

## Just the ticket!

*Roxton Bailey Robinson Worldwide Limited pre-empts growth with a flexible financial system.*



### Financial Management

### Financial Analysis

### Financial Control

### Expert Services

Roxton Bailey Robinson Worldwide Limited (<http://www.rbrww.com>) is a specialist luxury travel company that provides tailor-made safaris in Africa, journeys in Latin America and holidays to the world's finest hotels. Its sister company, Roxton Bailey Robinson Limited is the leading provider of field sports in the United Kingdom and overseas. The two companies have a turnover of £14 million and have 50 employees.

#### AN OPPORTUNITY

When Murray joined in January 2005 he inherited an accounting system that had evolved over five years without ever having been properly structured. The chart of accounts ran to an impossible 74 pages!

"It was immediately clear that I wasn't going to get any meaningful information out of the system," he says. "I would have to spend a tremendous amount of time and money upgrading the software and restructuring it, so it was an opportunity to start again. I had implemented Dream at a previous company, so I knew that it was the right product for us and I didn't need to look any further."

#### NO PROBLEMS

A deal was signed with CODA in June 2005 and implementation within Roxton Bailey Robinson Worldwide started in July. Dream was able to run on the existing dedicated server, which has a single Intel (R) Xeon (TM) 3.06 GHz processor with 2.75 gigabytes RAM and 132 gigabyte hard disc. It runs on Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and the data is stored in Microsoft SQL Server 2003.

To keep costs down, Murray was happy to take full responsibility for implementation, including design and build of the database. As well as the help files, he had access to the Dream help desk and a CODA consultant, who visited twice a month to check design and build.

"Because of the functionality of the Dream ledger system, it was fairly simple to distil the chart of accounts, into a meaningful structure," says Murray. "It allows you to add significant amounts of analysis information to a transaction, replacing separate accounts for each department and cost centre."

He was able to write routines to extract data from the booking and customer relationship management systems, which also use Microsoft SQL Server. This allows customer and supplier master information, invoices and credit notes to be imported directly into Dream.

"I came across no problems that I couldn't deal with," says Murray. "If the wonderful help file couldn't solve it, the support desk or the consultant did."

#### AUTOMATED FINANCE AND USER-DEFINABLE FORMS

The month of October was closed early and Murray worked over the weekend, going live with Dream the following working day. There are currently four users. Eighty percent of the data that used to be re-keyed is now automatically imported, as are bank statement details.

"The form design functionality is absolutely marvellous," says Murray. "I had no experience of it until I started this project, but it is fairly straightforward for somebody with some knowledge of form design in Visual Basic® or Access. It allows for really well structured input of transactions. When we receive invoices from overseas suppliers, we are able to import the booking code and departure date, which are crucial for further analysis."

DreamView, the Microsoft Excel® add-in, is used to build reports and management accounts. The spreadsheet file is refreshed directly from the Dream database and is sent to users by electronic mail.

"The Dream reports allow us to drill back into details of performance," says Murray. "We can now get revenue from each brochure at the press of a button. Previously this had been a painstaking and time consuming process."

The monthly close has reduced from 15 working days to five. This is mainly because the open ledger system allows detailed margin analysis by individual holiday booking. This cuts down the previously laborious review process to ensure that everything is paid up, so that revenue and cost of sales are accurate for the management accounts. Also, Dream calculates monthly depreciation, which used to take half a day in a spreadsheet.

**REPORTS AT A BUTTON CLICK**

The ability to import data has saved the company a tremendous amount of time. The three members of staff who previously spent much of their time re-keying information now spend most of their time doing accounting and analysis work.

"The aim is that, over time, they will get their accounting work done quickly and will spend more time focusing on some of the problems inherent in our booking system," says Murray. "There are some reports that don't work because we haven't devoted the time and attention required to clear down accruals, etc."

The business as a whole now enjoys better reports and management information, as a result of better quality data and improved reporting functionality. Reports that previously took weeks to prepare by going through the nominal ledgers and producing complicated spreadsheets have now been replaced by a few button clicks.

"The quality of the reports is phenomenal," says Murray. "I can report by groups of departments or analyse the performance of specific brands just by clicking a refresh button. If more explanation is required, I can view the attachment to a transaction, which is a revelation."

**MORE CUSTOMER FOCUS**

Sister company Roxton Bailey Robinson Ltd will move to Dream in 2006. Because it will benefit from the work already done, Murray is confident that implementation will take just two months.

The company's three core business systems, Dream, bookings and customer relationship management, all use Microsoft SQL Server. The next stage is to implement an integrated management information system that draws data from all three systems.

This will help the company to be more customer-focused. It will identify the most valued customers and those who are making the most referrals. The company will be able to reward and retain its most loyal customers.

Once the data is integrated, it will improve the services available on the company's website. Customers will be able to view their account to check payments or access bookings to get itineraries.

**IDEAL FOR GROWING BUSINESSES**

"Dream has significantly improved the visibility of all our accounting transactions and I think it's an ideal solution for growing businesses like ours," Murray concludes. "I can now sit at my desk and see what is going on. If I am not quite sure about a figure I can see the scanned image of the input document. My fellow directors have been amazed at how quickly we can access analysis of any part of the business. And now we can act on this information to improve the business as it grows, using it as a competitive advantage."



**About CODA**

CODA is the choice for finance professionals who need business software and services they can count on.



We provide award-winning Financial Management solutions that help organizations to streamline and automate their finance processes (from accounting and procurement to reporting and analysis) and to achieve better compliance and corporate governance. CODA applications work seamlessly with each other or independently and they integrate with other leading operational systems to maximize the return on your broader IT investment too. And our products are all underpinned by expert consultancy, training and support services, delivered by teams of experienced accountants, business analysts and technology specialists.

Founded in the UK in 1979, the CODA Group now employs more than 550 people and has offices around the world to deliver easy, local access to sales, service and support. Around 2600 medium and large organizations, across all sectors, use CODA solutions to control costs, drive performance and ensure compliance, while remaining agile and responsive.