



Angel Solutions Ltd

eXtraordinary thinking...

The value for money case for Perspective

Focus on cost

Value for money for software is notoriously hard to quantify in circumstances where a reduction in cost, or an increase in income are not the primary purposes of the systems in question. What follows is however an attempt to make a case, purely on the basis of value for money, for purchasing Perspective (i.e. it does not take into account factors such as improved quality of outcomes, the widening of participation in School Self Evaluation / Departmental Self Evaluation, easier identification of reasons for Within School Variation, improved data security, more communications with stakeholders)

Time is Money

The old adage that 'time is money' underlies the first element of the case that Perspective provides value for money.

With Perspective in place a Secondary school of 60 to 70 members of staff can (in the context of evaluation and planning) interact and participate anywhere and anytime without taking up time

- Moving from place to place
- Phoning/emailing (which will entail transcription and duplication)
- Waiting for feedback
- Copying data from one place to another
- Collecting data from disparate sources
- Searching for evidence
- Finding documents
- Asking for and chasing progress reports
- Briefing others
- Being briefed
- Printing forests worth of paper (using ink, paper, power, and time)

An unscientific but probably realistic estimate would reasonably be that by not having to do, or doing less of, the above staff would save around 1 or 2 hours per person per term (that's only 5 to 10 minutes per week!).

Assuming that an average salary for a professional member of staff is £34,000 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7372058.stm> then a (very conservative) figure of £20 per hour per person (£34,000/190 weeks/37.5 hours) is arrived at. On this basis the saving to a school of 1 hour per term per member of staff is £3,900 per year (65 staff x £20/hour x 3 terms) would be **not be saved** (the staff would still be employed) but time to that value would be spent paying staff to fulfil their professional role, thus contributing to a raising of standards.

Total saving: Secondary School: £3,900 (plus printer ink + paper).
Primary School: £780

The cost of knowing

The ability to produce predefined stakeholder surveys (e.g. for parents, staff, governors) is an integral part of Perspective.

If Perspective was used to produce just one parent survey per year then the cost of distributing paper, the time involved in collating responses, and to produce reports, would be saved. Some schools buy Perspective purely for these purposes believing on these grounds alone they either save money compared to using a specialised survey tool/application, or writing surveys themselves. Total saving: (compared to survey provider) £750 to £1,000 a time.

Losing is expensive

Perspective becomes the repository for many crucial official documents not least the schools Development Plan and SEF. These forms – and more significantly the evidence that underpins them, all represent huge investments of time. If one of these was lost, or the document became corrupted, the consequence would be a need to spend the same amount of time all over again for no net gain.

Total Saving: Say 8 hours at £20/hour = £160 per document.

What price reputation?

Most staff carry around with them a great deal of school related data in electronic form, usually on laptops, USB Memory sticks. Even the most diligent can occasionally suffer the embarrassment of losing these, or worse, having them stolen.

What would the cost be if sensitive data was misplaced, found by a member of the public, and worst of all passed to the media? Just the time spent fielding the questions of local and possibly regional or national media would be significant, let alone the embarrassment factor!

Total Saving: Tons of hassle!

Of course savings related to loss of data, documents, etc., are not necessarily going to be realised, but taking reasonable precautions to protect against them is the equivalent of investing in locks, keys, and insurance policies – which like Perspective, carry a cost for making sure something does not happen or, if it does, causes less pain than would otherwise be the case.

In conclusion:

Finally, regardless of any case based on the merits and capabilities of a product, its value and therefore its price will always be determined by the market the product or service is offered to. Perspective, has passed the test of value for money on that basis being selected by many schools, schools who had sometimes been offered competing products at both lower and higher prices. The conclusion that one could draw from this is that your school needs to take a closer look to find out what it stands to gain (as well as save).