

Client:	Big Sky Coaches
Business Partner:	Antinomy Business Consulting
Product/Software:	SalesLogix
Operating System:	MS Server 2003
Database:	SQL
Number of users:	15
Country:	South Africa
Date:	2008

Client profile

Big Sky Coaches has been in business for 27 years and operates a diverse fleet of vehicles throughout Southern Africa to tour operators, charter clients, contract clients and intercity passengers. The company markets, co-ordinates and manages transportation to events throughout the country, and its large database of regular clients is testimony to its success in the industry.

The challenge

Ashley Ellington, MD, Softline Enterprise, says the business needed more visibility into its operations and accounting system, and a way to spread the workload and information across various departments. This is where the stability and customisation of SalesLogix impressed the client the most.

Antinomy, Softline Enterprise Business Partner of the Year 2007, undertook the implementation. According to its Sales and Marketing Director, Lee Ann Mounter, Big Sky Coaches needed a way to produce and distribute quotations quickly and professionally, and then expand this process into operations.

MD of Big Sky Coaches, Abel Erasmus Jnr, explains that they conducted a manual operations and accounting system, using spreadsheets for quotes and confirmations, as well as job cards. "This was a time-consuming process. Operations staff had to keep an onerous filing system to match the initial request for a quote with the confirmation sent to the client. Once a quote was accepted, a manual job card had to be compiled the day before departure, which not only led to incomplete job cards but also long working hours for the operations staff."

Another glaring operational flaw was that the sharing of information was done verbally, or not at all. One person was responsible for following the entire client process, as vital information such as that of loading points, time of loading and the personal information of event organisers and clients was not always written down. As the workload couldn't be shared, all the company's client information was held by only a few key sales and operations personnel. The most pressing problem however was uncertainty regarding turnover at the various branches. Although it was possible to estimate turnover from the bookings sheets by judging how many trips were leaving in a specific period, this was hardly the best way of doing things.

The solution

The recent implementation of Softline Enterprise's award-winning CRM product, SalesLogix, has set the wheels in motion for a new dimension of visibility and operational performance for national tour bus operator Big Sky Coaches.

In conjuring up the remedy to its business dilemmas, Erasmus saw it essential to involve all sales and operations staff from the start of the SalesLogix implementation. "This was also the best way to secure employee buy-in, as everyone had a say in the detailed specifications of the software."

The benefits

After the customisation and implementation was complete, what impressed staff most, Erasmus says, was the stability of the customisations and deployment thereof. "We still saw the capturing of future opportunities as a big challenge since we had decided to do a complete switch from manual operations in this regard. But, with the buy-in of sales staff, this wasn't difficult at all and was in fact a good learning process for all."

Mounter says the implementation was greatly aided by the positive attitude at Big Sky Coaches. "SalesLogix is a very intuitive product, and in this case customised to the extent that it made perfect sense to all the users. The staff had a very open attitude, and this I believe is always 90 percent of the battle won."

The Future