



“New Zealand small businesses are many and varied. I sell and support Accredo software because it’s flexible and lets owners operate their business how they want to.”

John Pronk, owner Blue Sky Systems Ltd

Flexibility of Accredo software gives business owners scope to run things their own way

If John Pronk has learned one thing in his career as a business software reseller and support provider it is that every customer is different and likes to be treated that way.

Pronk began working for an accountancy firm straight from school, and then moved into computer programming after filling in one too many tax returns for customers. Over the next decade he kept developing his computer literacy whilst continuing his chartered accountancy training. In the early 1990s he started reselling the then popular accounting software system, Prophet.

“Once I got my head around the system I quickly developed a loyal list of customers to whom I provided day-to-day support. I think the thing they appreciated was not just the fact that I had accountancy and IT skills, but that I took time to understand how they operated. Every business owner likes to do things their way and my aim is to ensure the software they use supports that operating independence.”

In the early 2000s Pronk, who by now was a qualified chartered accountant, went looking for a Windows-based accounting system that had the customisation tools that would allow him to tailor the software to suit the specific needs of his customers.

“Prophet had good DOS-based tools, but was slow developing its Windows-based equivalents. That’s when I came across Accredo and immediately I knew I had struck gold. It had just the right customisation tools I was looking for.”

Pronk says one problem Accredo helped remove was any niggling accounting software issues.

“Accredo is a sound accounting platform and that is what customers deserve from the outset. If the accounting processing is unstable it is difficult for a customer to trust the information the system is providing. Accredo does the fundamentals very well.”

But it is tailoring the software to better match a customer’s specific needs and providing custom reporting where Pronk says Accredo really comes into its own.

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"My first action is to ensure the customer's chart of accounts is structured correctly. I then talk to the customer and find out how they go about their daily business routines, which gives me an insight into the type of information they need from the system."

The good thing about Accredo, says Pronk, is that it captures a lot of transactional data. "Many systems capture a rich amount of financial data, but getting that data back out of the system to help business owners and managers make informed decisions can be problematic.

"Accredo comes standard with powerful, easy to use report layouts across all modules. It produces detailed or consolidated reports containing the information owners need to manage their business."

But better yet, Pronk says, Accredo's report writer and its scripting language allow him to customise the system to suit each particular business.

"Accredo's Report Designer module gives customers the option to design reports specific to their unique business needs, allowing them to combine information from different modules. Rather than compile 20 different performance reports each month, owners can use Accredo to create a single page report capturing all the essential information that needs to be monitored."

Using the scripting layer available in Accredo, Pronk says he can change the information each module displays on screen by adding or subtracting fields to include or exclude data.

"Flexibility is one of Accredo's strengths. The Forms Designer module lets you extend the Accredo software to create forms that can manipulate nonstandard data – data that is often unique to the way a business operates."

Pronk cites the example of a customer who distributes confectionary. He has tailored Accredo so the owner can double check that the items he is shipping match what has been ordered.

"With different people involved in receiving the order, picking the product and packing it for distribution there is room for things to awry," says Pronk.

"But now thanks to Accredo, the owner can scan all the products that have been picked and those scans end up in a form that compares what's actually been picked to what's been ordered. At the press of a button the comparison is completed and he knows he is providing his customers with the right products."

Pronk says it is a good example of how the software can be used to create a particular form or workflow that matches the business owner's specific requirements.

"The business benefit to the owner is significant. It saves him a great deal of stress and time. He can now check that everything is in order before it leaves his premises and he can prove what has been ordered and delivered. This reduces the amount of time he needs to spend on customer follow up and has enabled him to keep better track of day-to-day transactions."

New Zealand small businesses are many and varied, and Pronk says that is the reason he sells and supports Accredo software. It provides owners with control over what's happening in their business.

"Knowing what jobs provide the best margin and finding out what customers or products are performing well are crucial to the success of a business – and it answers to those questions that customers on the Accredo platform can get easy access to."

Small business owners in New Zealand are an independent bunch, and don't like to be told they have to do things in a certain way. That's why Accredo is perfect for them, says Pronk.

"Every business operates differently and every owner wants to keep an eye on their own key performance indicators – the ones they know provide an insight into the well-being of the business. Accredo can be trusted to present them with the exact information they need – in black and white."

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