

Fashioning a Passion for Craftsmanship

Skibbereen-based O'Donnell Furniture Makers specialise in manufacturing high quality hotel bedroom casegoods for new builds and refurbishments in both Ireland and the United Kingdom. Their business is based on a tradition of craftsmanship that stretches back to 1904. Recently, they installed the powerful SageCRM solution to help drive sales and improve project management capabilities to better serve their diverse customer base.

About the Company

Managing Director Jim O'Donnell's grandfather began making precision crafted furniture in West Cork back in 1904. *'He was guided by one simple and powerful force: furniture making is more than just a job, it is a passion,'* Jim observes. That passion has been a guiding principle for the four generations of O'Donnells who have continued developing the business.

Today, O'Donnells is a specialist "Hotel Bedroom Furniture Maker" whose business philosophy has always been about maintaining quality and affordability. This objective is accomplished by translating architects' and designers' concepts into functional products that will produce the levels of comfort and style that today's hotel guest expects.

To ensure customer satisfaction while also maintaining their reputation for supplying cutting-edge hotel interior designs, O'Donnells have a team of dedicated project managers to support every commission they undertake. Each project manager provides a single point of contact between all O'Donnell services by liaising directly with design, procurement, production and installation teams, through to completion.

Some of the best-known designer hotels in Europe feature O'Donnells' work. These include The Great Eastern Hotel, The Cumberland and Le Meridien Russell in London, the Radisson Edwardian

Manchester, The Clarence in Dublin and The Sheraton at Frankfurt Airport. Some of O'Donnells' most recent work has featured at The G in Galway and The D in Drogheda as well as at one of the latest additions to Hilton's UK property portfolio, the new five-star Hilton London Canary Wharf.

O'Donnells Quantity Surveyor and IT Manager Chris Enright explains how the company's passion for excellence is focused upon the needs of their many satisfied customers:

'The company supplies an all round package to hoteliers and their contractors and architects, and this capability helps us stand out from our competitors,' he says. *'Our clients expect us to deliver room furnishings, carpeting, and fittings that reflect their overall design concept. We use a variety of design and manufacturing tools that go hand-in-hand with our staff's creativity to deliver on that vision. For instance: prior to manufacturing, we will provide clients with 3-D Cad-Cam drawings to show them exactly what they will be getting. That attention to detail has always gone down well.'*

O'Donnells also wants to build on their core values of quality and affordability by adding a complementary "front-of-house" product design and manufacturing service. *'We intend to provide front of house solutions in the near future,'* Chris notes. *'This will enable us to extend our passion into other areas that are critical to hotel operations such as Receptions and conference facilities.'*

The Challenge: Comprehensive Database Management

In order to provide even higher levels of service and engender subsequent client goodwill, O'Donnells began searching for a system that would enable sales and project management processes to be integrated.

'Until recently, our sales, project management and subsequent manufacturing and logistics activities were driven by disparate data bases,' Chris states. 'Sales would keep their customer contact information within one database, while project management would keep their data on a separate database. Ideally, we knew that to serve our customers better, those databases would have to "hand-shake": that is, when a potential customer becomes a live client their data would be instantly available to project managers in order to expedite accurate design, manufacturing, fit-out, and delivery.'

'We have enjoyed a long and productive relationship with Innov8, the Sage Business Partner, and specialist in CRM IT solutions. In discussing our objectives with them, they suggested SageCRM. We considered their proposal, and decided to run with it.'

The Solution: SageCRM

SageCRM is the highly flexible and powerful customer relationship management software solution that can be customised to meet the precise operating requirements of both small and larger companies. Its exceptional, easy-to-use functionality can integrate valuable data from various departments, thereby providing quick access to critical information by management, and key staff, in order to increase operating effectiveness and efficiency. These benefits not only help companies to maximise sales efforts, but

also help to deliver valuable goods and services to important customers on time, to specification, and within budget. Additionally, SageCRM provides rich operating data, almost in real time, that helps managers to intelligently plan ahead.

Innov8's Kiara O'Mahony explains: 'We recommended SageCRM due to its flexibility and its ability to be customised to meet exact needs. We knew that it would enable O'Donnells to become an even better partner by acting as a powerful 'memory' to the company and its staff. The data captured by SageCRM can be accessed quickly by a variety of staff, working in a variety of functions.'

Working closely with O'Donnells' management and staff, Innov8 initially installed the SageCRM solution within the company's sales function. Chris explains the results: 'The sales team now uses SageCRM to drive all sales and marketing activities,' Chris states. 'All client contact information including name, address, email address, etc are inputted. As importantly, SageCRM also captures all contact communications with specific customers and prospects. This includes not only the dates of contact, but also any critical information – or personal data regarding those clients – that the sales team believes might allow us to better serve the client.'

'We can capture not only the design 'vision', but also the specific aspirations that our clients and prospects might have told us about: how their hotel might enhance their customer experience, for example. That information, captured within SageCRM, can become of critical benefit when implementing a solution.'

'As a particular project moves forward, additional information will also be collected within SageCRM: budgets, for instance, and specific customer requests. This helps us not only to develop designs that capture the concept that we've been provided but also helps us to deliver a solution on time and within budget.'

Additional links are held within SageCRM that allows managers and staff to instantly



access vital information. For instance, design plans, renderings, and similar information can be accessed instantly through SageCRM to provide managers and staff with quick information regarding particular projects.

'Instant data availability enables key staff to maintain an awareness of project status,' Chris emphasises.

Accessing Critical Sales Information

SageCRM's rich data also provides exceptional sales information, helping managers to plan ahead. *'A wide range of reports are available within SageCRM helps our managers not only to understand what's currently in the sales pipeline but also to assist us with forecasting. For instance, we are able to access ordered units, as well as their values. We know how many proposals have been converted into live sales. We're able to chart actual versus projected unit and value sales.'*

'The solution provides us with powerful data transparency, helping us to understand not only where we've been and where we're going, but also where we want to be.'

Integrating Project Management

With SageCRM now in use by the sales team, O'Donnells - together with Innov8 - turned to the Project Management function. Innov8 focused specifically on methods to increase productivity. To that end, they integrated SageCRM with both MSProject and AutoCad.

'SageCRM is now being used by our Project Management team, and because all client data has been integrated across both the sales and project management functions, we are seeing exceptional increases in productivity and accuracy,' Chris notes.

'Project managers have instant access to all client data that has been previously inputted into SageCRM by the sales team. This minimises the need for double entry, thereby increasing efficiency and accuracy. All critical

design, production, and logistics tasks are scheduled into SageCRM, and the solution flags those critical activities in order to ensure that deadlines are achieved.

'Moreover, the Sage solution allows us to manage and schedule multiple tasks across multiple projects. This facility allows us to coordinate our efforts effectively, thereby helping us to get the most out of our staff and material resources.'

SageCRM also helps O'Donnells to partner with their diverse client base even more effectively. *'The scheduling information and reports available through SageCRM allows us to quickly determine if we are able to deliver particular projects on time,'* Chris says. *'In the event that we are experiencing the possibility of a late delivery, we are instantly notified by the Sage solution, which means that we can quickly pass along that notification to the customer. A late delivery is never welcome. But by being able to let the client know that we might be late well before the deadline arrives, we are effectively partnering with them because they know that we have their best interests at heart.'*

SageCRM therefore helps us to turn what might be a problem into an opportunity to serve our clients better. And that, in turn, translates into powerful customer goodwill'.

Would Recommend

Chris would definitely recommend SageCRM and Innov8 to other companies. *'SageCRM is a very simple-to-use, yet powerful, software solution,'* he says. *'Its flexibility and customisation capabilities provide exceptional benefits in enabling companies to increase efficiency and productivity. We have found the Sage solution to be exceptionally stable as well as user-friendly. It is infinitely customisable to a company's real needs.'*

Through careful listening, Innov8 have gained a true understanding of our objectives and work hard to bring their experience to bear in order to complete their tasks quickly. Innov8 also provides us with both training and ongoing support. We are confident of their capabilities.'



'Would I recommend SageCRM to other companies?' he states, summing up. 'Put it this way: if you have a clear direction in your mind of where you want your company to go, SageCRM can be customised to help you get there.'

For More Information

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For more information on SageCRM and our exceptional range of CRM, management, and accounting solution, contact us.

