

“ The application enables Business Link Solutions to build much greater presence in their target market without increasing costs. ”

Matt Wright, Project Manager



Background

Business Link is a free business advice and support service, available online and through local advisers. BusinessLink.gov.uk is an official government website containing information, guidance and support for businesses of all sizes, along with guidance on online dealings with government (e.g. PAYE and VAT) helping save time and money. Content is developed in partnership with subject experts within government and relevant business-support organisations.

Business Issue

A new strategy dictated that each local operator become an 'active broker' stimulating demand for their services and matching appropriate service providers to satisfy client needs.

The Challenge

The new strategy would see massive increases in supplier and client data, and existing IT systems were deemed inadequate to handle this increased load. New IT applications would therefore be needed to improve the scope and efficiency of the service and manage the large increase in volume of data.

Solution

esuasive developed from scratch a new application to enable suppliers of business services to submit details about themselves through an extranet facility moderated by Business Link, and to allow businesses to place requests for help or support.

esuasive extensively prototyped the system during development to allow end-users to get a feel for the new application, to ensure the widest range of needs were met.

Matching of services with needs is to some extent an art, but a degree of automatic matching functionality was delivered, matching business (buyer) with supplier (seller) based on specified criteria, with the option for Business Link staff to then fine tune the matching of clients' needs with suppliers' capabilities. Clients are also able to give feedback on their experience, allowing increasing sophistication in the matching algorithm to be developed over time.

The application was tightly integrated with existing applications, and its future-proof design and minimal maintenance requirement are helping to keep down long-term running costs.

Results

The new application allows quicker and more consistent responses to client queries and more sophisticated matching of client needs to suppliers able to satisfy them.

By allowing suppliers to take much of the data entry burden via the implementation of self-service supplier profile maintenance, the application has improved efficiency markedly, allowing Business Link to redeploy resources away from backend administration tasks to 'front line' business advisory roles.

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Contact Us

Nick Hill
t: 01753 626625
e: nhill@dbgroup.co.uk