The Open University

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A FIT FOR FUTURE COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT MODEL

> NTT DATA Business Solutions has worked collaboratively with us to meet our needs, augmenting their approach and ways of working to fit with our best practice. They are a great intermediary between The Open University and SAP. They have been open to our ways of working, and the journey we have been on has shown that they don't just do things in one way.

Stuart Overton Grace, Head of ERP Products, The Open University

Challenges

- A lack of in-house specialist SAP resources to manage and maintain the extensive Open University ERP landscape
- Peaks and troughs in the requirements for varying numbers of SAP focused staff
- Unique ways of working at The Open University requiring a bespoke and flexible support model from a third-party SAP partner

Why NTT DATA Business Solutions?

- Strength of NTT DATA Business Solutions consultants, bringing both business and SAP knowledge
- NTT DATA Business Solutions demonstrated a solid understanding of The Open University's requirements
- Strategic SAP partner, providing application management services, technical and functional consulting, advisory services, and software maintenance
- Depth of experience in higher education
- Successful implementation of integrated suite of SAP solutions at The Open University

Solutions

- A bespoke collaborative SAP Support Model

Benefits

- Dedicated NTT DATA Business Solutions SAP resources, working in a blended team (Open University and SAP SMEs) and Service Delivery Manager, 100% focused on the university
- Cost-effective access to a talent pool of highly skilled and knowledgeable SAP consultants as well as flexible offshore support from NTT DATA Business Solutions
- A 'flex to fit' partnership between The Open University and NTT DATA Business Solutions which allows the University to scale up or down support as and when it's needed and according to budget requirements
- Transfer of knowledge from NTT DATA Business Solutions' expert consultants to The Open Universities' in-house team

Industry: Higher Education
Products: Distance Learning and Research
Employees: 3,582
Revenue: £492.5m
Website: www.open.ac.uk

NTT DATA Business Solutions

SAP Platinum Partner

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The Open University is a distance learning and research institution based in the United Kingdom. Founded in 1969, it is the largest University in the UK, with over 175,000 students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The Open University has a unique approach to learning, offering flexible study options that allow students to fit their studies around their other commitments. This includes online lectures, tutorials, and interactive assignments.

The relationship began when NTT DATA Business Solutions was selected by The Open University to implement a wide range of integrated SAP solutions including SAP S/4 HANA, SAP SuccessFactors, SAP Concur, SAP Ariba, SAP BPC and SAP Payroll.

Once the initial implementations were complete, the University recognised that it didn't have the necessary SAP skills and expertise in its in-house team to effectively manage the extensive SAP landscape. They turned to NTT DATA Business Solutions and worked collaboratively to develop a unique SAP support model.

For the last three years, NTT DATA Business Solutions has provided the University with a dedicated Service Delivery Manager who works solely on the University account, along with similarly dedicated team members who work blended in with the University's in-house SAP team.

This has proven a powerful model which has enabled the University to increase its agility and ability to respond to the changing needs of the organisation.

Flexibility
With augmented SAP team members, The Open University has access to additional resources from NTT DATA Business Solutions on-demand, which helps them to manage workload spikes or unexpected projects. The team can scale up or down depending on the demand, which helps the University to avoid the need for full-time hires.

Cost-Effective
Hiring full-time SAP team members can be expensive, especially when considering salaries, benefits, and training costs.

This bespoke model allows for The Open University to hire augmented SAP team members from NTT DATA Business Solutions on a short or long-term basis, which is a more cost-effective model for the customer. And, if the budget goes down, the team at NTT DATA Business Solutions can switch out the physical team members and hand over to its offshore teams to reduce the cost base whilst maintaining a consistent service across the business.

Knowledge Transfer
The augmented SAP team members help to transfer knowledge to the existing in-house SAP team, improving the team's skills and expertise.

Daren Carpenter, Account Director for The Open University explains, "The team have full use of the University's systems - we're fully integrated and embedded into their way of life, a true-blended team model. Our team members bring a range of specialised skills and knowledge. We're not just there to support, we architect and collaborate with Stuart, Head of the University's ERP Product Team, on an ongoing basis to understand what needs to be achieved. For example, if there is an SAP SuccessFactors release, we'll look at the new features that will be specifically relevant to The Open University and we'll recommend which would be beneficial to implement based on our understanding and knowledge of their support tickets.

Stuart Overton Grace, Head of ERP Product Team at The Open University comments, "We've come from a place where we didn't have enough knowledge in our own team, and through this long-term partnership, we have built strength and capability over the last three years. There are going to be peaks and troughs and we're going to have to scale up and down. Every year our resourcing requirements are going to differ and that's the value and flexibility of the partnership."

Want to know more?
Do not hesitate to contact us:

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03/2023