



A Time Warner Company

IPC Media finds a proactive Oracle support partner

IPC Media welcomes the expert, partnership approach of the Mokum



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Customer challenge

IPC Media required a responsive and proactive support service for its Oracle Applications.

Solution

The flexible, partnership approach of the Applications Management Support Service from Mokum.

Key Benefits

- Quicker, more effective resolution of problems
- Improved service to business users due to a clearer understanding and communication of problems and solutions
- Proactive proposal of process and system improvements.

IPC Media is the UK's leading consumer magazine publisher employing over 2,000 people and selling more than 350 million copies each year from its large portfolio of brands. Over 70 per cent of women and 50 per cent of men buy its magazines, representing 28 million UK adults. IPC Media is owned by Time Inc, the publishing division of Time Warner, the world's largest media organisation.

To help meet the information and complex reporting needs of its business, IPC Media uses the key financial modules of the Oracle E-Business Suite including Financial Analyzer. These Oracle Applications were initially implemented and then supported by a third party.

Addressing falling support levels

"Our support providers had been in place for around seven years," says Ruth Hudson, Financial Systems Controller at IPC Media. "And it seemed the relationship was getting tired. In addition, communication levels dropped when some services were moved offshore. We felt our problems were no longer properly understood or dealt with."

In order to improve its support service, IPC Media decided to invite tenders from potential partners. Key requirements were a flexible service that offered a proactive approach to support issues.

The main challenges support providers face at IPC Media relate to the complex accounting and reporting structure as well as the number of customised interfaces between the Oracle Applications and other systems. IPC Media requires a sophisticated matrix arrangement to enable them to extract and independently report on information such as costs, distribution levels, unsold returns and profitability for each of its magazines. Naturally, this complexity is reflected in the way that Oracle Applications are set up within the company.

Demonstrating ability and proving worth

"Throughout our selection process, Mokum came across as a professional organisation with top quality people," says Hudson. "But what really won us over was the expertise Mokum showed in a free day of support offered to us as part of the tender process. A consultant helped us with a problem that had been unresolved for around a year. His input really opened our eyes to the level of service Mokum provides."

IPC Media has an initial 2-year contract for Mokum's Applications Management Support Service and has chosen an agreement that does not limit the number of support calls that can be made or the time spent on resolving problems. A full support service

is provided covering application, database and functional support, technical development and business processes.

As part of the support contract, IPC Media has 50 "call off" days. These can be used as required, for example to implement minor development work, carry out system updates or provide training to in-house staff. Mokum always provides the best resources for the job so, although call off days are part of the support contract, specialist staff are used whose skills match the task being undertaken.

A proactive, trusted partner

"Mokum are very hands on and happy to get involved," says Hudson. "They offer a personal service, providing great attention to detail. I'm always confident that the right people are looking at the problem and will get to grips with it quickly."

As part of its partnership approach, Mokum analyses the pattern of support calls it receives to identify potential areas for improvement. It can then suggest remedial action such as set up changes, system performance enhancements or user training.

Enabling a better service to the business

IPC Media has seen many benefits from its Mokum support service, often stemming not just from Mokum's expertise but from the close working relationship that encourages effective transfer of knowledge and sharing of skills. As a result, problems get resolved much more quickly than previously.

Mokum has developed a detailed understanding of IPC Media's business and systems, which added to good communication skills, results in a greatly improved service to the business users. "Thanks to Mokum we are able to gain a better understanding of any support issues that occur and can communicate effectively with our users. We can let them know exactly what the problem is, what is being done to fix it and when the issue will be resolved. This has increased their confidence in our service," says Hudson.

However, IPC Media gets more than a reliable, efficient support service. "Mokum do more than just fix reported problems, they proactively suggest ideas for improvement," adds Hudson. "I'm far more confident in the quality of the service and it's costing us less than our previous supplier."

IPC Media has developed a good working relationship with Mokum and, as a result, has involved them in a growing number of Oracle projects that fall outside the remit of the support contract. Mokum helped IPC Media roll out Oracle Financials in Australasia and implement the enhancements and modifications needed to cater for regional needs. A simple add on to the existing support contract now covers Oracle Applications in the Asia Pacific region.

"Because we feel comfortable with the service we receive from Mokum we are happy to involve them in new work that matches their skill set," concludes Hudson.



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About Mokum:

Mokum is an Oracle consulting and support business based in London's Docklands. Mokum offer high-quality services to large organisations that have selected Oracle as their strategic ERP system. Mokum's services include enhancements, upgrades and support encompassing all areas of the Oracle E-Business Suite.

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