

The Royal Academy of Arts (RA) is an independent fine arts institution, which supports contemporary artists and promotes interest in the arts through a comprehensive and ambitious exhibition programme. Founded in 1798, the Academy is completely autonomous, politically independent and self-funding. The famous Summer Exhibition is a hugely popular show of contemporary art held every year since 1769 and attracts up to 800,000 visitors. The Friends organisation is the third largest in the world and numbers more than 85,000 members. The Royal Academy of Arts Magazine carries advertising from art galleries and art related companies around the world and is published quarterly.

Memory overload

With so many strings to its bow, the RA had reams of data on advertisers that was rapidly becoming unmanageable. Over time, notes scribbled on paper and information stored in peoples' memories alone was proving an inefficient system of maximising commercial opportunities and maintaining client satisfaction.

Do it yourself

Having studied its needs the RA decided it needed a CRM system that was a) web-based, for easy and flexible access and b) they could build themselves, as opposed to purchasing a more expensive custom system. "We needed to be able to access information from home or anywhere," explains Business Manager Kim Jenner. "We wanted a complete history of advertisers, rather than relying on our previous system of just guessing when a customer last advertised, last paid etc. And we also had price considerations to take into account."

Simplicity itself

The solution was Really Simple Systems' web-based solution. Having briefed Really Simple Systems on its needs, the wheels were set in motion for a seamless progression from an old-style paper-based system to fully operational technology-based CRM. "Implementation was very quick," recalls Kim. "Once they were up to speed on our requirements, Really Simple Systems offered loads of fantastic suggestions. They transferred the data, did a parallel run, and everything went really smoothly. It was a very positive experience without any of the glitches or frustrations you might associate with this type of operation."



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or home. We have all our client records at our fingertips and can also get an overview of progress being made by any given salesperson in the organisation with any given client." No mean feat given that the organisation is using Really Simple Systems to manage advertising sales for the British Library, the Cinema Television and Benevolent Fund (which recently ran the James Bond premier), and Chichester-based art gallery Pallant House. "It has solved all the issues we had and in the process has made us more productive and efficient – no more scraps of paper!" continues Kim. "We can do sales forecasting, see sales to date and no longer have to wait for all that crucial information."

Keeping things simple

In a sales environment where staff previously had little, or no IT experience, Really Simple Systems has also proved supremely easy to get to grips with. "Seriously," says Kim, "you can learn how to use it in two minutes flat. We had a temporary member of staff in and they were up and running on it in 10 minutes. I think anyone – even with minimal IT experience – can learn to use it in that amount of time." And, of course, building its own system meant the RA had to be able to maintain it, something that Kim insists has been no problem at all. "Our IT department are very good, but it makes us independent of them, which is empowering."

Final verdict

"When you consider that none of us has any IT training and yet myself and my team are running our entire advertising process using Really Simple Systems – thanks to the system's ease of use and as much help as we need from Really Simple Systems over the phone – you can get a picture of just how valuable this whole thing has been," concludes Kim. "It's super-reliable and we can always be confident in the fact that all our data is backed up and stored. It really has transformed the way in which we work."

For more information on RAA visit royalacademy.org.uk



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Problem Solved

So, has Really Simple Systems made the RA's life simpler? The answer from Kim is a resounding yes. "Today we have easy access to all our data from wherever we need to access it – be it from work

Really Simple Systems Hosted CRM is aimed at small and medium sized organisations with between 5 and 200 sales people who want a straightforward hosted CRM sales and marketing 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 and Australia. Users include the Royal Academy of Arts and the British Library as well as many small and medium sized companies.

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