

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Sage and CPIo
give RSPCA
paws for thought

The UK's leading animal welfare charity chose Sage and Platinum Partner CPIo to deliver a flexible, future-proof business management system.



At RSPCA headquarters in Horsham (Sussex, UK), people bring their dogs to the office while they work. "It's one of the great things about working here," says Helen Tracey, Chief Financial Officer for RSPCA, the UK's largest animal welfare charity. "As we're talking, I can see a golden retriever puppy sleeping under someone's desk."

It's a nice insight into the RSPCA, a charity that was founded nearly 200 years ago, in 1824. Its ultimate aim remains the same – to promote kindness towards animals – however the founders would barely recognise today's organisation. The RSPCA is now one of the UK's largest charities, with an income of £140M and over 1,600 employees. It has a large network of regional offices, 30 animal homes, hospital and clinics, and a team of uniformed inspectors on the streets. The organisation investigates over 150,000 complaints of cruelty and neglect every year.

But the financial and administrative overheads have grown along with the organisation. As Helen explained, "Many of our processes, particularly in finance, had become outdated. Like many older charities, processes had evolved by default, not design, and there was a gap between what we were doing and current best practices. We also knew we needed to have greater clarity and leverage over our information. By shifting the finance team away from transactional processing to a review and analysis-type role, we knew we could really add value to the business."

Company/Organisation

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)

Location

UK

Industry

Non-profit

Solution

**Sage Business Cloud
Enterprise Management**

Partner

CPIo



Reaching out

Introducing Sage software gives RSPCA's central teams the opportunity to do more for others, such as fulfill a more service-led function to the large branch network. In corporate and social responsibility (CSR) terms, RSPCA could start to assist other smaller charities, particularly those working in the same arena. Improving processes and reducing admin frees people up to do all this, and more.

The RSPCA's vision is to live in a world where all animals are respected and treated with compassion. It works to:

- improve the welfare of pet animals
- improve the lives and reduce the suffering of farm animals
- reduce the use and suffering of animals in experiments

All of its income is raised through voluntary donations, legacies and memberships and fundraising with corporate partners.



“We needed a solution that would enable us to take control of the business and maximise our donations, so that they are focused on animal welfare and not to administration costs,” Helen said. “We also wanted a solution that had longevity. We’re very aware, sadly, that the need for our services is not going away any time soon.”

At the start of 2014, the Society went through a competitive tendering process. Helen explained: “We were keen to include Sage because they are the market leader – they had also provided our previous finance system. We then undertook a structured and controlled selection process, and it was clear pretty early on that we had found the right solution in enterprise management, part of Sage Business Cloud.”

Another critical element was the role that Sage partner, CPiO would play. “We started working with CPiO some years ago and as a result they really understood our organisational goals and our aims for the end system,” Helen said. CPiO worked, and continue to work, very positively with RSPCA, and were excellent at challenging some of its established processes – questioning the methods, so that they could get the most out of a modern enterprise management solution.

“CPiO worked with us to really demonstrate what Sage can achieve so we can leverage that ability ourselves.”

It was clear that enterprise management met all of RSPCA’s overarching objectives. “We wanted a plug-and-play solution, not bespoke – we wanted to configure, not customise – and it had to support best practices. We also wanted a cloud-based solution. As well as fitting in with our organisation’s ‘digital first’ approach, a cloud solution meant we don’t have to heavily invest in IT infrastructure,” Helen said. “Instead, we have put that money towards helping animals,” she added.

“The role of CPiO was again invaluable here,” Helen said. “Following their lead, we created a collaborative project team made up of technical/business project managers and subject matter experts, who all worked together to make sure we got the right results.”

In addition to the core financial management modules for invoicing, payments and the usual checks and balances, the RSPCA chose to implement two additional modules. Sage Enterprise Intelligence gives intuitive real-time data reporting that makes it quick and easy to get relevant business insights (and ensures a consistent data view for everyone). And with eDocument Management, an electronic copy of an invoice can now be stored with a transaction, keeping everything together and removing the need for paper copies.

Thanks to the cloud, RSPCA's commercial teams can take Enterprise Management anywhere – on any device.



Phase one went live in July 2017, delivered on time and within budget, and the benefits have quickly spread across the business. “We estimate we’ve already seen a 20%-40% increase in efficiency by moving from a traditional system of paper invoices and old-fashioned date stamps to scanned invoices,” Helen said. “We’re still calculating the reductions we’re seeing in cost per transaction, but that, plus the amount of rework, are two of our key metrics, and we can already see both values coming down,” she added.

There’s universal love for the new system across the business. With enterprise management available on any device, people can now take business data to where it’s most needed. “Our commercial colleagues do a lot of work supporting teams in the regions. Previously they were more desk based and took wads of paper with them when they did go to site. Now they can go any time and take Sage with them – on their laptop, Chromebook or mobile phone,” Helen said. The quicker and easier data analysis in enterprise management also helps the commercial team to generate better forward-looking planning.

Another key aim of the new system was faster financial closing, particularly at year end. “We wanted to shift the balance of work to earlier in the process, to make sure we have the data insight earlier in the system,” Helen said. “And it’s been a success – the timetable and schedules are better. Even the auditors have seen a real difference: we have better data insight and can respond with much greater agility to their requests for information,” Helen said.

Fewer invoices and less paper has reduced the finance teams’ workloads and admin costs, but Helen says the Society has also seen some unexpected benefits. “We’ve found we now have a more consistent approach to processes across the team, which allows for more flexible working,” she said. “People are collaborating much more, and we can now achieve a clear desk policy. It gives us more space and makes the office a nicer place to work.”

So what’s next for the RSPCA?

There’s no doubt that the RSPCA is on a journey and that Sage and CPIO are long term partners. “We chose enterprise management so we can have a solution that’s future-proof and will adapt with our needs,” Helen said. Phase two of the project is already underway, and this will see the cloud-based solution extended to cover the RSPCA’s fixed assets (including all its properties and vehicles) and procurement processes.

As the RSPCA gears up to celebrating its 200 year anniversary, it’s clear it now has the right business tools to take it into its third century.



sage

Business Cloud

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