



THE ALICE SPRINGS WATERSHED

SAP AND ITS ABUNDANT PARTNER ECOSYSTEM PROVIDE EXCELLENT SUPPORT EVEN IN REMOTEST AUSTRALIA

“In deploying software, don’t make it your goal to avoid problems because they’re inevitable. The important thing is to know that when problems do arise, solutions will be available. With SAP, there has always been a solution to any need we’ve had.”

Simon Worssam, Director, The Alice Springs Watershed

QUICK FACTS

Company

- Name: The Alice Springs Watershed
- Location: Alice Springs, Australia
- Industry: Retail
- Products and services: Water-related products
- Revenue: US\$10 million
- Employees: 23
- Web site: www.watershednt.com.au
- Implementation partner: Leverage Technologies Pty Ltd.

Challenges and Opportunities

- Feel confident about business software stability and support despite remote location
- Attain support for specific required functions plus the flexibility to accommodate additional needs
- Improve reporting environment

Objectives

Ally with a software provider that is sure to remain viable for the long term, with multiple business partners to provide services and add-on applications

SAP® Solutions and Services

SAP® Business One application (version 8.8)

Implementation Highlights

- Strong partner network enabled SAP to immediately find a new partner to take over the project in a time of need
- New partner resolved all issues and had the system up and running in 2 to 3 days

Why SAP

- Long-term stability
- Large, global partner ecosystem
- Excellent match with functional requirements
- Flexibility for tailoring to unique needs
- Powerful, intuitive reporting environment

Benefits

- Found multiple sources for all needed services and software related to SAP products
- Obtained cutting-edge functionality and excellent support despite remoteness
- Met requirements for online banking, vendor pricing file uploads, and exporting to Microsoft Excel
- Attained flexibility to accommodate additional needs through programming
- Greatly improved reporting environment
- Gained confidence in long-term software vendor stability, a steady stream of enhancements, and continued excellent support

Existing Environment

Legacy business software

The Alice Springs Watershed is a small business that provides water-related products in the area around Alice Springs, Australia. To be sure of support in its remote location, the firm sought a business software vendor with long-term stability and a wide-ranging partner ecosystem. "We chose SAP Business One, and we were immediately glad that we did when SAP rescued us by finding a new partner to get us out of an implementation jam," says Simon Worssam, The Alice Springs Watershed's director.

Learning from Experience

The Alice Springs Watershed provides plumbing fixtures for the home, cast-iron pipes that supplies the water, pumps that get the water out of the ground, tanks the water is stored in, and everything in between. The company's constituency is as broad as its product range, with customers spanning the gamut from individual homeowners to government agencies.

Since Worssam and his partners took over the business in 1996, The Alice Springs Watershed has run its business with a succession of applications. The first, a DOS-based package, lost its viability when the vendor failed to come through on promises to keep operating system support up-to-date. The company then moved to another system but found that it too was not being updated regularly to remove limitations and provide needed feature enhancements. "We learned

some important lessons from those experiences," reports Worssam. "In both cases our vendors let us down, and there was no place for us to turn for help. The only option was to pull the plug and start all over again."

Choosing Wisely

The company resolved to make its third move the final one by choosing a vendor that could be counted on to remain robust for the long term and to keep its solution up-to-date with a continual stream of enhancements. Equally important was to make sure ample third-party resources were available, even in its out-of-the-way locale, to provide services and specialized software functionality. "SAP was the obvious choice because of its stature and all its service and software partners," says Worssam, "but we didn't realize SAP had software appropriate for a small company

like ours. Then we saw a demo of SAP Business One and realized how well suited it is."

The Alice Springs Watershed had a number of specific functionality requirements, all of which the SAP® Business One application fulfilled. The company does all its banking over the Internet and therefore needed its software to provide facilities for transferring funds online. The firm's vendors use the Internet for uploading new pricing files, and so The Alice Springs Watershed required the functionality to automatically accept and use them to populate its pricing database. Strong reporting was a must, and SAP Business One has flexible, real-time reporting now that SAP Crystal Reports® offerings come standard in version 8.8. "SAP Business One had all our most important needs covered, along with the programmability that lets us address further requirements ourselves," reports Worssam.



“We are finding SAP Crystal Reports easier and more intuitive than any other reporting environment we’ve used. We really like that it publishes reports at the summary level and then lets us drill down to any level of detail we want.”

Simon Worssam, Director, The Alice Springs Watershed

Seeing Immediate Payoff

The Alice Springs Watershed had no idea how quickly it would reap the benefits of choosing a vendor with a large partner ecosystem. As its first implementation partner approached its date for going live, a key employee suddenly quit the company – leaving The Alice Springs Watershed in a potentially disastrous position. “We immediately called SAP, who recommended a new partner almost on the spot – Leverage Technologies out of Sydney,” recalls Worssam. “They came right out, cleaned up the problems

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the other firm had left, and had us on the air in two or three days. If we had chosen an application that didn’t have multiple service partners available to us, I don’t know what we’d have done.”

“In deploying software, don’t make it your goal to avoid problems because they’re inevitable,” Worssam adds. “The important thing is to know that when problems do arise, solutions will be available. With SAP, there has always been a solution to any need we’ve had, usually from a choice of vendors.”

Fulfilling All Expectations

SAP Business One is fulfilling all of The Alice Springs Watershed’s expectations, providing integrated support for the company’s business operations. It proved straightforward to implement online banking and price file uploading, two critical features to the company. Reporting is vastly improved through both Excel file exporting and especially SAP Crystal Reports. “We are finding SAP Crystal Reports easier and more intuitive than any other reporting environment we’ve used,” summarizes Worssam.

“We really like that it publishes reports at the summary level and then lets us drill down to any level of detail we want. That is a crucial feature.”

SAP’s partner ecosystem continues to come through for The Alice Springs Watershed. Leverage Technologies Pty Ltd. is providing excellent support, mostly by telephone but in person for major upgrades. The Alice Springs Watershed bought a small business hundreds of miles away and found just the right add-on software to support it from another

SAP partner. “There are hundreds of SAP partner applications available from everywhere on earth,” says Worssam. “It doesn’t matter where these applications come from. Via SAP, they can help us right here. And if they can help in Alice Springs, 1,500 kilometers from the nearest major city, they can help anywhere.”

Furthermore, SAP itself makes sure support stays strong with near-daily e-mails explaining SAP Business One developments. “We read them with great interest because we’ve come to realize that unlike our previous vendors, we can count on SAP to do what it says it will do, when it says it will do it. SAP is great about showing us a road map of where it is going and then coming through in full and on time,” Worssam explains.

Business is growing smartly for The Alice Springs Watershed, but with SAP Business One the company has no concerns about outgrowing its software; nor does it worry about another vendor failure. “There is great peace of mind in knowing that we won’t ever have to face another wholesale change in the software that supports the company,” concludes Worssam. “We made the right decision with SAP Business One, and we see proof of it every day.”



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