

Photofile

Leaders in photo and video evidence for medical legal claims

Complex Management Information System

UK-based Photofile are justifiably proud of their 'Seeing is believing' strapline. And what it says about their skills as a leader in photo and video evidence for medical legal claims.

When Photofile needed a major overhaul of its back office accounting system, seeing also led to believing in Evergreen's services ...

Photofile director Ross Aldridge explains: 'In 2016 we realised that we had to address the serious limitations of an existing accounting database. We couldn't even extract meaningful monthly management information needed to manage the business, or generate historical accounts.'

Photofile had to choose between amending the database or creating a bespoke solution from scratch – with a new supplier. When they chose the second approach, Evergreen was recommended by another IT supplier.

Confidence-inspiring from the start

'Evergreen inspired confidence from the start,' explains Ross Aldridge. 'I'd been disappointed by several IT suppliers over the years, not least because of their inability to work to set budgets. I was therefore pleasantly surprised by Andrew's team's knowledge and their willingness to work to an agreed project budget. And their thorough investigations before recommending a solution.'

Understanding Photofile's requirements was key to creating a robust, future-proof solution. Photofile may be a small business, but the nature of medical claims photography means it isn't a straightforward business. Not only did Evergreen's solution have to deliver reliable actual and historical management information, but other sophisticated functionality. This included a directory of all Photofile's transactions and interactions with clients, medical specialists, law firms and others. What sounds straightforward is typically complicated by the intricacies and duration of medical claims litigation. And the different terms of business applying to different clients. There's also the challenge of managing VAT over several years. Furthermore, Photofile's accounting information had to migrate seamlessly into Sage – something their existing database didn't allow ...

Extremely complex is an understatement

'What's more,' Ross Aldridge adds, 'we typically manage outsourced work with numerous pro-forma invoices. To say that our accounting is extremely complex is an understatement. Evergreen had their work cut out.'

The challenge only got tougher. With typical honesty, Evergreen recognised that it had underestimated the complexity of the very specific issues associated with how Photofile's accounts were produced and run. Getting to grips with Photofile's unique requirements exposed a previously unidentified weakness in their project account management. In turn, this led to the project stalling and could have caused the relationship's ignominious end...

A supplier's response to problems is key

Evergreen's experience with Photofile demonstrates how, in the real world, and even with good intentions backed by proven technical capabilities, projects can become mired. It also demonstrates how a supplier's response can successfully resolve problems. And how prompt system and procedure improvements can strengthen relationships – and ensure a delighted client.

Ross Aldridge again: 'By and large, despite some difficulties, Evergreen did well and worked efficiently. And, yes, with the project finished, and after everyone digging deep, we're delighted with the outcome.'

A seminal experience for Evergreen

Recalling the project with signature candour, Andrew Cope, Evergreen's managing director, believes Photofile are being generous:

'On this occasion, we misjudged how much specialised business understanding and account handling skill this complex project required. However, when the project stalled and we fully appreciated our client's frustration, we quickly re-assessed the situation and redesigned our account handling model. This included new procedures for flagging project management issues before they get out of control – now part of our standard working methods. This was the first such incident in Evergreen's 15 years, but it was a seminal learning experience for us. With changes made, we quickly got back on track. Our working relationship with Photofile is now better than ever. What's more, other clients will benefit in future.'

We respect Evergreen's response

Ross Aldridge concurs: 'Andrew and his team did exactly what was required. They helped further by sticking to their original project fee, despite incurring considerable extra costs. We respect them enormously for how they dealt with something that could happen to any business. The differentiator was *how they did so*.'

So how is Photofile different with the project complete? Ross Aldridge again: 'Everything's much more relaxed,' he explains with obvious relief. 'We know exactly how the business is performing and have meaningful management information within a month. Remember that before this we hadn't had accurate accounts for nearly a year, which was a serious concern. Before Evergreen's involvement, we had no idea where the business stood, our aged-debtor position or – critical given our extended client transactions – our cash flow.'

Quantifiable benefits

He goes on to comment on the quantifiable benefits that Evergreen delivered: 'What was previously a 2.5-person role is now managed easily by our ultra-perfectionist financial controller. I know Mirka won't mind me describing her as a consummate professional with a very low frustration threshold. She also cares passionately about supporting our business with quality management information. Now, thanks to Evergreen, she can.'

Asked whether the project had a particular 'Wow!' moment, one day stands out for Ross Aldridge: 'It was when, after months of frustration, Mirka could at last give me, not just the latest information, but numbers we could trust and robust historical data. That was when I noticed the happier, less stressed, Mirka again. It puts an important human perspective on Evergreen's work – their team members were also particularly generous with their time when Mirka visited to see in detail how the new solution worked.'

Technical skills and integrity win through

It's good practice in any case study to mention minor glitches. This is because they add reality to otherwise positive stories and show how the way suppliers respond to problems can actually build relationships. With Photofile, Ross Aldridge's patience was tested to the limit. Fortunately, Evergreen's unquestionable technical skills, and integrity during circumstances that were genuinely exceptional for them, earned them a second chance. Given both parties' investment in a business relationship, where a supplier is genuinely capable, well-intentioned and committed to rectifying a one-off failing, this makes sense. Time has proved that Evergreen is – and always was – the right supplier for Photofile and the relationship has subsequently grown closer.

They've transformed our business

So how does Ross Aldridge sum up his experience with Evergreen? 'We're delighted with how they've transformed our business and how they look after us with excellent ongoing support.'

'We presented Andrew and his team with an exceptionally challenging problem. And a deceptively complex business that was dysfunctional in a key area due to the limitations of our original database. Evergreen made an account handling misjudgement, but they quickly did everything required to put things right. What's more, they very honourably stuck to their original project fee, despite incurring extra costs.'

I'd recommend Evergreen unreservedly 'We've stayed together, grown closer, and Evergreen has satisfied us completely. You can't ask for more. They come out of this brilliantly and I can recommend them unreservedly.'

What can YOU challenge Evergreen with?

Has your latest software project stalled? Are your software suppliers looking after you properly?

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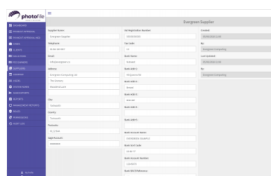
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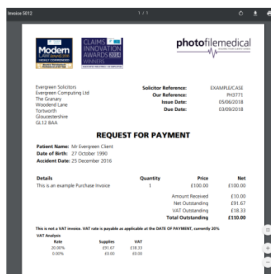
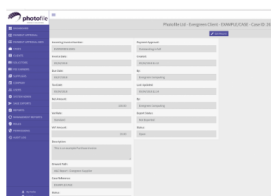
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