



Dataflow Case Study Charities



Moving to *dataflow* Financials halves costs for Forces broadcaster

When Forces charity SSVC restructured five years ago, *dataflow* financials provided a cost-effective and flexible solution to managing the financial needs of a charity which has operations around the globe

Best known for arranging celebrities as diverse as Geri Halliwell and Chris Waddle, to entertain servicemen and women in far-flung locations from shelters in Bosnia to aircraft carriers in The Gulf, the Services Sound and Vision Corporation (SSVC) plays a key role in entertaining and boosting the morale of the Armed Forces around the world.

In addition to organising 140 live shows a year, SSVC operates three radio networks broadcasting pop and speech radio 24 hours a day to 23 countries and two 24-hour television channels to personnel in 17 countries as well as Navy warships. SSVC also sends the latest blockbuster movies to Forces Personnel in Cyprus, Germany, Falkland Islands, UK, Northern Ireland and the Balkans. Additionally, SSVC has a retail operation on major military bases in Germany, selling home entertainment equipment and white goods, so its business is diverse. SSVC is a registered charity which donates any surplus revenue to support welfare projects within the Armed Forces.

The impetus for the move to *dataflow* Financials in 2001 was the restructuring of the organisation. The SSVC Group, as it was then known, sold its satellite business and property portfolio, allowing it to concentrate on its core business of broadcasting.

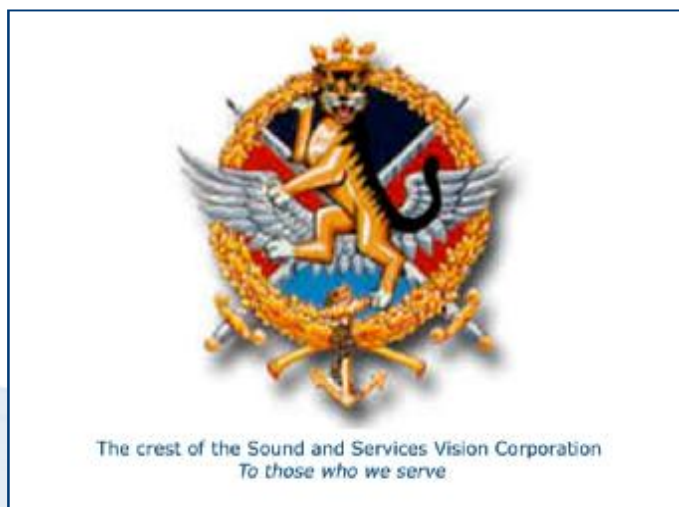
***dataflow*'s multi-currency functionality and adaptability made it the obvious choice**

Roger Nash, Management Accountant, was involved in the decision to move to *dataflow* Financials: "Our previous software was in place when we were a bigger organisation, but it wasn't flexible enough to handle the changes brought about by the restructuring of SSVC".

Roger continues; "The Dataflow Financials solution went onto our shortlist, along with Access Accounting, Lakeview and Sage.

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One by one they dropped by the wayside until we were left with two packages, Dataflow and Lakeview. Although the Lakeview package looked as if it was flexible, we felt it wasn't as adaptable as *dataflow*, and the *Dataflow* Financials package was also reasonably priced." Roger and his colleagues were also impressed by Dataflow's exporting routine.



Another key factor in SSVC's decision to choose *dataflow* financials was its ability to handle multiple currencies. Notes Roger; "As an organisation we deal with over 20 different currencies, so finding a software package able to handle multi-currency requirements was crucial. As we operate shops in Germany we also needed something that would allow us to import data from there easily."

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dataflow Financials' adaptability allows it not only to support sales and purchase accounts in any currency, but it will offset invoices in one currency with payments in another and handle exchange differences automatically. In addition, reports can be produced on demand in any base currency and there are no costly conversions to be made.

Implementation of the software went smoothly, according to Roger, and was done without any time-consuming overlap between the two systems; "The *dataflow* system was implemented without parallel running and we didn't have any serious issues. The training went well, we switched from one system into another and everyone picked it up very quickly."



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SSVC currently has 15 users of *dataflow* Financials, 10 of whom are in the Accounts Department in the UK, with 1 full time and 1 part time accounts staff working in the organisation's German head office, which has direct live access to *dataflow*. The other users access *dataflow* to raise purchase orders.

Management information on tap

Implementing *dataflow* Financials has also enabled SSVC to empower their management team to access the financial data they need to make business decisions quickly. Staff in 138 departments across 4 directorates and 22 divisions have access to a suite of *dataflow* reports, which are available through a centralised system. According to Roger, "All departments have their own directory on our central network, where they can run their own reports. By driving this themselves it makes it much easier for our Accounts department and frees up their time to concentrate on other work." SSVC has also created its own in-house reports, most of which are Analyzer reports which output straight into Microsoft Excel.

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Roger Nash observes the benefits of providing access to *dataflow* reports in this way has brought to SSVC: "The ability to get information out of the system in a meaningful manner has been key, particularly regarding management accounts, as managers can't manage if they don't have the information they need. Another advantage of creating this networked system

has been that managers don't have to have direct access to the *dataflow* software to access the reports, they can get what they want on their desktop."

Smooth and efficient integration with third party products

dataflow Financials integrates well with the other systems used by SSVC. As well as payroll, there is a direct connection with the organisation's asset management system, Asset 4000, allowing depreciation data to be transferred automatically. Financial information from SSVC's retail business is imported into *dataflow* from Cromwell UK's Open Retail system used by the shops and also from the ADP payroll system SSVC uses. Roger Nash has built an interface to upload data into Excel which is then imported into *Dataflow*, using the data import facility.

SSVC's *dataflow* users also appreciate the export facility from *dataflow* into Microsoft Excel, which allows users to either copy data across or "drag and drop" straight into the spreadsheets.

The organisation receives somewhere in the region of 1,500 purchase invoices a month, the majority of which are paid through the BACS interface facility.

Roger appreciates the ability to customise views within *dataflow*: "It is easier to control projects with the *dataflow* system, you can easily change your chart of accounts, descriptions, titles and formats of P & Ls and balance sheets". All of SSVC's budgets are run off *Dataflow* and are fed into Profit & Loss reports.

Roger observes: "As any account can be created as a reconciliation account, not just bank accounts, this is a very useful. We have created accounts for each of the shops for all the types of money we take. This is important because in the UK any takings from shops can be taken straight down to the bank but in Germany they won't accept cheques paid in this way. Staff have to take cash to the local bank but cheques and card payments are processed centrally and electronically. With *dataflow* we can run reconciliation accounts for all our shops on the different types of payments. We can download cash from the bank as one journal and information from the shops themselves on what they have banked into another and reconcile the two. It's also easy to reverse journals completely, you can easily reverse the whole batch."

Moving to *dataflow* has enabled SSVC to make considerable cost savings of approximately 50% on previous expenditure. This is particularly evident for system upgrades, which are provided free-of-charge to *dataflow* Financials customers.

Roger observes: "Our previous system was very bespoke, so every upgrade was a hefty cost and a lengthy exercise to make sure everything worked properly afterwards." Roger Nash concludes: "The best thing you can say is that *dataflow* financials has fitted in easily within SSVC and it more than meets our requirements."

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Dariusz Mogtader, *Dataflow*'s Managing Director, highlights the benefits of using a fully multi-based, multi-currency system. "*dataflow*'s strength lies in its ability to control unlimited currencies with ease, saving time and money and providing the users with a strong financial system. We are also delighted that SSVC appreciates the strong reporting functions available within *dataflow*".

Dataflow's Management Systems are already helping many companies to realise their true growth potential through streamlining their business processes. If you would like further information, please contact us on 0845 456 1020.

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