

Choosing your business software

:: a business white paper ::



Background — Progressive Solutions and bisTrack

Progressive Solutions develops and supplies bisTrack business software primarily to distribution companies serving the construction industry. bisTrack was originally developed for use by companies that supply, import and process timber and, because of its strong timber related functionality, it is still widely used throughout this sector as well as by builders' merchants, steel stockholders, plumbers' merchants and electrical wholesalers.

The standard bisTrack package is used to process sales, manage stock, simplify purchasing and gather intelligence. However for greater functionality, additional bisTrack modules have also been developed and these include Web Track for companies who wish to offer internet based trading, bisTrack Mobile which enables staff to access the software remotely and eBusiness for paperless trading.

bisTrack software is built in Microsoft architecture and is therefore easily integrated with companies' existing software. Because of this, modules are now being developed for wider use throughout the construction industry to complement incumbent systems. Specifically, extra modules which enhance data mining and electronic trading and document tracking are helping to deliver projects on time and within budget.



Progressive Solutions International Limited
The Heath Business & Technical Park
Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4QX
Tel: +44 (0)1928 592200
Fax: +44 (0)1928 592252

www.progressive-solutions.co.uk
info@progressive-solutions.co.uk
Published: 23 November 2010
© 2010, Progressive Solutions International



Choosing your business software

A White Paper published by Progressive Solutions
November 2010

Background - Progressive Solutions and bisTrack.....	1
Choosing your business software	1
Objective	1
Why should I upgrade my software?	1
How difficult is it to train staff to use a new system?	2
How do you choose a reputable supplier?.....	2
How long will implementation take and how disruptive will it be?	2
What benefits can I expect?	2
Can a business management system be linked to accounts packages and other software used in my business?	2
Where shall I start looking?.....	3

Objective

This white paper takes the form of a question and answer series including some simple questions any prospective IT user should ask themselves when looking for a new business information software. New software systems and consultancy represent a significant capital investment for most companies, and they will not make that sort of commitment lightly without due diligence. New IT should be expected to add value to a business and return the investment, and will normally represent a carefully considered decision on the part of the client.

Why should I upgrade my software?

It's probably time to upgrade your software if you feel your current system is not delivering effective solutions to the challenges facing your business. You should see what your current supplier offers, and compare it to what else is available. The chances are things will have moved on since you last checked. A key reason for change today is to obtain immediate, reliable and insightful business intelligence. The sort of information that arms you with the ability to plan ahead with confidence and to put strategies in place that set you apart from the competition.

How difficult is it to train staff to use a new system?

Choosing a Microsoft Windows based system means that most staff will already be familiar with the new system's intuitive user interface. But it pays to invest in a well organised training programme to ensure that all users feel confident and are able to make the most out of the new system right from the start.

How do you choose a reputable supplier?

It's not just the supplier's reputation that's important, it's also crucial that they understand how merchants operate. So talk to your peers about their own software experiences. Sound out contacts at buying groups. Read case studies in the trade press. All the major suppliers provide plenty of information on their websites and some offer initial demonstrations over the internet so you can get a taste of the software without even having to leave your desk.

How long will implementation take and how disruptive will it be?

Like any major change to your business you will need to plan the implementation carefully, in conjunction with your supplier.

Then day-to-day operations need not be disrupted and you will have a realistic expectation of the time you will need to invest.

What benefits can I expect?

If you choose a supplier who is prepared to listen to what it is you are looking for from a new system; who wants to understand how you like to operate your business and what your goals are for the future; then you can expect a system which delivers the benefits that are important to you very quickly. Typically these might include improved margins, tighter credit control, accurate stock counts, simplified purchasing and fast, in-depth reporting and sales analysis.

What's it going to cost me? Normally you will be charged a licence fee per user, plus, depending upon the supplier, there may also be ongoing fees for training, new product development, upgrades and support. All these costs need to be equated to what the software will add to your business.

Can a business management system be linked to accounts packages and other software used in my business?

Yes, the best modern systems will interface with almost anything including the e-Xact product catalogue service, Microsoft Outlook and Calendars, Sage and other accounting packages and useful online tools such as Postcode Anywhere.

Where shall I start looking?

Try the supplier pages at <http://www.buildersmerchantsjournal.net>. Check out the 'Computer Software, Hardware and Services category.

"An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest."
Benjamin Franklin