

PEACHTREE PLAYTHINGS PREPARES FOR EXPANSION WITH SIKICH AND BUSINESS PROCESS REVIEW



CHALLENGE

After a complete audit of the business to pursue investment opportunities, Peachtree Playthings discovered critical deficiencies in the business processes of their organization. They had to figure out the best resolution.

SOLUTION

Sikich performed an in depth business process review (BPR) to uncover and analyze the operational and technical challenges at Peachtree Playthings. Recommendations were presented with the diagnosis.

RESULTS

BPR leads to selection of NetSuite, a cloud based solution. The organization is moving to one integrated system. Technology headaches are gone, costs are minimized and company data is consolidated and always available from any location at any time.

If you have walked into the toy section of a mass market retailer like Walmart, you have undoubtedly seen the work of Peachtree Playthings.

Have you gone back to school shopping and bought your child their favorite character note pad, pencils and erasers? It's likely you have your hands on some of their finest products. Headquartered in Georgia, this privately owned company is in the business of designing and selling toys and stationery products to mass market retailers. The owner, Mark Tasman, started out over 20 years ago and has grown into an international business with entities in the United States and Hong Kong.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES REQUIRE AUDIT

As a privately held company, with no debt, Peachtree Playthings was not required to share financial reports with third parties, as is practice for public companies. This all began to change about two years ago when Peachtree Playthings started to look at potential growth and investment opportunities. Whether it was to bring on investors or invest in other companies, they knew they needed to produce audited financial statements.

They brought in a reputable Atlanta based CPA firm, Frazier & Deeter, to complete an audit of their organization. There were some challenges that quickly had to be considered. One of the challenges Peachtree Playthings faced was that the company is set up with multiple legal entities that required consolidated financial and sales reporting. The level of complexity was elevated with entities in both the U.S. and Hong Kong, each on different enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. What was even more troubling is the ERP systems could not talk to each other. "The ERP system in Hong Kong was very simple and archaic. It was a very tedious process to pull together financials. It involved getting information from Hong Kong very late and in a paper format. It was quite a challenge to go through and publish audited statements," noted their CFO, Bob Creagh.

Creagh isn't the only one that felt the pain and frustration. Tasman, the Owner, always had a hard time viewing sales data. Neither Tasman or the sales team had access to easily review consolidated business intelligence data such as consolidated sales by customer. With two systems that didn't work together, there was a heavy reliance on spreadsheets. It was very cumbersome and inefficient for the team at Peachtree Playthings.

SIKICH RECOMMENDED FOR TRUSTED ADVISOR

It became clear that Peachtree Playthings had systems that were very inefficient. The big question that needed answered was how could they solve this problem that was hindering their business. The partner with the audit firm made a recommendation. "The auditing firm highly recommended Sikich as a talented and good fit for our organization," commented Creagh.

Recommendation in hand, Peachtree Playthings started out with two main objectives in mind from varying perspectives of the management team. As CFO, Creagh was very in tune to the need to have all locations on one system that would provide the consolidated financial data they required in a very timely and accurate manner. The owner was more focused on the need to have consolidated sales data and analytics.



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"What was very impressive with the BPR is how much Mark got to know our business in the few days they spent here and going to Hong Kong. I am immensely impressed with their level of knowledge of our business. They know the systems. They know the people. They know where our short comings are. They know the process. What's kind of neat and exciting from my standpoint is that it's not about just finding a new computer system to do what you are doing right now. It's recognizing you have a bunch of people in different systems doing things very inefficiently. Sikich's BPR process leads organizations to tear the band aid off and start building infrastructure. They help you figure out how to build your processes right around a good system that is going to get good information. It's an opportunity to really re-build your business processes. We were very impressed with how much they know about our business in a very short period of time."

Bob Creagh, CFO
PEACHTREE PLAYTHINGS

BUSINESS PROCESS REVIEW IDENTIFIED AS NEXT STEP

Peachtree Playthings initiated discussions with Sikich to work on a solution for their challenges. Creagh brought in the technology advisors anticipating that he would share their problem and they would answer back with a solution during the meetings. However, he was impressed with the insightful diagnostic methodology explained by Sikich in the form of a business process review (BPR).

The BPR is a very thorough evaluation of the current business processes in an organization. This involves touring the facilities, engaging with employees as well as taking a very close look at the actions and responsibilities of each department to discover what is being done well and what processes need restructured. Once the evaluation is complete, a report of the findings is written and assembled with recommendations for appropriate solutions.

While this action plan brings an up-front investment, Peachtree Playthings viewed it as a small investment to find the proper solution. They saw the value of this necessary step to ensure the best solution was selected for their organization and trusted they were getting the best consulting advice for future success. "It's a level of comfort and trust that you get from meeting with people," noted Creagh. "Once we met with Sikich there was a comfort level that they knew what they were talking about. We met a few times and were ready to pull the trigger and go."

OPPORTUNITY TO REBUILD BUSINESS PROCESSES

Once engaged for the BPR, Sikich partner Mark Goodson started the process of spending time at their organization both in Georgia and Hong Kong. This time was utilized to sit down with the key individuals identified in their organization in order to really get a clear understanding of what was involved. Prior to the meetings, employees completed a questionnaire prepared by Sikich to make the meetings with Creagh and Goodson as productive as possible. The derivative of the meetings was a powerful insight into current business processes and challenges.

Going over to Hong Kong also allowed the technology experts at Sikich to pick up on subtle differences only noticeable to an individual looking in from outside the company, as opposed to someone has been doing it the same way since they started. Many organizations often execute a processes a particular way because that is the way they were taught or it's believed to be the way the organization wants it done, regardless if it is void of best practices. Creagh was extremely pleased with how Goodson handled these situations.

"They come in a tactful way and say we don't have to do steps two, three and four," remarked Creagh. "We can just do step one in a different way."

PEACHTREE PLAYTHINGS SELECTS NETSUITE SOLUTION

When all was said and done, Sikich evaluated multiple options to find the solution that best fit the unique needs of Peachtree Playthings. After reviewing the detailed findings and recommendation of the BPR, Peachtree Playthings made the decision to move forward with Sikich recommendation

of NetSuite. "I think an interesting part of this is that we had never really considered the cloud," remarked Creagh. "The recommendation was to go to NetSuite because it's a cloud based system. We are a small company with no IT department. Right now we have things on servers and when they go down we don't know how to fix it. When you put it out in the cloud it will save that infrastructure plus give everyone access to the information from their iPad. So Mark, who travels a lot all over the world can have access to the information."



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Bob Creagh, CFO
PEACHTREE PLAYTHINGS

THE BPR IMPACT

Peachtree Playthings was thrilled that Sikich delivered on the high expectations for the BPR project. "What was very impressive with the BPR is how much Mark got to know our business in the few days he spent here and going to Hong Kong," commented Creagh. "I am immensely impressed with their level of knowledge of our business. They know the systems. They know the people. They know where our short comings are. They know the process. What's kind of neat and exciting from my standpoint is that it's not about just finding a new computer system to do what you are doing right now. It's recognizing you have a bunch of people in different systems doing things very inefficiently. Sikich' BPR process leads organizations to tear the band aid off and start building infrastructure. They help you figure out how to build your processes right around a good system that is going to get good information. It's an opportunity to really re-build your business processes. We were very impressed with how much they know about our business in a very short period of time."

SIKICH IS A PARTNER OF CHOICE

When asked about working with Sikich, Creagh had nothing but positive impressions to share. "Sikich came in and quickly learned our business. They gave us a real solution that is going to drive real tangible improvements at the end of the day. We are now in the design phase," noted Creagh. "I have a lot of confidence we are going to be happy with it and it will be a successful implementation. I would highly recommend them to anyone and am happy to do so. I had never heard of NetSuite before and had not really considered cloud computing. They know what they are talking about. They are very friendly people. They know their stuff and are certainly willing to put the time in to keep us happy." Sikich has set Peachtree Playthings on the right path and a great partnership is now formed.

ABOUT SIKICH

Sikich is a national technology consultancy with a single-minded focus on improving business performance by deploying best-fit technology solutions. We help our clients understand "what could be", help them set priorities, and take responsibility to deliver transformative digital strategies.

