Opera Holdings see time-savings with iplicit

Sector	Previous Finance System	Number of iplicit users	Go Live Date
Recruitment	**Safe Financials**	**4**	**September 2024**

Recruitment business Opera Holdings made large time savings at a 'not unreasonable cost' with iplicit

Running the finance operation for a group of recruitment companies is a complicated business.

The team at Opera Holdings handles the accounts of eight businesses — and it has to get into a lot of detail.

"We have fairly complicated accounts requirements," says Simon Alderman, Group IT Director.

"We run full accounts for each company within the group and we drill down into the individual cost centres."

The business was previously using an on-premises software system, Safe Financials. When that product was being moved to the cloud, with the prospect of considerable pain and cost, the team spotted the ideal opportunity to change.

"I haven't had anyone complaining to me about iplicit. That's a big plus as far as I'm concerned!"

"iplicit allows us to do different things, in a better way. It also future-proofs us, so we don't have to keep looking to upgrade the software."

**Simon Alderman
Group IT Director**

Requirements were 'complicated'

Founded in 1982, Opera Holdings has grown through acquisition to cater for a wide range of recruitment needs. It provides temporary staff in nursing, social care and private domiciliary care. It finds permanent staff for transport and logistics. And it has an operation supplying industrial staff all over the UK.

"The hardest part of running the group is the intercompany administration," says Simon.

"We have information feeds coming from each of the companies into head office. Each of those information feeds that are to do with the sales or purchase ledger will require their own coding. They may require their own VAT treatment. They will certainly require their own reporting. All of that means that our requirements for any accounts system are quite complicated.

"In part, that's why we started looking for a new system and ended up with iplicit. After looking at it, we felt it was going to be able to take care of things in a more straightforward way than some of the competitor products — and crucially, at a not unreasonable cost."

Why change systems?

"We were going to have to move to a new system because the existing accounting software from Safe Financials was a long-standing, in-house server-based product and it was being moved into the cloud," says Simon.

"That was fine but there would have been various aspects of pain and cost to do that. The cost, and some other concerns about that product, meant that wasn't really where I wanted to end up. It was the right time to look around and see what else was out there."

He drew on his own experience and previous notes on the subject and discussed the company's needs with the head office team, led by Chief Value Officer Paul Lawrence. Their research led to a list consisting of iplicit and two other suppliers.

"It was always going to be cloud-based, as most software is these days in the accounting space," says Simon.

"It had to handle intercompany transactions in a way that didn't make us duplicate work. All our money goes into one pot and then we've got to hand it over to various other pots and we don't really want to be doing that with a pen in hand if we can avoid it.

"Given that the software we were running has been pretty much unchanged for 15 years, we were expecting a much greater sophistication in terms of reporting capabilities and user interface configurability, all of which we've gained with iplicit.

"We also wanted an improved exchange of information with the banking system. A lot of it was done fairly manually under the old system. We were hoping we'd find it easier to do what we need in terms of bank recs, statements and money transfers and all that sort of stuff with new software."

"Things are easier and quicker. There's no question that it's saving us time."

“I think the professionalism of the project management was great. iplicit has some very good people working for it,” says Simon.

“I always had the feeling that staff were being made available when needed and we always had some means of getting answers fairly quickly.

“If you're going into something like this, it's important to get it right and it's good to know there are people who can dig you out of a hole that might be of our own making. I don't think anybody's had anything bad to say about the implementation and training.”

'The staff are very pleased' with iplicit

Opera Holdings has seen substantial time savings from iplicit and has noted a long list of advantages over its previous software.

“We were going from an old-fashioned package into something new, so there were considerable benefits. The staff are very pleased with it,” says Simon.

“It's easy on the eye and it's very easy to create workflows, to customise your interface and get at the information you want, when you want it, in the format you want.

“It's cloud-based, so I don't have to worry particularly about software backups and that sort of thing, so that takes away a headache.”

For those who use the system most, the key benefits include:

- automatic bank reconciliation;
- the iplicit app for claiming and approving expenses;
- and the ability to use reporting templates rather than create reports from scratch.

The team also benefits from the system's notifications to alert people to actions they need to take.

'Nobody had a bad word to say' about iplicit's support

Opera Holdings had a “very good” experience with iplicit's training and implementation teams.

“I hear a lot of noise about bad things, but I haven't had anyone complaining to me about iplicit. That's a big plus as far as I'm concerned! ”

Simon Alderman
Group IT Director

"The email communication side of things seems to work very well too — the ease with which we can send out remittance advice and that sort of thing," says Simon.

"Things are easier and quicker. There's no question that it's saving us time."

He adds: "iplicit allows us to do different things, in a better way. It also future-proofs us, so we don't have to keep looking to upgrade the software.

"It might sound trivial, but with the on-premises software, there are end-of-year upgrades you've got to run, and then there are new bits in between. One of the benefits of being in the cloud is that all that side of things is taken care of, so we get the new features coming through automatically. I hope that will make things work even faster as those things come on stream."

'It's working well for us'

As the person responsible for IT, Simon hears about any concerns about new systems.

"It's the nature of my job that I rarely hear good things about anything," he admits.

"I hear a lot of noise about bad things, but I haven't had anyone complaining to me about iplicit. That's a big plus as far as I'm concerned!

"It's working wheel for us."