

The Family Grapevine is a magazine that supports parents from the moment they decide to start a family to the day their teenager finally leaves home. Each issue contains hundreds of local phone numbers covering a huge range of subjects of interest and inspiration to families across the country. The Family Grapevine's ultimate goal is to deliver a local edition to every family in the UK.

Shared challenges

As the business grew quickly using franchising The Family Grapevine realised it needed a CRM system to manage its client and distributor lists. An original system created in-house by using Microsoft Access became difficult to manage – partly due to different users using different versions of the software, resulting in software support and version control problems. Third parties were drafted in on two occasions to develop more effective programmes, neither of which delivered and “wasted an enormous amount of money” according to Family Grapevine Director Sheridan Parsons.

Breadth. Scope. Flexibility

Having decided that an off-the-shelf application would be the best solution, the group assessed several different systems before choosing Really Simple Solutions. “The others we looked at weren't flexible enough or broad enough in scope,” says Sheridan. “Really Simple Systems CRM stood out head and shoulders above the rest. We were also impressed with the manner in which they handled our enquiries.”



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**Sheridan Parsons, Director
Family Grapevine**

Switch on and go

After a refreshingly straightforward transition from the incumbent system to Really Simple Systems CRM – “We felt quite vulnerable but there was no need to worry, the change was easy and Really Simple Systems helped us all the way,” says Sheridan – the publisher found its needs were finally being met. Thanks to Really Simple Systems the magazine's franchisees can use the system to produce their own reports. “They are not restricted to standard ones – it's all very flexible,” says Sheridan. The company has also been able to introduce data sharing. “This is really valuable when



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caring for shared clients; also, we no longer have to worry about the IT impact when taking on a new franchisee. We just switch them on and they're up-and-running."

Taking control

Sheridan adds that the Really Simple Systems CRM has really helped the group get on top of its business at any time and from anywhere. “Franchisees can even manage their businesses when they're away on holiday,” she says.

Easy option

The fact that Really Simple Systems is so user-friendly has been a real boon, says Sheridan. “It's very popular with new franchisees because it's so flexible and easy to use. When they see it their reaction is always the same, which is 'No question, I want to use that system'. It's so simple I can even customise it myself."

Stress-free

Thanks to Really Simple Systems' unparalleled customer support, Sheridan says the company is able to operate in total confidence. “To be honest, though, I have only had to use support to make additional customisations. The system has never crashed and we've never had a problem."

Final verdict

“Really Simple Systems CRM is very good value for money and has brought us enormous benefits,” concludes Sheridan. “Customers always say thank you for looking after us so well. The Really Simple Systems CRM system makes us able to care for our customers far better and to be far more efficient."

Really Simple Systems Hosted CRM is aimed at small and medium sized organisations with between 5 and 200 people who want a straightforward hosted CRM sales, marketing and support system. The hosted model is particularly suitable for companies with multiple locations and sales people who work remotely or at home. Really Simple Systems is the largest United Kingdom provider of hosted CRM systems and has offices in the UK, North America, and Australia. Users include the Royal Academy of Arts, the British Library, British Red Cross and the Department of Health as well as many small and medium sized companies.

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