

SAP Education Customer Success Story



Royal Mail Group's SAP implementation has been a massive undertaking – but is reaping huge business benefits for the postal giant. Find out how SAP Education worked in close partnership with the customer to develop and deliver a bespoke training programme to support the national roll-out.



ROYAL MAIL GROUP SUCCESS STORY

HOW SAP EDUCATION IS PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN HELPING ROYAL MAIL GROUP MANAGE ITS BUSINESS MORE EFFECTIVELY.

A public limited company wholly owned by the Government, Royal Mail Group is a massive organisation with annual sales in excess of £8 billion and more than 220,000 employees. It touches all our lives every day through its three main brands of Royal Mail, the Post Office and Parcelforce Worldwide, and is constantly evolving to meet the challenges of the digital age.

In its quest to become more efficient and competitive, the Group embarked on a major SAP implementation in 2001, completing the successful roll-out of SAP R/3 across 18 business units and over 10,000 users. Having standardised and merged the organisation's internal processes and moved all legacy systems on to a single consistent platform, the next phase of development is well underway – the enhancement of the decision support capabilities to help Royal Mail Group manage its business more effectively. The ongoing SDS (Strategic and Decision Support) project – which comprises major SAP SEM and SAP BW implementations – is already delivering significant benefits to the business, and SAP education has been a crucial success factor.



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LEARNING LESSONS

According to Royal Mail Group's Steve Swindail, the key to the project's successful SAP education programme was simple: "...there was no grand design as such, we simply put ourselves in our project team's position and asked what skills and know-how would we need, to get the job done." As the Process Change and Information Exploitation Manager for the SDS project, Steve has a wide-ranging remit that includes the provision of the necessary skills for the project team, key users and end-users – and acknowledges the lessons learnt from the SAP R/3 roll-out. "One of my key drivers for the education programme this time around was to ensure that right up-front we engaged and challenged the business team members of the project team by giving them a thorough grounding in the software to complement their wide business experience."

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Royal Mail Group worked in close partnership with the SAP UK Education Team to develop and deliver a bespoke training programme, and the results have been outstanding. To date, 13 Royal Mail Group employees from IT and the business groups – an astonishing 50% of the Project Team – have become Certified SAP-SEM Consultants. The benefits have been immediate and exceeded even the expectations of Steve Swindail – himself a member of the Certified SEM Consultant group: "The rationale basically was that the project team go, attend, learn with SAP at Heathrow and then come back to help us shape our future direction. What we got in addition was an enormous payback in terms of goodwill from the attendees and ideas generation from business experts who now also know the software extremely well."

According to Keith Howard, mySAP Financials Solution owner for SAP UK Education, the holistic nature of the approach was an important factor in the success of the training programme: "What worked particularly well with the approach we took in partnership with Royal Mail Group was that it was balanced, joined-up education. The programme focused on technical and business skills, on project team-members, key users and the Project Board."

The four-stage programme began early in 2002 with a number of one-day BW and SEM overviews held specifically for Royal Mail Group. These were short, sharp knowledge-transfer sessions designed to engage the entire Project Team – not only to provide a stepping-off point for the project, but also to give everyone an appreciation of the wider project. These overviews were quickly followed by an 'Executive Day' at SAP, where the Project Board could see how SEM and BW – and ultimately the SDS Project – would add real value to the business. Strong sponsorship is one of the critical success factors of any project and Steve and the team were delighted with the results from the day: "We have received consistently positive feedback... the senior managers went away from this workshop not just bought-in but as advocates, strongly supporting the aims and objectives of the Project."

ACHIEVING SELF-SUFFICIENCY

By now the members of the SDS Project Team had a good foundation of knowledge and were therefore in a great position to make full use of the 10-day SEM academy. But as it was impossible for the whole Project Team to take 10 days off, Keith and Steve worked together to break the Academy down into smaller modules that could be taken over three or four months. "The bite sized chunks allowed us to retreat and digest the information within our own environment and discuss how our learning could be incorporated into our objectives," says Tom Hayden, a Royal Mail Group Business Consultant. "The staggered approach also encouraged interaction between the strands providing enough time for discussion on ways forward."

The focus has now turned to key and end-users, and the training programme to date has certainly helped in this task: "The SEM academy together with some tailored BW courses have given us the confidence and know-how to train our own users," says Steve Swindail. "In effect, at this stage we're self-sufficient."

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