



Causeway talks to Barhale

What Causeway do for Barhale

- Increase profitability
- Manage and improve project performance
- Integrate the financial and commercial departments seamlessly
- Reduce the reliance on spreadsheets and paper based systems
- Eliminate re-keying and duplication of effort
- Achieve a reduction in errors
- Standardise information, processes and procedures across the group
- Implement powerful and flexible reporting
- Capture timely and accurate information

Causeway talks to Henry Arthur

Information Systems Manager

Business: Civil Engineering Contracting & Infrastructure Services

Turnover: £100m

Staff: 900

Solution: Causeway Financials

Q1.

Why did Barhale choose Causeway Financials ahead of other Accounting systems available in the market place?

Primarily because we worked in a spreadsheet culture which is how we managed all of our site and commercial information. Our accounting software was functional but not brilliant. There was a lot of duplication of effort in the system from initial input to final accounts. It was a poor situation and we needed to identify a better alternative. We were aware of Causeway and the solutions they had to offer and due to their market expertise and experience we felt confident their solution was the most comprehensive available, offering the best way forward for our business.

We were also driven by our mission statement. Barhale is continuously looking to improve and part of that drive was to increase turnover. About six years ago when we were a £20m turnover company, a target was set to expand turnover to £100m within 5 years. In order to do so, we recognised a need for a more integrated, comprehensive and functional financial system as our existing paper based system, spreadsheets and accounting software were unable to cope.

Causeway Project Accounting (CPA), an integral module within Causeway Financials, is an extremely well respected product within the industry and is proven in many construction businesses. It was the potential benefits of CPA, combined with previous knowledge of the solution that really drove the decision.

As a company we managed to reach our turnover objectives within 3 years. The decision to grow drove the system change and has undoubtedly helped us achieve our targets. We started growing in 2000, and have since been recognised as one of the fastest growing businesses in the UK.

Q2. What were the biggest issues you faced with your previous system that forced you to look elsewhere?

The system was spreadsheet based which meant we were heavily reliant on re-keying data resulting in duplication of effort which in turn introduced the risk of errors creeping into the system. There were regular complaints from our commercial teams at site that costs were not always allocated to the right elements of the project. The commercial team now have infinitely more control over where the costs are allocated and greater visibility of projects progress and performance. Causeway has given them that control.

With regards to core accounting, our incumbent system simply did not fulfil our needs. Causeway Financials combines the proven commercial management functionality within CPA with a world-class accounting system in a single fully integrated solution. This offered us a world-class solution for both the commercial and financial disciplines within our business without compromise.

Q3. How have Causeway helped you overcome your business issues?

The total solution is able to satisfy our needs from commercial management to purchasing and accounts and has eliminated the need for re-keying and, duplication of effort. It provides more flexible and powerful reporting with user shaving access to key data across the business. More importantly it promotes and encourages unification of practices throughout the group. The system is used by everyone so it has introduced a standard approach throughout the business, driving best practice and providing unified rather than disparate views of data.

We have also spent time concentrating on the issues of costing and valuations. The senior management within our business were relying on cost managers and quantity surveyors for monthly reviews and performance updates. The forms and reports are now held within the system and are 'real time' providing timely and accurate management information. This includes the cost/value reports prepared by the QS.

Currently we primarily operate from regional offices. Qs and Cost Mangers visit site as and when required, but we are increasingly moving towards a more site-based operation. The advances in technology have allowed us to linkup more sites and the QS will now be able to operate more efficiently. The system will provide greater control at the sharp end where it matters, rather than producing historical data days later when things can be missed. We are now proactive as oppose to reactive. Broadband is helping us expand the use of CPA on site and currently we have licences for over 100 users.

Q4. What are the biggest benefits the system brings to your business?

Barhale primarily works under frame work agreements, cost recoverable and open book forms of contract. CPA has assisted in the management of these contracts as we now have a much greater control over our project cost information. All costs are now allocated to the correct codes and can be reported accordingly. Before they were held in different parts of the system whether spreadsheet or paper based and were not easy to collate, manage or report. CPA offers increased control in one central system providing timely and accurate information. This is clearly the way to go for a growing company.

With regards to our accounting procedures we are now reducing our reliance on spreadsheets and have much greater functionality available than with our previous systems. A great example is the fixed assets functionality which has recently been implemented. This allows us to maintain asset registers and monitor depreciation within the accounts package itself.

Q5. What do you feel the future is for the solution within Barhale?

Barhale is a successful company and is continuing to grow. It is essential that our chosen software grows with us. Causeway is continually listening to the market and is aware of legislative changes, adapting accordingly. By means of an example they have developed their software to comply with the government changes to the CIS Scheme and have made

a good job of it. As a software supplier Causeway is very well attuned to industry changes and advancements.

Q6. Any words of advice?

When undertaking a review of your software you need to produce a detailed implementation plan allowing enough time to achieve the goals. Do not forget there are plenty of tasks to do after you have gone live with the system, so a well-managed project plan will produce distinct benefits providing clear focus for the primary objectives. It has certainly worked well for us.

Data migration is also a key consideration. It is very important to have a clear understanding of data transfers from old systems to new, especially the accounts system.

In order to improve your business you need to unify your systems and processes. Barhale is now effectively using a single solution providing unified data management throughout the business.

To find out how Causeway can help your business please call us today on

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