

Cost-effective yet powerful; Numara Track-It is the answer for one of the country's first Business Enterprise Colleges

In the summer of 2002 Tollbar School became Tollbar Business Enterprise College, one of the country's first specialist schools to offer a new standard in secondary education. The transition has brought new opportunities and challenges for the staff at the organisation as well as the 2,000 children who attend, with improved targets for GCSE results and a stronger focus on business management in the organisation.

One dramatic change has been the creation of a joint sixth form with Grimsby College of Adult Education. As joint partners, the two colleges now share classes and benefit from better resources as well as an expanded syllabus.

The process of becoming a Business Enterprise College led to great demands being placed on the IT team (led by Kevin Blake). IT support and admin systems had to be developed and maintained to increasingly high standards. To help them do this the college began using Numara Track-It! three years ago and has worked through several upgrades since then.

"We urgently needed a solution that would deliver efficient software audits, inventory control and help desk administration," said Kevin. "Not unusually, we'd been using a 'mix and match' system of spreadsheets, and paper-based systems which we'd seriously outgrown. It had become a nightmare to keep accurate records as the number of PCs grew. Management control was very poor and it was clear that a new solution had to be found. That solution was Numara Track-It!"

Having scoured the market for possible solutions, taken advice from the council and evaluated four packages, Kevin found that nothing came close to the Numara Track-It! offering.

Having tried a test run, and finding the Intuit IT Solutions' (now Numara Software) support team helpful and attentive, Kevin discovered that the software could be amended from a user-centric focus. This was a key turning point in its use at Tollbar.



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"We have many users, all moving around and sharing equipment so help desk queries need to be tagged to the PCs, not the users, for quick resolution. By switching from a user-focus we can identify trends and issues more easily, such as which machines break down most frequently or which classrooms lose most mice, for instance!"

"Everything else was wildly expensive, overly complex and unwieldy. As with any educational facility we're price sensitive, but functionality of the software is of paramount importance. Bearing this in mind, the only logical choice for us was Numara Track-It!"

A brief pilot followed, incorporating the engineers and key users and then Numara Track-It! went live across the organisation. Kevin continues: "We were delighted to find that installing Numara Track-It! was a piece of cake. After just 30 minutes training for our end users we were up and running." One of the biggest improvements Kevin has instigated has been the inventory and auditing system to meet Council audit requirements.

The system tracks each and every technology component in the school; hardware, software, consumables and cables etc. The inventory currently stands at over 20,000 items. Full user histories can be created for all equipment together with a full audit trail for financial and management reporting.

"The old annual audit used to take huge amounts of time for the team and was something everyone dreaded," Kevin admitted. The inventory system has recently expanded into offering a library function; this enables teaching staff to check availability of specialist equipment, such as laptops, projectors or unusual software, and book it in advance."

Help Desk productivity has also improved hugely with the use of Numara Track-It!. As Kevin explains "In a year and a half we've amassed over 3,000 records from support of the three different user communities we serve; pupils, 125 teaching and 75 admin staff, all of whom have quite different requirements. We experience concentrated bursts of demand, generally when exam and project deadlines are coming up.

Kevin's horizons continue to expand: "We'll be looking at using the Web front-end to Numara Track-It! and will be incorporating e-mail into the Help Desk logging system. Numara Track-It!'s flexibility means that there are always new and better ways of doing things as demands change and the Intuit IT Solutions' (now Numara Software) support team works in partnership with us to develop them."

"I'm pleased to say that we have much tighter management control over what work is to be done on the help desk, where issues are arising, how they're being dealt with and how we can improve our services further."

A small selection of organisations that depend on Numara help desk and service desk products

3M A.C. Nielsen	Hewlett-Packard
Abbott Laboratories	Hilton Hotels
Ameritech	Honda-Netherlands
AT&T	IBM
Bacardi	Lloyd's Bank
Cartier	Loughborough College
Charles Schwab	Lucent Technologies
Chase Manhattan Bank	Mercedes-Benz
Chester City Council	Mitsubishi Motors
Chrysler	Motorola
Chubb	Nabisco
Cisco Systems	NHS Tayside
Deloitte & Touche	Nikon
DHL Airways	Pfizer Pharmaceuticals
Discovery Channel	Pirelli
Dr. Pepper	PricewaterhouseCoopers
E.I. Dupont	Quaker Oats
EDS	Reebok
FedEx	Rolls-Royce
Ford	Shell
GE	Sony
Goodyear	Sotheby's
	Texaco
	UPS



About Numara Software

Founded in 1991, Numara Software is a global provider of service desk management solutions. Its flagship products, Numara Track-It! and Numara FootPrints, support over 50,000 customer sites worldwide making it the leader in this market for small to mid-sized enterprises.