



Accountable Technology



APS Case Studies

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Involvement in selection process

I was involved throughout the selection process, which also involved one of my other partners and our IT manager. I made the final decision to move over to APS.

Key Quote

“The whole process (of deciding on APS) took 2 years. Initially we delayed our decision due to the fact that APS did not at that time have a Tax product - and because we were waiting for a proposed new system from Sol 6. We actually went through the process of installing Solution 6’s Viztopia product – we were one of the first 3 users in Australia – but after 6 difficult months we took the decision to switch to APS.”

Section One General

When did your firm implement its APS Advance Practice Management system?

We implemented in January/February 2003

Which edition did your firm sign up for – a) Professional or b) Enterprise?

Professional Edition.

How many users do you have?

We have approximately 25 using the system

Which APS products have you taken out licences to use? (PM, Tax etc...)

We are already using the Advance Practice Management product and we have now installed APS Tax but have not commenced using it yet. The likelihood is that we will take on Professional Accounting too in due course – so the idea is to move over fully over time.

Who was your previous supplier and how long were you using that supplier's software for?

We were previously Sol6 users – for 15+ years

From start to finish, how long did the meeting, testing and decision-making process take that saw you move over to APS?

The whole process took 2 years. Initially we delayed our decision due to the fact that APS did not at that time have a Tax product - and because we were waiting for a proposed new system from Sol 6. We actually went through the process of installing Solution 6's Viztopia product – we were one of the first 3 users in Australia – but after 6 difficult months we took the decision to switch to APS.

Was your decision to move over to APS made on gut-feel, or was it more scientific than that? Please explain how you went about making your decision...(e.g. team approach: IT manager, IT Partner, Work Group etc...)

It was largely gut-feel, but also as result of product review and comparing APS with the alternatives in the market.

Now that you have been using APS products for almost 6 months, has the product and service met your expectations? If so, please tell me about it...

Yes, it has mostly. There are some limitations and some system processes that do not happen as we expected, however we are quite satisfied overall. The APS staff knowledge and attitude are particular "stand outs".

APS prides itself on its ability to listen to its customers regarding their business needs and business aims and its commitment to then work closely with customers to meet and achieve them. Tell us about the APS approach from your perspective...

The team did listen to what we wanted – Fiona Harding was an enormous help and was able to assist us in more ways than we had imagined. For instance, when it came to migrating our data across to Advance, she was able to extract more data out of Sol6's PMA product to put into APS than Sol6 could extract out of PMA for our migration over to Viztopia!

Section Two Product

Functionality Testing

Looking at APS from a product perspective, what were the most important factors from a functionality point-of-view that were seen as critical to your business – the things that APS had to have if it was to be considered as a your practice management and tax preparation software provider?

Reliability was the key thing for us. Also important was APS' ability to electronically route bills for approval – and we would like to see further enhancements here. Another critical piece of functionality was Advance's ability to easily import data when we converted from Sol6 – which I mentioned earlier.

Did you feel that APS was ahead of its competitors in terms of its functionality and how did you verify the fact? (e.g. pilot / product testing methodology)

Yes we did – APS is the stand-out product currently. What the APS team needs to do now is stay ahead – and that means giving its users the best new technology as it becomes available.

How long did you pilot and test the Advance product set for functionality – and how many people were involved? Was the APS team accommodating in this process or did your APS contacts press you to make an early decision?

We tested Advance for approximately 2 weeks formally this time around. Three people were involved at our end – and whilst there was constant follow-up from the APS team, there was no intense sales pressure applied.

Future Development

What would you like to see APS add to its product set in its next releases of Advance that will assist your business? What does it need to do to stay ahead of its competitors?

We would like to see non-audit work papers built into the software and we would also like to see an integrated, scalable document management system in place.

Section Three Corporate Situation

Were the following factors important to you in determining if APS was the right provider for your firm to go with:-

The fact that APS is a profitable business? APS prides itself on the fact that it has posted a profit every year since inception in 1991

APS needs to make money but it is not a major news item from our perspective.

The fact that the Advance product set traces its lineage and development path directly to its first release in 1994 there has been no deviation from the product roadmap – merely incremental annual upgrades to the product. This has meant that customers have not had to waste time and money implementing new systems on an intermittent basis

This belittles the product – APS has continued to embrace enhancements in technology to develop the product. As I mentioned earlier, what it needs to do is continue to do so – go for the highest denominator not the lowest when it comes to technology.

I have no problem with APS ‘deviating from the product roadmap’ if it gives us new functionality that helps us manage our practice effectively. Business changes and so the available technology needs to recognise that change and keep up with it.

What other corporate stability factors would you recommend that firms should consider when choosing a Practice Management system supplier?

Yes, corporate stability is important, but more importantly still, APS needs to continue to produce the best products. That’s the stability I am looking for.