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With Accredo we never get stuck for an answer

Jason Weaver, the founder of business software systems supplier Zeal Systems, knows the problems growing organisations encounter when they attempt to introduce new business processes. As a trained chartered accountant he has tinkered with many different accounting software packages – trying to stretch their functionality to incorporate different ways of doing business.

"I enjoy system project work," says Weaver. "Figuring out how to automate repetitive daily tasks and reduce manual intervention is one of the key ways we help businesses prosper. It is one of the reasons why we love Accredo – its flexibility in this area is second to none."

As a chartered accountant with computer skills Weaver was often involved in developing cost models for businesses and tailoring systems to better match the way individual organisations operated. "But unfortunately, with most accounting packages the inflexibility of the software becomes a problem very quickly and is a barrier to fast and effective business change."

In the late 1990s Weaver capitalised on his accountancy and computer skills by establishing Zeal Systems with the aim of implementing business software systems that could add real value to the day-to-day activities of growing New Zealand businesses.

"Becoming an Accredo reseller was a real breakthrough for my business. Instead of spending lots of time fixing errors and bugs in software, which I had to do with other accounting systems, I could focus on tailoring the system to fit the business, and use Accredo to tick off the specific requirements each of my customers had."

Weaver says with Accredo he rarely gets stuck for an answer. "With other less flexible software packages, the capability to accommodate different functions or non-standard ways of operating dries up pretty quickly and we would have to start building something separate from the core accounting system – or simply say, 'no, that can't be done.'"

With Accredo we never
get stuck for an answer…continued

But with Accredo, Weaver says he can mould the system around the needs of the business. "This is a huge advantage. Matching the system to the processes that a customer wants to undertake is a powerful catalyst for change. Whereas forcing the business to operate the way an off-the-shelf system functions is a recipe for failure."

Zeal has grown to the point where the business now supports over 60 Accredo clients based in New Zealand and Australia. Weaver says the only thing his clients have in common is a desire to do things their own way.

"Many of our clients have been looking for a system to meet a specific need, but haven't been able to find it. They may need to accommodate complex transactions or simply a bespoke process that off-the-shelf systems can't handle. Very often they are resigned to having to join two or three systems together to achieve their goal."

Weaver says that's when they are glad to be introduced to Accredo, because it meets their needs without them having to go to the trouble and expense of integrating several different systems.

"A demonstration of the flexibility of the Accredo software is enough to convince customers that it is going to provide the necessary time-saving or functional improvements. If we do need to integrate Accredo with a secondary system we aim to make it as dynamic as possible, so there is no manual importing or exporting of data – and thankfully the Accredo software is designed to make that easy to achieve."

Weaver says many of his customers are importers, wholesalers or distributors of some variety and software that can help reduce manual data input is often what they are after.

"I have a food distributor customer who wanted a more dynamic way of linking the sales he made to customers on the road back to his core accounting system. In his previous system the integration was very clunky, but with Accredo the orders come back from mobile devices and the transactions are automatically created in the system – an improvement

that his helping him save a great deal of time because it has eliminated all the rekeying that had to be done at the end of each day."

Getting institutional knowledge out of the business owners' heads and into the system in the form of rules and procedures is key to giving them more control over their day-to-day activities, says Weaver.

"As a business grows, the owner has to try and keep more and more balls in the air. Maintaining control and visibility of all the activities becomes increasingly difficult if you can't automate key activities and manage by exception.

"Real value can be added when you can codify that type of knowledge within the system. With Accredo you can create rules, procedures and alerts to ensure the repetitive tasks that make a business tick over smoothly are completed correctly – no matter who is undertaking them."

The robustness of the Accredo system is a comfort to customers says Weaver. They know that whatever he designs the software to undertake from a project perspective, it will not impact the underlying accounting rules in the Accredo system.

"Accredo is a solid accounting platform. It is strong on data extraction and allows us to concentrate on business process projects, rather than worry about getting the accounting procedures right – we know that is already taken care of."

Weaver often puts his accounting background to good use at customer sites, helping improve financial reporting. "The accounting knowledge comes in handy as I can interpret exactly what they want and ensure the reports we design in Accredo meet those objectives. We often work with financial controllers showing them exactly what they can get out of Accredo to help track cashflow and budgets."

In fact, he says it is not uncommon for him to end up working directly with his customer's accountant. "I find most accountants know a great deal about entry level accounting systems, but do not know a lot about higher spec systems such as Accredo. When they see what it can do in terms of reporting, and how it can be tailored to match the way a business owner wants to work they are very impressed. It's then by working together that we can achieve some good results for the business."

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