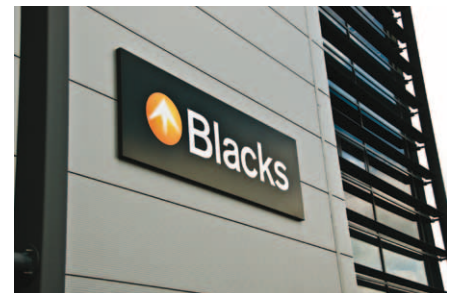


Blacks Leisure Group plc is the UK's leading outdoor retail specialist with a total of 314 stores throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland and a turnover of upwards of £240 million a year. Having entered the recession as a loss making business, in early 2008 the company embarked on a turnaround programme under a new management team.



Their challenge

Tough times call for tough decisions and for Blacks that means turning around their losses, cutting costs and still maintaining the potential for future growth. A significant contribution towards that challenge was investing in software to help them keep tight control of their finances, while at the same time being conscious of tight budgets and timescales. IT Program Manager Jamie Danby explains: "We had to have a solution that could cater for us to go down to a smaller number of stores, but that we knew we could build upon because we know our intention is to continue with the business turn around."

"We had a lot of information to load into the system – a two year history of information for example. We had a

tight budget which was always going to be a challenge to manage and we also had tight timescales. With everything that was going on in the business, we couldn't afford not to meet those timescales."

"We wanted something that was going to support us going forward... something we could grow into or grow with."

Our solution

Blacks had outgrown their existing Sage software so to bring all the different parts of their business together under the same system, they opted for Sage Line 500. Jamie Danby says: "It had to be easy to use and had to be something supportable."

"We wanted something that was going to support us going forward...something we could grow into or grow with."

Jamie Danby, IT Program Manager, Blacks.

It's not about having a flashy solution for us, it's about having something we could trust, that would work for us and that we knew would be there for us for a number of years."

That trust in their business management software has already helped Blacks reduce their overheads by £100,000 a year.

And they now have more visibility of what's happening across the whole of their business which will help them maintain their turnaround plans as Jamie Danby explains: "We can go into store level and tell you how much a store has spent on electricity last month for example. That's a big thing if you're trying to set a Profit and Loss down to store level."

The future

By working closely with the Sage team, Blacks now have a financial management system they can trust, that will help them through their turnaround plans and on into the future. And Jamie Danby offers this advice about working as a team with Sage: "Obviously there are responsibilities and requirements that sit on either side, but working with Sage how we did on a very tight and difficult project, made it the best project we've delivered into the company this year."



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