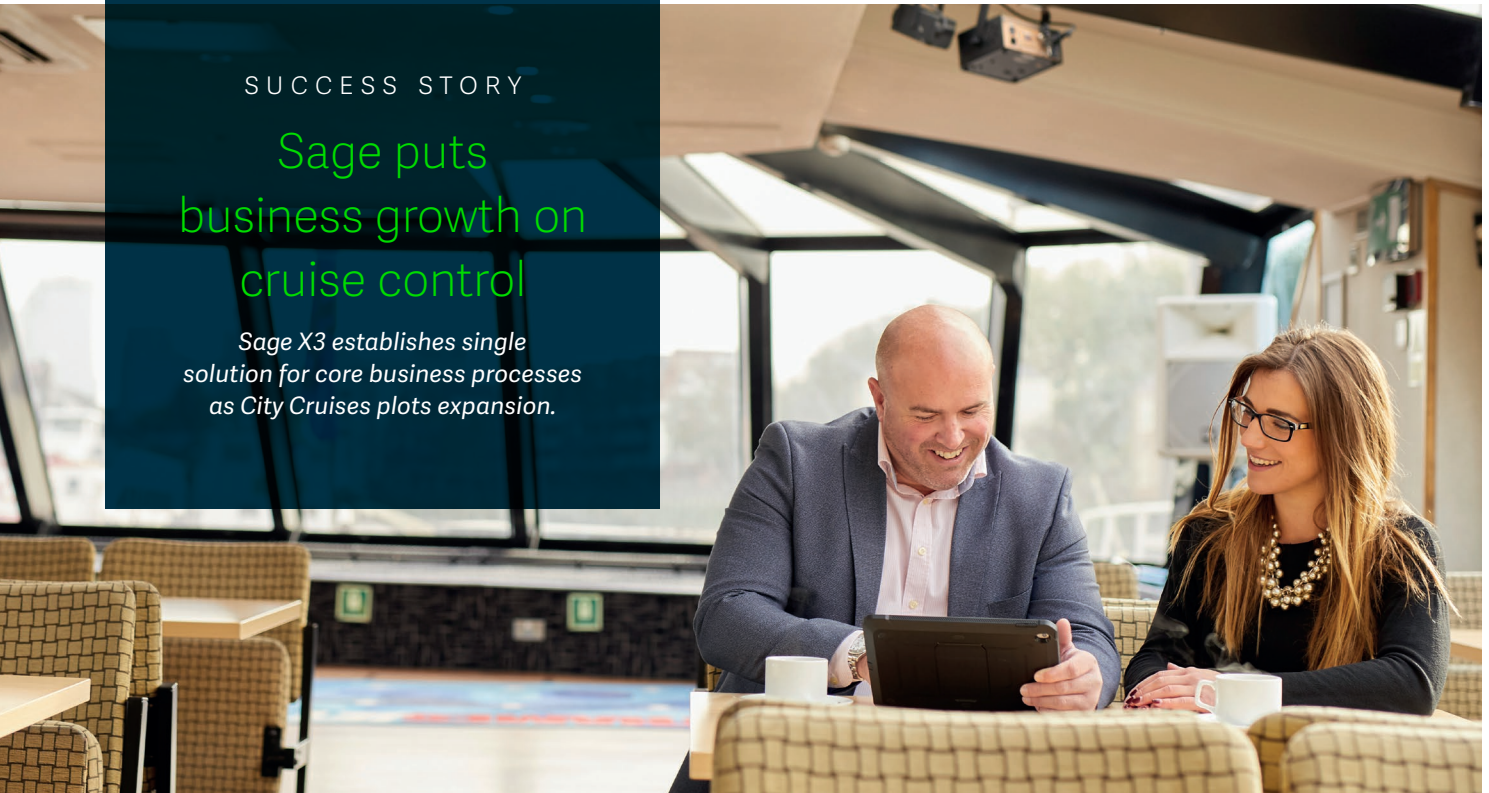


SUCCESS STORY

**Sage puts
business growth on
cruise control**

*Sage X3 establishes single
solution for core business processes
as City Cruises plots expansion.*



City Cruises is the UK's leading boat tour operator, carrying more than four million passengers a year. To manage and integrate new acquisitions, senior management wanted to create a new finance system, capable of supporting the growing business. Today, by adopting Sage X3, City Cruises has future-proofed the administration of the business, while delivering the tools to spot and act on valuable business insight.

Based in London and operating 17 boats on the River Thames, City Cruises offers regular services throughout the day, including a restaurant ship.

Over the past five years, the company has expanded rapidly, diversifying its product range to include dining products such as lunch and afternoon tea. It has also expanded its portfolio by taking on operations in Poole, and five boats in the historical city of York.

The challenge

Amongst all of this growth, City Cruises lacked visibility and wanted greater insight into its financial processes, such as budgeted costs. It needed a new finance system that would support further business expansion year on year.

Company
City Cruises

Location
London, UK

Industry
Services, Tourism

System
Sage X3

Release
Version 11

Partner
Percipient



"We've grown, yet some of the infrastructure in place to support the business has not kept pace," says John Rowthorn, finance director at City Cruises.

Rowthorn wanted to create a new finance system capable of supporting the growing business and enabling City Cruises to manage and integrate new acquisitions. "We needed a solution that would scale and be robust," he says.

In addition to delivering scale, the solution would need to reveal granular detail. With City Cruises moving into new lines of business, such as events and dining, it needed to be able to understand the true financial impact. Rowthorn wanted the ability to focus on individual elements, such as specific boats, locations, or service times.

"One of the challenges with the old system was that we weren't able to identify different products by profit," he explains. "We wanted to be able to drill down on specific activities and take action if needed."

The solution

Sage X3 provides a single solution for City Cruises' core processes: inventory, sales, customer service, and finance. It manages financial processes with general ledger, cost accounting, budgeting, and more, enabling better control of procurement, cash flow, and business purchases. It is integrated with both the stock management system and CRM.

For Rowthorn, it delivers a 360° view of customers across sales, marketing, customer service, and support. According to Rowthorn, the Sage solution has created "a single version of the truth." Rowthorn adds: "The key difference with the Sage solution was the ability to be able to automate our processes with both our customers and suppliers."

“We felt that Sage X3, with its multi-site functionality, was better suited to the growth plans of the business.”

Jo Fuller, Percipient



Sage X3 was planned and implemented by technology partner Percipient. Other solutions were considered, but Percipient and City Cruises opted for the Sage solution.

“We felt that Sage X3, with its multi-site functionality, was better suited to the growth plans of the business,” says Jo Fuller, head of pre-sales at Percipient.

Rowthorn says, with Percipient alongside, the solution was put in place with minimum disruption.

City Cruises also manages its stock inventory through Sage X3. It has brought together disparate reporting elements and historical data, enabling City Cruises to see the full picture, yet still be able to drill down on granular detail. “We can now see profitability by different boats, different routes, and different times,” Rowthorn says.

With Sage X3, City Cruises has a platform on which it can easily add future acquisitions. “The ability to manage future integrations was key,” says Rowthorn. “We see this as a multi-phase project.”

“Multi-dimensional functionality allows us to make proactive decisions. It accelerates decision-making and empowers the commercial team. We’re more agile.”

John Rowthorn, City Cruises

citycruises



Today, City Cruises has an enterprise management system in place that can scale as the business grows. It has future-proofed the administration of the business, while giving Rowthorn and his team the tools to spot and act on valuable business insight.

“Sage X3 allows us to make proactive decisions when margins aren’t what they need to be,” says Rowthorn. “It accelerates decision-making and empowers the commercial team. We’re more agile.”

The solution is also easier to operate, manage, and maintain. Upgrades are made via the cloud, saving City Cruises time and resource. “It’s seamless and automatic,” says Rowthorn. “It means we’re always working off the latest version.”

The bottom line

The business is now more streamlined, according to Rowthorn. Stock management and purchase order processing is automated; each boat and each location is fully integrated.

“We’re spending less time processing and more time on higher value projects,” he says. “Freeing up time allows us to focus talent where it’s most needed. Growth will come through innovation.”

The future

City Cruises has a new online booking system planned for early 2019. This will be integrated with Sage X3, along with new third-party ticketing systems. “We have a lot of international business, lots of overseas customers booking online or through third parties, and we want to make the process as seamless as possible for them,” explains Rowthorn. “And as simple as possible for us to manage.”

For City Cruises, its events side of the business—which includes dining, parties, and seasonal boat experiences—offers the most potential for growth but requires the operation to be flexible and accurate if it is to turn a profit: “It is an exciting opportunity for us, but it is certainly more complex.

“The beauty of Sage X3 is that we can easily integrate a new line of business, even international expansion, and then examine the figures in detail.

“It has future-proofed our business growth,” adds Rowthorn.



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