

The Western Canadian Pipeline Article

The Power of ERP

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When Erin Shackleton came onboard as Corporate Controller at the Datalog Technology. It was obvious to all involved that the limited reporting capabilities of the software systems in the place throughout their 17 global locations would soon become detrimental to the companies' future growth.

With previous experience gleaned from other positions on the benefits of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). A software tool that allows businesses to house all of their business processes from Accounting to human Resources in one data base, she set about looking for a system that would work for Datalog.

"I first went on line to see if I could find some local distributors that dealt in ERP software," says Shackleton. Ruling out the previous ERP systems that she had used, because she didn't think they would be a right fit for what was needed at Datalog.

"It's extremely important when looking for an ERP system that you find the right partner that can work to meet your needs."

Those partners, for Shackleton and Datalog, turned out to be with CRCS Inc. (now known as VistaVu Solutions). A partner that works in conjunction with SAP's Business One software, Shackleton says that after some very long and intense consultation sessions, the use of a trial version of the software to play around with, and eventually some company specific customization that needed to take place, she ended up choosing the Business One as the right solution for her company.

When asked what it meant to both her and her company to be on the ERP path Shackleton explained, "We were elated to be done with the previous software we had been using." Software programs that consisted of a mish mash of AccPac, Quickbooks, and even excel, located in Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and several Latin American countries and all the different currencies they possess.

An excitement that rippled throughout the company when it was discovered that the new software would not only be able to work with all of the different currencies they dealt with, something explained Shackleton, that only a handful of software companies can do, but also would be able to meet all of their process and reporting standards necessary to deal with such issues as vendor payables, customer invoices and payroll.

"We were just excited that we were moving to a point where everyone was going to be using the same system."

A system that Shackleton estimates as something that saved her more than 20 hours a month of her time. Time previously spent compiling data and entering it on 17 different spreadsheets. With so much extra time available Shackleton says that she could then turn her focus on following market trends, currency fluctuation, and to looking at what the company needed to do to grow and where they needed to go. Forecasting that eventually led to the refocusing of the companies' operations from dealing primarily in mud logging, expanding their services to include logging while tripping and wireline services.

But while the company's focus may have changed dramatically, thanks to the Shackleton's foresight when choosing an ERP strategy, their software didn't have to.

"As part of the training we were provided at the onset, we were taught how to customize the program ourselves, which allowed us to adapt it and change the procedures in the software as we changed our business environment."

While Shackleton's enthusiasm for a software system may seem overly zealous, Shackleton explains, "I had used four different ERP software systems before this and had complaints every time. But not with SAP business One, our end users were very receptive to the new system."

But best of all says Shackleton, "You can make it to what you want it to do."