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Paul Shore

Executive Director of I.T. and Operations
Ralawise



customer review



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Ralawise are one of the UK's largest distributors of promotional workwear and leisure clothing. From their four warehouses in the UK and one in Ireland, Ralawise mainly supply the processing industry, which ranges from large workwear organisations through to individual screen printers and embroiderers.

Paul Shore is the Commercial Director and responsible for the IT systems at Ralawise. He’s heavily involved in the financial reporting side of the business and runs Ralawise Ireland. During his time at Ralawise, Paul has witnessed substantial business growth and the tripling of turnover.

What led you to first approach Datel?

The Tetra 2000 product we had was starting to restrict business growth. We could have stayed with the current provider but felt we wouldn't have had anything near what Datel have provided. I spoke to Sage and said who's around? I like dealing with more local companies and they were in Warrington which was a bonus - although this wasn't the main reason for choosing them. We looked at them as a business and their approach, we asked them to look at moving us forward to CS3. We felt their approach to the project was a million miles from where we were. Immediately that was an impressive angle for us. We met Paul Crompton and he became our Account Manager. I think he did a very good job of selling the company and its solutions to us. He is still very much involved with us and has enjoyed seeing us progress with the business.

So the first thing Datel did was to take you through a CS3 upgrade?

That was nearly ten years ago. We did a CS3 upgrade from Tetra 2000, and sat on that product for about four years. We upgraded

again because the business moved on and Sage offered progression, so we moved from a Unix based system to a Windows based system with all the latest technologies of Windows. We then moved forward again to Sage Line 500.

Fundamentally, you outgrew these systems?

We got to the point where the hardware was being hammered, the business had moved on and we were putting more demands on the hardware. Likewise with the database which wasn't coping with the demands of the business. The whole thing is down to business demand. Even in the last eighteen months we have seriously churned it again and are having to upgrade hardware.

Datel have obviously supported these upgrades. Have they added anything else to your systems?

Yes, we use all the Version One products and the Cognos suite of products which provides all our reporting including any type of three-dimensional analysis of reporting. In terms of what that software allows us to do, integration with Sage dramatically enhances its functionality, for example the SQL database integrates with Microsoft tools which Datel also sell to us. Datel also offer fully bespoke products. They wrote a time and attendance solution for us which records visitors from a health and safety point of view. From an employee point of view, it records time in, time out. If they're absent it looks at our HR module and knows whether they're on holiday or off sick. Basically it manages everybody's time. We have also embraced a warehouse management solution which is a Datel product - part of their FUSION range, and we've implemented SalesLogix. Datel isn't just a Sage reseller, it's a partnership that offers a solution to everything. So, from my perspective, I would rather have a one-stop shop that you can ring regardless of the query and be able to get support for it.



How do these projects originate? Do you ask them, or do Datel offer the service?

I suppose it's two-pronged. From a business perspective I'm always looking at what's going to make us a better bottom line or how we can get better customer service - ultimately, it's customer service which is paramount to us as a distribution company. If our customer service is spot on then, hopefully, our customers will always come back. As an example, I was recently looking at our business from a purchasing perspective and looking for ways to react quicker and get orders into our system. I talked to Datel and they suggested their API solution. We ended up buying three of these products.

Similarly, when I was looking at different warehousing products on the market I told Datel that they would have to carry out the integration with a third party product but I was a bit concerned because it was going away from the one-stop shop solution. However, Datel came back to us as a few customers were saying the same thing to them. They decided to write something themselves because there was the demand. The more customers that request a specific product from Datel, the more they develop and the better solution we all end up with.

You obviously have a long standing relationship and work very closely together?

Our partnership with Datel is a lot more than just that of a supplier. I think that they are a very professional set up. I've never had an issue with any of their personnel and their actual knowledge is fantastic. Continuity of consultants is important to me and I've always had that. They build a knowledge of your site, you build a working relationship with them and it works, you don't have to start going back over old ground. Continuity means a lot.

How important is IT in the business?

IT runs this business. If we have a power cut we don't trade. That's it in a nutshell. IT supports everything. The reason we are investing so much money in IT is that we are looking to bring more efficiencies into the business and be able to react quicker to customer demand. It is very easy in this industry to lose a customer. All our customers are very reliant on us as a supplier to have the kit there for the next day.

I suppose it's very difficult to quantify in terms of the success of the business?

I.T systems are very much a key factor to the growth of the business - a critical part of it. I don't think the business would be as successful as it is without our systems. We have a very good core based system which does a lot for us every single day, but our focus is to get it working harder. We are always looking for additional things, looking at improving our market knowledge - SalesLogix has given us a tool to manage this.

With regard to all your future plans, you're absolutely confident that Datel will deliver?

I have not come across anything where we have had any negative feeling or a feeling of incapability. They will find a way to do anything. They are a sizeable organisation and in terms of their technical ability they are spot-on and it's nice that Datel realise there isn't everything for everybody and will develop their own solution. The system is business critical so I need a company who will support our systems from 8 am to 10 pm daily. They offer a really good level of service. Overall, Datel offer everything that this business requires and I'm very happy, they are very professional and find a solution for anything that we throw at them.

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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 larger version of the Sage logo, showing the word "sage" in green with a stylized leaf-like shape above the 'e'.

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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 Ralawise Solution:

- **Business Management Software**
Sage Line 500 providing finance and distribution functionality for 60 users across 5 locations
- **Fully integrated Customer Relationship Management System**
SalesLogix for 30 users providing consistent views of product information and customer sales
- **Integrated FUSION WMS software**
Ensuring seamless extension to Sage Line 500
- **Document management software with Version One DbArchive**