



ASPEN MARKETING SERVICES

SUPPORT FOR AMBITIOUS GROWTH STRATEGY

QUICK FACTS

Industry

Media – advertising

Revenue

US\$370 million

Employees

800

Headquarters

West Chicago, Illinois

Web Site

www.aspenms.com

SAP® Solutions and Services

SAP® ERP application; SAP NetWeaver® Business Intelligence component

Implementation Partner

Fujitsu Consulting Services

West Chicago–based Aspen Marketing Services is the nation’s largest privately held marketing services agency. Aspen Marketing serves its industry-leading clients with a complete portfolio of integrated solutions that cover direct mailing, digital marketing, promotions, event marketing, analytics, and public relations. When the company’s business objectives were hindered by a legacy system stretched to its limits, Aspen chose the SAP® ERP application to support its aggressive growth-through-acquisition strategy.

Key Challenges

- Retire an existing platform unable to support further growth
- Improve customer service and profitability tracking across all lines of business
- Integrate core business processes
- Improve data reporting across business functions
- Automate processes to improve operational efficiencies

Implementation Best Practices

- Used Fujitsu-powered SAP® Discovery system during blueprinting
- Simplified data conversion by focusing on active data
- Simplified data structures by using single warehouse and company code
- Used SAP standard chart of accounts tool, delivered via SAP Best Practices offering
- Trained all system users (150 to 170) prior to go-live

Financial and Strategic Benefits

- Seamlessly integrated operations of acquired companies
- Gained macro view of entire business operations
- Improved data reporting for all business owners
- Enhanced Sarbanes-Oxley Act compliance by introducing standard user role definitions
- Gained multilingual functionality for invoicing

Why SAP Was Selected

- Support for company’s growth strategy
- Optimum scalability
- Comprehensive functionality
- Robust and flexible reporting features

Low Total Cost of Ownership

- Achieved rapid 90-day implementation, on time and within budget
- Reduced need for IT staff by hosting solution on internal hardware with Fujitsu application support
- Eliminated service charges for IT support after new acquisition

Expected Operational Benefits

- Reduced effort for annual budget planning
- Automated 25% to 30% of all accounts payable transactions (within 6 months)



“SAP ERP was definitely the right decision for Aspen. We now have a system that fully supports our business strategy.”

Patrick J. O’Rahilly, CEO, Aspen Marketing Services

www.sap.com/contactsap

Building One-to-One Customer Relationships

Aspen Marketing Services offers its clients an extensive array of innovative and fully integrated marketing solutions. This successful agency has a client list that reads like a Who’s Who in industries ranging from automotive to telecommunications. In fact, Aspen is the nation’s largest privately held marketing services agency, and the company is still growing.

Aspen’s growth can be attributed in part to an ambitious acquisition strategy that allows the agency to infuse its rich portfolio with cutting-edge services – such as digital marketing concepts and specialized solutions for the automotive industry. In the recent past, however, Aspen realized the need for a business platform that would enable it to easily integrate new operations and provide visibility into an ever-expanding enterprise. The company’s legacy system was already operating at maximum capacity; it was clearly time to make a change. As Aspen’s CFO, Don Danner, sagely observes, “It didn’t make sense to have a business system that could not support our business strategy.”

Making It Happen

As company executives recall, it didn’t take Aspen long to choose the SAP® ERP application as its platform for continued growth. Working closely with implementation partner Fujitsu Consulting Services, Aspen focused on standard functionality and a simplified approach to data conversion. The agency also used the Fujitsu-

powered SAP Discovery system to evaluate different business processes and to accelerate employee training. The result was a rapid 90-day implementation – on time and within budget – that required minimal customizations (only a single user exit!).

Enhancing the Value of an Enterprise

The implementation was finished just in time. Concurrent with go-live, Aspen completed the latest of three recent acquisitions. The agency gained 150 employees and business relationships with more than 1,800 additional automotive dealerships across the United States and Canada. Yet, Aspen integrated the acquired company’s operations into its new enterprise business system in just 15 days. The scalable software was not only able to handle the increased operating demands – such as a significant upturn in billing volume – it also provided support for some atypical business requirements (for example, providing invoices in French to the company’s new customers in Quebec, Canada). The rapid integration also let Aspen avoid potentially expensive monthly service fees for transitional IT support. As Danner summarizes, “This acquisition wouldn’t have been possible with our previous system.”

As a result of increased visibility across its growing enterprise, the agency can now measure and track performance throughout the various profit centers. And, with readily available information at their fingertips, business owners will be able to generate reports according to their

own specific needs. In fact, Aspen discovered that four out of five “custom” reports it initially requested are part of the standard SAP ERP application.

The company is also benefiting from improved efficiencies in its financial operations. For example, Aspen has consolidated several different general ledger databases. In addition, the company expects to automate at least 25% to 30% of all accounts payable transactions in the next six months, eliminating many formerly paper-based tasks. Further, Aspen executives anticipate a significant reduction in the cost and effort of conducting internal audits as a result of better GAAP and pro-forma reporting.

Growing with Confidence

“It’s just the beginning,” says Rick Goodard, Aspen’s CIO. He foresees even greater operating efficiencies as the company fully utilizes its production planning and project systems functionality. Meanwhile, Aspen can continue to expand its creative portfolio with confidence – knowing that the agency’s business platform can easily support the company’s growing success.

50 088 519 (08/06)

©2008 by SAP AG. All rights reserved. SAP, R/3, xApps, xApp, SAP NetWeaver, Duet, PartnerEdge, ByDesign, SAP Business ByDesign, and other SAP products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of SAP AG in Germany and in several other countries all over the world. All other product and service names mentioned are the trademarks of their respective companies. Data contained in this document serves informational purposes only. National product specifications may vary.

These materials are subject to change without notice. These materials are provided by SAP AG and its affiliated companies (“SAP Group”) for informational purposes only, without representation or warranty of any kind, and SAP Group shall not be liable for errors or omissions with respect to the materials. The only warranties for SAP Group products and services are those that are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services, if any. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty.

THE BEST-RUN BUSINESSES RUN SAP™

