
Interview with...

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On Selecting Software

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SCA Packaging is Europe's leading producer of customer-specific packaging solutions, with some 260 locations in 25 countries. SCA Packaging Europe puts emphasis on state-of-the-art design and local services close to customer facilities. They recently went through a Software Selection process, with the help of independent Supply Chain Planning specialist, Hughenden.

Q: What was the objective of your project?

A: "We had identified a missing element in our **sales forecasting and planning process**, which prevented us from getting closer to becoming a *One Number Company**. We decided that software would be of huge help to forecast and plan demand across multi-sites and multi-products, for input into our newly created Sales and Operations decision making process. The objective of the project was to select good fitting, user-friendly software that could do this for us, so we do not create a huge overload administratively."

* Editor: 'One Number Company' is the term used to describe a business where every plan is derived from the same, agreed basis – typically the Demand Plan. It implies that there is no more second-guessing from different departments.

Q: How did you run the project?

A: "It made sense to me to **off-load** this from my people and myself - we realised that we could not go through this selection process in 2 hours. I also thought that we **would have been biased**. So, we decided to use an independent and knowledgeable body to act as a 'filter' between us and the software houses. This is the role that Hughenden played for us, helping us to create the long list of potential vendors and then managing the process to create the short list. The decision on the final selection was down to us – because at the end of the day, we pay for the software!"

Q: What did you like about the Hughenden methodology?

A: "I liked the fact that **I did not have to create one!** I wanted to work through a selection process, not have to create one and structure it from scratch... In addition to the method, the Hughenden team also contributed good hints and tips, along with key details."

Q: What did it mean to have this 'filter' (Hughenden) between you and the software houses?

A: "I think that it was not easy for the software houses to have this 'filter'. They prefer to approach the buyer, get straight into the organisation, and win quickly. But we put this

independent 'filter' in place on purpose, in order to have a more robust process. Eventually, the software houses understood the reasons, and saw the benefits to them: there were **no inconsistent messages** being told, so it was fair to all the candidates. The other advantage was that, when all we cared about was seeing a software demonstration, Hughenden translated our **technological requirements** in a way software houses could understand them. We would have been totally inexperienced as a group."

Q: How did your team feel about the process you went through?

A: "At first, the people asked why Hughenden were involved in the process. But very quickly, they started telling me how much they appreciated the methodology and the value it brought to the project. **"We have never seen such a structured vendor selection process"**, they told me! I think that everybody felt so much more informed upfront, and then everything was logical and organised during the process."

Q: If you had to do it all again, would you change anything?

A: "I would still want to create the 'filter'. I would still want Hughenden to talk to the vendors, so they do not come straight to us, avoiding biased views. I would ensure that we run the whole project together, from beginning to end, so that everything is aligned."

Q: What personal lessons are you taking from this experience?

A: "I do not think I have learnt anything contents-wise, but I know that I have learnt to **listen to my team**. I also take away that it is an ideal combination to have people with internal experience (knowledge of our current and to-be planning processes) and an external, independent team with knowledge on vendor capability. **This combination brings results**. Having it was fantastic!"

Want to go further?

No doubt you have thought about what functionality you need from new software. Is the list comprehensive? Have you prioritised it? Have you got a mechanism to log the various software evaluations and to compare the ratings?

To save you time and effort, Hughenden has developed a Functional Requirements database for selecting Supply Chain software (Planning, Scheduling, Forecasting, and Inventory Management). It has been praised by several leading software houses, and is designed to help you go through a faster and more robust selection process.

To find out more, contact us at info@hughenden.net