



energy&utilityskills

“Access Dimensions readily gives us the information we need to enable us to go out and support the business more effectively.”

Hayley Hillyard

Financial Controller Energy & Utility Skills

Case Study - Energy and Utility Skills

Making finance simple with Access Dimensions

company profile

Industry

Education & Training

About Energy & Utility Skills

Energy & Utility Skills is the Sector Skills Council for the electricity, gas, waste management and water industries.

A not for profit organisation, Energy and Utility Skills delivers the governments national skills strategy, ensuring that employers of all sizes have people with the right skills and qualifications to support the success of their business.

Turnover

7 million

Number of Employees

63 staff plus 15-20 associates

Solution

Access Dimensions and Access Dimensions FocalPoint

Number of Users

6 Accounts

60 Access Dimensions FocalPoint

Key Modules

- Accounts Bundle
- Costing/Project Management
- Access Dimensions FocalPoint
- Executive Desktop Business Intelligence
- Microsoft Office Integration
- POP
- SOP & Invoicing
- Credit Control
- Transaction Broker
- Payroll
- Asset Manager

For further information about Energy & Utility Skills please visit their website: www.euskills.co.uk



Reviewing their systems

Energy & Utility Skills (EU Skills) is one of 25 UK Sector Skills Councils, their responsibility covers the electricity, gas, waste management and water industries. Employer-led their purpose is to enable the provision of an appropriately skilled workforce to assist these industries in improving their performance. During 2005 EU Skills decided that they needed to review their existing Sage Line 50 and Sage Job Costing system. Their systems review highlighted a number of gaps where their Sage systems were unable to support them. Hayley Hillyard, Financial Controller explains, "We had two main areas of concern, firstly as a project based organisation we needed a fully integrated projects and accounting solution. Secondly as a funded organisation with accountability to a number of stakeholders, we needed a solution that would allow us to extract and convey financial information in a simple and meaningful way."

Having compiled a specification EU Skills evaluated a number of industry leading solutions including Microsoft Navision, Sun Systems and Access Dimensions from Access Accounting. Access Dimensions was selected on the basis of its strong integration, user friendliness and higher levels of standard functionality. Hayley Hillyard says, "We were impressed with Access Dimensions and also felt that we'd be able to work effectively with Elite Business Services the Access Specialist Centre."

Analysis and Reporting

As a funded body EU Skills must provide stakeholders with detailed information on each project and project stage in order for them to draw funding. Hayley Hillyard explains, "the more detailed the information we can provide the quicker we can claim the funding, Access Dimensions has really helped with this, for example a narrative field can be added at a transactional level making it easy to demonstrate the details of spend to interested parties."

EU Skills have made good use of the analysis codes in Access Dimensions, to simplify for example, the raising of purchase orders, Hayley Hillyard adds, "Access Dimensions gives us the flexibility to make our analysis codes descriptive, so that they are easily identifiable by accounts and none accounts staff alike. As the analysis codes drive the nominal codes this has meant far fewer mis-codings. For us Access Dimensions makes finance simple."

Linkage between analysis codes and VAT status has also proved invaluable to EU Skills who are partially exempt from VAT. The different kinds of projects run by EU Skills incur different VAT treatments, Access Dimensions analysis codes have allowed them to rapidly create VAT statuses on a project by project basis, making it possible to accurately calculate EU Skills irrecoverable VAT liability on a monthly basis.

Access Dimensions Microsoft integration is a valuable tool for EU Skills, particularly the Microsoft Excel integration. Integration is simple to set up and offers a live two-way link enabling EU Skills to take data into Excel, manipulate it and then re-import it into Dimensions as required.

Month and year end reporting has been greatly improved using Access Dimensions, with Dimensions monthly management report packs can be readily compiled with all the information needed and should extra reports be required this is quick and easy to do. Year end reporting has also improved with Access Dimensions; they are able to easily provide all relevant information for auditing making it a much quicker process, with auditors able to issue a good year end report in record time.

Hayley Hillyard sums up the analysis and reporting offered by Access Dimensions, "information is readily available so that finance can go out and support the business more effectively,"

Project Management and Accounting

As an organisation with a large number of funded projects, it was imperative for EU Skills to have a solution where project functionality was closely integrated with accounts. Their previous Sage system had required the re-keying of information between job-costing and Line 50. Access Dimensions offers job-costing as one of 38 fully integrated modules and automatically eliminated the need for re-keying.

Access Dimensions has greatly enhanced EU Skills ability to manage projects through the use of Dimensions FocalPoint. This web-based front end allows staff across the organisation to quickly and easily access and update key business information via a web browser. Hayley Hillyard explains, "The majority of the costs for our projects are made up of time and expenses. The ability to manage these costs quickly and effectively has a direct impact on our revenue stream."

Prior to implementing Dimensions FocalPoint Project Managers would fill out and send in paper timesheets and expense claims, these were then keyed into job costing for posting against the various projects. With Dimensions FocalPoint Project Managers can simply enter their timesheets and expenses online for posting directly to the relevant projects, they can see a complete history of all claims giving them visibility on the completion of project milestones. Time and expenses claims are further bolstered by the ability to store supporting evidence and documentation against all claims. Back at the office Dimensions FocalPoint allows accounts staff to see at a glance if a timesheet is missing so they can chase as appropriate. The range of information supplied through Dimensions FocalPoint can be rapidly passed on to stakeholders so that EU Skills can draw their funding, and provide a strong and robust audit trail

Access Dimensions FocalPoint has proven to be extremely easy for EU Skills to implement. Hayley Hillyard adds, "After just half a day's training we were able to roll out Dimensions FocalPoint throughout our organisation, put simply Dimensions FocalPoint saves time and provides an effective tool to all staff both office and home based."