



Reporting headaches

Nine ways to remove the pain

“My finance department seems to grind to a halt at the end of every month.”

“Despite the allocated resource, reports are never totally accurate.”

“We need to write reports that can be easily deciphered and personalised.”

“Report writing should not be this disrupting - our finance staff should be focusing on key tasks such as planning and managing cashflow.”

Given that report-writing isn't such a burden for all organisations, what are the secrets behind producing fast, precise & customised financial information? By implementing the following steps you could eliminate your reporting headaches forever.

1 Learn to let go... of Excel

It may just be the toughest decision you have to make, but the biggest obstacle to proficient reporting is a reliance on Excel. Just importing data from one system to another can be complicated enough, never mind the formulae that have to be applied to get the right results. Although Excel can be a very powerful tool for standalone scrutiny of data, when it's used for reporting it is really just another vehicle where raw information can potentially be corrupted. Whether data is deleted accidentally or copied twice, using Excel can frequently accrue more mistakes than you started with. By cutting out the middleman, why not collect information directly from third party applications and deliver it straight into the core finance system ready for report generation.

(To view our Spreadsheets – bane or beauty paper, [click here](#))

At a glance...



- Have your data delivered straight into the finance system, thereby avoiding the limitations of unwieldy Excel spreadsheets ▶
- Automate your report generation – your staff can then focus on more profitable duties ▶
- Get your month end when you need it – at the month end, not several days later ▶
- Reports directly to your inbox without having to chase colleagues ▶
- Avoid bespoke report requests by introducing a self-service approach via a dashboard facility – tailored information for the individual ▶
- Create reports anywhere, anytime ▶
- Reduce investment in stand-alone reporting tools ▶
- Empower everyone rather than the elite few – on-demand and pre-scheduled reporting across the organisation ▶



2 Cut down time spent on reports

Why let two or three finance staff spend a couple of weeks preparing information for month-end when it could just as easily take one person as little as half a day? By automating the manual effort of collecting data from disparate sources it is possible to dramatically reduce the amount of labour required, allowing staff to get on with more profitable duties such as cashflow management and planning.

3 Break the deadlock of month end

Does a whole organisation really have to stand still while everyone is involved in month end? It doesn't have to be this way. If a person spends hours rather than days preparing reports and doesn't have to rely on external departments for information, then it's possible to release the deadlock and allow everyone to get on with their jobs. Rather than having multiple personnel involved, why not generate reports from the core finance system and allow a single person to review & distribute them?

4 Schedule reports to arrive the day they are due

How many times are you waiting for a report to land on your desk, prior to attending a meeting or to make a critical decision? Think how much easier it would be both for the finance department and senior managers if reports automatically dropped into inboxes at a pre-scheduled times. With modern finance systems, this is now possible to set up, so you never need to worry about chasing or remembering to send another report ever again.

5 Why wait when you can help yourself

If employees put in special requests for bespoke reports then the chances are the responses will be so slow that the information is no longer relevant. Instead, why not introduce an environment where staff can access information themselves on-line via a dashboard. This approach is perfect if employees need to view summary business information or need the facility to drill down further themselves.

6 Reduce the number of hours personalising reports

Gathering all the necessary information to use in a report can involve endless chasing, but once this is done there is then the task of formatting reports and putting them into the appropriate templates. Some reporting tools such as Excel are particularly poor when it comes to presentation and are also quite difficult to read. Using ready-made templates and emailing reports directly to individuals as a PDF attachment can take the pain out of this process as well as ensuring that the final document is preserved in its original state.

7 Create reports, anywhere, anytime

With a browser-based finance system you can give staff the flexibility to work on reports remotely. So regardless of where key personnel are based, there are no excuses for delays in getting reports out on time.

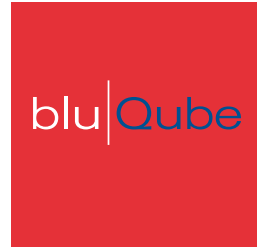
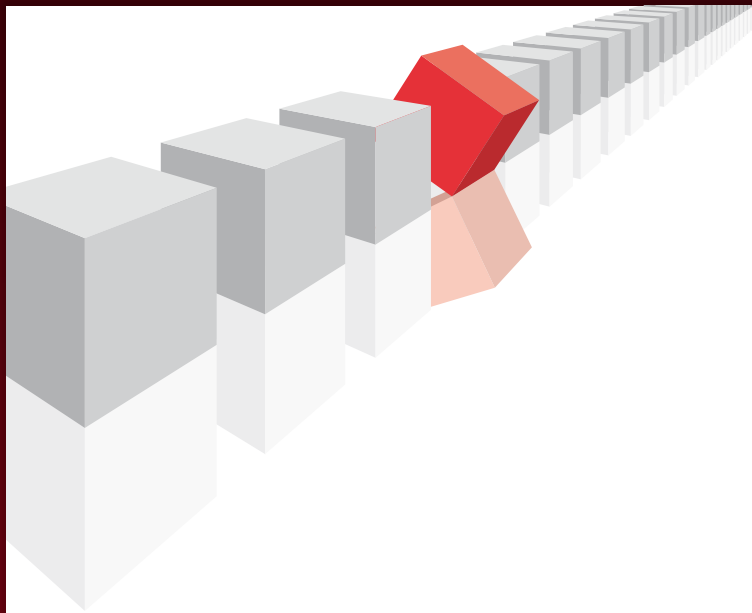
8 Don't buy specialist tools when you can rely on built-in reporting

Many finance professionals often invest in standalone reporting tools such as Crystal Reports or Business Objects but the problem with these is that you also have to invest in the skillsets to manage such detailed applications. An alternative is to use built-in reporting suites which can offer up to 150 different templates that can be easily customised without the need for extensive IT resources.

9 Empower everyone rather than an elite few

One of the main bugbears for managers is when they hear that reports will be held up because the person(s) responsible for creating them are either on holiday, ill or otherwise engaged on another project. Try not to fall into the trap of making certain employees indispensable, so without their knowledge and input the whole reporting process stalls. To prevent a bottleneck occurring, consider how reporting could be achieved without the manual effort and expertise of key personnel. Look at how on-demand and pre-scheduled report creation could be rolled out across the organisation.

(For more on the wider area of devolved accounting [click here.](#))



Find out more

An open, browser-based accounting solution such as bluQube that is based on a relational database platform helps you address these key reporting challenges. For further information call **08456 44 7788** or visit **www.bluQube.co.uk**

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