

“Much of the success of Multisol can be attributed to us getting close to our customers. Our new customer relationship management system supports this by giving us a single view of every aspect of our customer’s history and status.”

Andrew Wilkins
Operations Director
Multisol





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Multisol is a privately owned, family business offering services to the chemical industry. It provides sales distribution of chemical and oil products, blending and packing, toll processing and logistics provision. Its oil customers include household names such as BP, Esso Castrol and Total. Multisol is also a major distributor for Exxon Mobil, providing white spirit-based, specialist chemical products to customers such as Toyota and Vauxhall.

Multisol's turnover has grown five fold in just 8 years and the company has ambitious but realistic plans to double turnover within another 2 years. Furthermore, this phenomenal growth has been achieved purely by increasing sales. The main challenge facing Andrew Wilkins as Operations Director has been anticipating the on-going growth in business and meeting these demands within its IT system.

Clearly, the growth of Multisol has prompted the decision to upgrade your IT system. What were the main criteria you were looking to fulfill?

Although it might sound strange, I actually wanted to get away from having a bespoke solution. I wanted a system that is easily supported, based on a product that is widely used which means there is a lot of commonly available knowledge for us to use and benefit from. I was also looking for a system that is robust, easy to upgrade and able to grow with us.

Why did you choose Datel as your preferred supplier?

Bearing in mind I was looking for a 'tried and tested' product, I chose Sage Line 500 to handle the nitty gritty of our internal procedures. For the 'front end', Datel had the skills to integrate SalesLogix as the interface for Line 500 making it easy to use and resulting in an attractive overall package. Our sales people can now see everything they need for each customer: history, orders, account information,

credit levels, technical information and so on. All the information is live so everyone in Multisol can see the same information at the same time. This is really important particularly as oil prices are constantly changing.

How did Datel work with you to create and support your system?

The core product already existed, it was like a pile of bricks on the table - Datel's expertise was in knowing how to construct them into the system we needed and to create any bespoke features we wanted, for example one of our legal requirements is to supply datasheets with our products: they're chemical or oil-based so they need careful handling. Datel adapted the system so that it automatically tracks the orders through SalesLogix and supplies the datasheets accordingly.

We are committed to Sage as a product but need a focused, personal approach to IT support so find Datel is the perfect intermediary. We don't contact Sage at all, the influence Datel has with Sage means we get a better response through Datel. They understand our business and together we have refined and developed our IT system. Datel give us total IT support from conception to implementation right through to troubleshooting, problem solving and training services. This service gives us dedicated support staff within Datel who proactively manage our system.

Have you experienced any 'issues' with Datel and the new system?

Nothing hugely significant - we've had cause to call Datel out urgently several times and they always rise to the challenge. We are especially impressed with the way they will solve problems for us even if it's not directly within their remit. They know how business critical our systems are.



How has Datel supported your ongoing business growth and expansion?

We were offered a tremendous business opportunity to expand into Europe by one of our existing major suppliers as their distributor. In order to meet their demands, we set up a new company 'Zenteum' in a joint venture with a Scandinavian company. We compared the IT systems within each company to select the best and, critically, the quickest to implement as we were set very tight timescales of just 6 months if we wanted what was a very big piece of business for us. This for an expansion that would double the number of Sage users with more SalesLogix users across several European countries. Basically, we concluded that the best route forward was to replicate Multisol's existing Sage Line 500 and SalesLogix system within Zenteum.

How demanding was this project?

We put Datel under immense pressure as the project covered the complete infrastructure, a new wide area network across Europe and lots of bespoke integration including work to integrate with our supplier's SAP R/3 system. Datel liaised directly with them - we didn't need to be involved in every discussion as we had the confidence in their knowledge of our systems, our business and the chemicals industry to let them deal with our American suppliers. Our new system pulls data, on a daily basis, such as load information, test certificates and quality documents into Sage from SAP for our production and logistics which are then all tracked. There are other complexities of our business which also required bespoke work, there are VAT and customs and excise issues as we import and export both raw material and re-engineered products within EU and non-EU countries. My role meant that I was also involved in setting up the physical elements of the project such as new facilities, processing and logistics infrastructures so I needed to rely on Datel to project manage the whole IT implementation. In hindsight the timescales were, quite frankly, tremendously challenging, but these were imposed by our supplier. I think the project ended up being twice as complicated as Datel thought. They took on this very challenging

responsibility and still delivered to the 6 month deadline.

Did you consider handling the project in-house?

Datel's expertise enables us to react far more quickly than adding to our own IT, in fact despite doubling the system we haven't needed to increase our internal resource at all which I believe has proven much more cost effective. Mind you, we don't really consider Datel as external in many ways, they're so closely involved with the company. It says a lot to me that they coped with a doubling of support calls, virtually overnight as well as our ongoing support demand which was much higher than usual. New user training has been a real benefit as we deal with the same people over the phone.

And Datel continue to work with you?

Datel continue to work on further projects to enhance the system. Currently we're upgrading some of our servers to cope with the increase in users, and again Datel are project managing this for us. We're also looking to enhance the SAP integration, we're planning to take our infrastructure and operations into Eastern Europe integrating with our existing remote offices and to integrate with our logistics partners, work which will all be carried out by Datel. I've every confidence in Datel, gained not just through this project, but over several years. In 8 years the business turnover has grown from £10M to £50M and Datel have implemented and supported our IT systems for the last 6 of these. We anticipate to double this again over the next 2 years to around £100M but again, I'm absolutely confident in Datel - after managing such a radical change in just 6 months, it means that they can cope with anything else.

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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 lowercase, green, sans-serif font.

Business Partner

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

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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

The Multisol Solution:

- **Business Management Software**
Sage Line 500 providing finance, purchasing and logistics processes for 20 users
- **Fully integrated Customer Relationship Management System**
SalesLogix for 37 users providing consistent views of product information and customer sales
- **Intergrated report writing software**
- **Document management software**
Enabling automatic mail sending and document printing directly from core business applications