



The client

Proactive, also known as Proav, is an experienced international supplier of broadcast and professional video equipment, headquartered in Hemel Hempstead and with a sales office in Bromsgrove. It offers customers an online store as well as a dedicated physical showroom and tailored solutions to suit customers' specific applications and budgets.

The background

Proactive was facing two main challenges.

First, its internal IT manager was approaching retirement, and the company was looking for alternative ways to manage its growing IT infrastructure, including the LAN infrastructure on both sides and the WAN connecting them. Due to double digit business growth, management of Proactive's IT systems was becoming more challenging, and resilience of the infrastructure was becoming particularly business critical. Second, whilst Proactive was already using SAP Business One as its ERP solution, it was dissatisfied with the levels of user support from its existing IT services provider. The company was in need of a more strategic and proactive approach to ERP support and optimisation, with recommendations for optimising SAP Business One's features, particularly in relation to its ecommerce strategy. Having bought a third-party application to manage the integration of SAP Business One with the ecommerce site, Proactive took the opportunity to review its SAP support more holistically.

As such, Proactive was looking for a single managed IT services provider, which could not only take on the day-to-day support and management of its IT systems, but also host and support SAP Business One. APH was able to offer all this.

The solution

We began by reviewing the SAP Business One deployment which Proactive already had in place and making a series of recommendations for upgrading the existing system and improving current business processes by implementing new features in the system. Our approach focused on business requirements rather than just technical requirements, considering Proactive's ambitions for future growth and the vital importance of its ecommerce site.

Unlike many multi-tenanted offerings, Proactive has its own instance of SAP Business One which means there was no restriction on how we could tailor the solution to meet Proactive's specific needs. We chose to host SAP Business One directly for Proactive with Microsoft Exchange and were then able to provide Proactive with the same level of customisation as if it was deployed on-site including the integration of third party and industry specific add-ons. We used all SAP models apart from production.

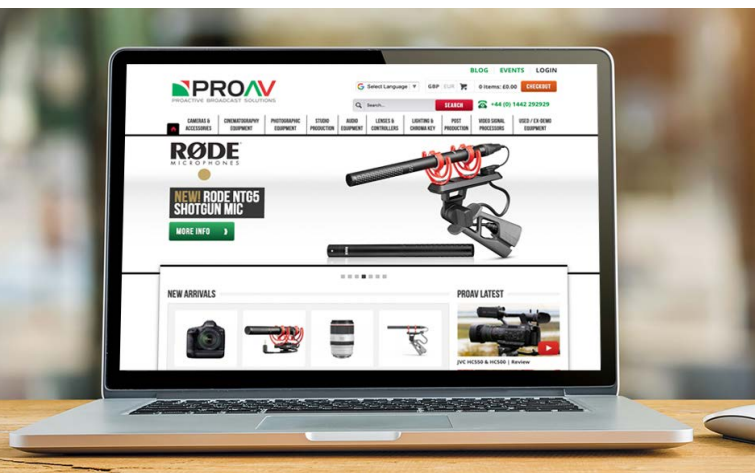
In terms of ongoing IT support and managed services, it was clear that a migration to cloud-based services would give Proactive the flexibility, scalability and on-site peace of mind it sought. We facilitated the company's full migration to Office 365, hosted by Microsoft but supported directly by our own team. This migration went smoothly and without a hitch.

Looking forward, Proactive has already engaged us to mobilise its warehouse operations through the implementation of a mobile warehouse management system. We delivered a new wireless solution throughout the warehouse to assist in the implementation of this project. APH is working as a strategic partner to evolve Proactive's IT services in line with its business goals.

The results

APH now provides a fully managed IT service to Proactive. Proactive's system is monitored 24x7x365, with Service Desk support to meet the needs of the infrastructure, applications and end-users. With APH managed services, the on-boarding and off-boarding of end users, as Proactive requires, is managed seamlessly. APH provides a single point of entry for IT support and problem-solving via its Service Desk, and its proactive approach aims to catch incidents before the business encounters productivity loss. Proactive benefits from predictable costs, less downtime, guaranteed response time and a greatly reduced IT burden.

In terms of SAP Business One, APH has helped Proactive to get far more out of the solution, including full integration with its ecommerce platform. By hosting SAP Business One for Proactive from our two UK datacentres, we have ensured that the SAP solution is delivered from a secure environment that is always available with a service level of 99.9% availability. This enables Proactive to gain all the benefits of the market leading ERP solution without the need to deploy and maintain expensive on-site hardware. The software is delivered from the cloud and consumed on a per user model.



We seamlessly integrated Proactive's SAP deployment with its ecommerce platform, Magento, slashing the amount of duplication and margin for error by integrating online orders with the ERP system. Payment records as well as stock managed online are now all part of the same integrated system. We also provided Proactive with an online price comparison feature within SAP as well as improvements throughout the whole goods receiving process involving label printing.



Finally, the migration to Microsoft Office 365 enabled Proactive to truly future proof its IT system, with new users added quickly and easily, and all users able to access emails and data from multiple devices, wherever they are located. With APH supporting Office 365, the company's employees enjoy reliable and robust Office 365 connectivity wherever and whenever they need it, thereby improving communication and collaboration across the organisation. Furthermore, APH drives consumption and provides best practice guidance. Data is secure, and time previously spent maintaining hardware and software can be used to move the company's overall IT functionality forward.

In addition to providing a predictable monthly cost model, APH provides end-user Office 365 support of issues such as password resets, basic device troubleshooting, answering "how-to" questions, and proactive device monitoring and management.

Maureen Hart, Director at Proactive said: *"A huge reason for moving to a hosted solution was not only reducing the burden for our in-house personnel but also generating greater resilience. Our website is business-critical and the peace of mind of knowing that our IT infrastructure is being managed on an ongoing basis by APH's experts is huge."*

"We know that SAP Business One has a huge amount to offer but we simply weren't making the most of it. APH enabled us to fully integrate our ecommerce operation with our ERP software, which makes for massive efficiency improvements and much greater business intelligence. It genuinely is a great platform for business productivity and growth. We have generated cost savings through no longer having our server infrastructure on-site, through the automation and efficiencies of SAP, and better uptime."

Charlie Heywood at APH said: *"We are proud to have delivered a raft of benefits for Proactive. The firm now has a single window into its entire business and can focus on its growth strategy rather than worrying about keeping the lights on. SAP Business One is a fantastic ERP option for ecommerce businesses as it offers a wealth of features as well as seamless integration with ecommerce platforms like Magento; we are pleased to have helped Proactive make the most of it."*