measure of how well the implementation went that there was no disruption to our business. In all, it took around six weeks. We still met the audit timetable and emerged with 100% accuracy.



### *How have your users found the transition?*

There were natural concerns among the finance team about undergoing yet another change of system, but once the benefits began to emerge, they readily accepted Sage 200.

By the way, our understanding of what the system can do for us is now much deeper, compared with in the past. We learnt more in a single day's workshop held by Ian, our consultant than we'd done in the previous two and half years with our previous business partner.

### *How is life better now with your new system in place?*

It's still comparatively early days but the improvements are apparent already. You have to be able to trust the system that underlies your business and now we do. With our previous system we undertook some degree of manual checking, just in case. Probably at times we checked where it wasn't strictly necessary, simply because we lacked confidence in its accuracy.

To give an everyday example, if one of our many suppliers sent us a copy invoice, the duplicate invoice number wouldn't have showed up. At best, this meant time wasted checking back through the supplier's account; at worst, it meant a supplier being paid twice if the duplication slipped through the net.

Now, this functionality is included in Sage 200 and has eliminated the problem – and all the associated time spent preventing or resolving issues, letting us make much more efficient use of our time. The software carries out this kind of checking in the background. Datel have also been very good at clarifying any limitations in the system, so we understand the areas which should still be double-checked.

### *How has the relationship with Datel developed?*

Our project manager, Steph, keeps in touch and Ian will be coming back to do some more training with us. It's gone so smoothly that we haven't had to contact the Datel helpdesk as yet; but we have no doubts that if there is a problem they'll be able to deal with it. It's really nice to know that they're there if we need them.

Thanks to Datel, we're now very comfortable with Sage 200 and look forward to exploring more and more of its functionality to further increase our business efficiency. Improved reporting, too, will give us the important data we need to make informed business decisions, and, ultimately, help us to keep focused on delivering excellent service to the student body.

To sum up, organisations who have only ever worked with Datel may not fully appreciate the benefits of their project management approach. Having had such a contrasting experience with a previous business partner, we're not just satisfied with Datel, we're over the moon.

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The Datel logo consists of the word "Datel" in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid red square.The Sage logo features the word "sage" in a green, lowercase, sans-serif font with rounded letterforms.

Business Partner

A large version of the Sage logo, featuring the word "sage" in green, lowercase, sans-serif font with rounded letterforms.

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## About Datel

Datel is Sage's largest Business Partner in the UK and is acclaimed as its leading systems integration specialist. Headquartered in Warrington, Datel also has offices in Leeds and the Netherlands employing a loyal team of over 140 highly-skilled people who look after its growing base of over 800 customers worldwide.

We specialise in Sage 200, Sage Line 500 and Sage 1000, Sage CRM and SalesLogix as well as our own in-house products which we have developed to integrate with, and sit alongside, Sage solutions. Known as Datel FUSION, the suite of products enhances and extends the functionality provided by the core Sage applications.

Datel looks after a broad ranging base of customers including those in distribution, manufacturing, construction and the food and drinks sectors. Typically they are mid sized companies who rely upon Datel to make the most of their investment with Sage.

We pride ourselves in our approach to doing business. We seek to know and thoroughly understand our customers and their businesses so, in turn, we can appreciate fully all of the issues and challenges they face. Only then can we presume to offer a solution that will make a real difference to the way they do business. Everything Datel does is guided by our belief in providing only the very best in customer service. To find out more about our products and services, visit our website at [www.datel.info](http://www.datel.info)

## The Irvine Whitlock Solution:

- **Business Management Software**  
Sage Line 500 providing financial and purchasing processes and HR support for 10 users
- **Integrated VI Software Modules**  
Ensuring seamless management of contract procedures within one integrated system
- **Document Management Software**  
Including Version One DbForm, DbMail and DbFax