

# Helping SmartSentry prosper

A client case study

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## **A smart business making smart decisions**

**Almost all successful tech companies start with a problem to solve. For Nottingham UHY client, SmartSentry, they hit the jackpot with a high-tech solution that helps businesses get their products to market on time and on budget.**

### **Every journey starts with an idea**

SmartSentry director and founder, Mike Gardner, spent 10 years with IBM as a senior IT specialist and a further 10 years managing complex IT delivery projects for the tech giant. After leaving one of the world's largest employers and experiencing the challenges faced by small and medium sized businesses in the UK, Mike recognised that many of those companies simply didn't have the luxury of being able to maintain a permanent team of hardware and software engineers, but at the same time needed those skills to stay innovative to remain ahead of the competition.

Mike was confident he could provide a solution and went on to found SmartSentry in 2011. The focus of the company was to provide expert professional services to those kind of companies, allowing them to focus on their core business.

During the last ten years, SmartSentry has successfully developed over 50 products for a diverse range of customers by deploying the most appropriate technology to match product requirements and cost targets.

### **Getting the basics right**

Around eight years ago, Mike came to UHY for accountancy support and has remained a client of our Nottingham office, looked after by UHY partner Liz Searby, ever since.

Like many start-ups, SmartSentry maintained manual paper records and used Excel spreadsheets for forecasting. This gave Mike the information he needed at the time, however, following impressive growth in recent years, data input was becoming increasingly time consuming. On the advice of our UHY team, SmartSentry's accounts were migrated from manual paper records and spreadsheets to cloud accounting software solution, Xero, a couple of years ago.

### **Giving time back to focus on the core business**

Whilst the move to Xero meant data entry became quicker, easier and altogether a less painful experience for Mike, on review of the end of year accounts, UHY manager Lucy Durham recognised that there were some issues in relation to the generation and posting of invoices and she also felt there was more Mike could be doing with Xero to improve efficiencies.

Lucy contacted Mike and set up a training session to run through the additional areas of functionality she was sure would make Mike's life easier. During the two-hour training session, Lucy went through each section of the software and then took a deeper dive into the specific areas that would benefit SmartSentry, from setting up bank rules to recommending the best bolt-on apps for their needs, like Dext to automate processing and Pleo to simplify expenses. In these two hours, Lucy and Mike made sure the system was set up to work as efficiently as possible for SmartSentry's needs.

### **More than just a service**

Following the training, Mike got in touch to thank UHY and Lucy specifically for the session, writing "it is another example of the added value we get from UHY, above and beyond the accountancy services. It was a real eye-opener seeing the extra productivity features available in Xero, plus the available add-ons and complementary products that Lucy went through."

He added, "the experience of meeting with Lucy resonated with some of my experiences seeing IBM transform from being a hardware manufacturer prior to 1990, to being a services organisation today. I think that the two hours spent with Lucy has saved me three or four days of effort per month, the return on investment is huge." Testimonials don't get much better than that!

### Effortless and instantaneous collaboration

Following our input, Mike can now view the stats that are most important to him on his Xero dashboard, giving instant summaries of profit, cash and assets at the touch of a button. And being in the cloud, UHY can work in instantaneous collaboration with Mike and his team, viewing real-time information, whilst Mike now has more control over the finances of the business than ever before.

The processes now in place will not only improve efficiencies but also support SmartSentry's growth, with full monthly management accounts and performance reports an option for the future. SmartSentry is also now prepared for the next stage of Making Tax Digital and will be ahead of the game when the time comes.

### Key contact



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### The future is bright

Following the recent success of SmartSentry, Mike has been joined at the helm by partner Chris Snow and together they have ambitious plans for the next stage of the company's growth.

Until now, keeping the business records straight was taking up a lot of Mike's time. However, following just two hours with Lucy, Mike now has the tools to ensure his accounts are much more efficient and useful, saving time to concentrate on his passion; providing high tech solutions to people who do not have the in-house expertise.

### The next step

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**Mike Gardner, SmartSentry Founder**



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