



## **Charities to save tens of thousands with new simple 'shopping online' e-procurement portal**

### ***Sightsavers develops best practice in end to end procurement***

A new e-procurement portal is radically improving the way charities acquire aid supplies and equipment, saving them thousands of pounds in resources and man hours.

Information software company, Intouch Business, has developed a new web portal that simplifies the complex processes of price negotiation and the purchasing of specialist equipment into an experience as familiar as shopping online.

Through working with the innovative global sight charity Sightsavers, Intouch has created a user-friendly system resembling an online shop that allows charity workers in the field to order anything from syringes to an entire surgical eye unit at the simple click of a mouse, from anywhere in the world.

This once complicated process has been made simple and reliable, enabling the charity to access the best equipment and prices from trusted suppliers.

Intouch's innovative Servizio framework aids Sightsavers in plugging gaps which existed in their procurement chain by improving and adding new modules. This immediately makes the process more efficient and eliminates the need for an expensive procurement system redesign and build.

The new portal means that in-the-field staff can now input what they require directly into the Sightsavers specialist e-procurement software. Importantly, the portal can also be used to plan and review buying for the year ahead with the added benefit that plans can be made for group and bulk buying for further cost savings.

Greg Collins, Operations Director at Sightsavers, says: "Intouch and Servizio have not just helped us in improving our global procurement but they have delivered us a quantum leap. They've enabled us to move away from paper based, error prone, and resource intensive ways of working to a full end-to-end electronic procurement process which is delivered consistently to offices in 20+ countries. We believe what we now have is best practice in charity end-to-end procurement."

Most recently, the portal's success has led to its adoption by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). The IAPB portal is a free service to 115 eye charities world wide enabling them to group buy to improve quality control and price negotiation. Large or small, each member charity gets access to the best deals from suppliers they can trust at the click of a mouse.

Gareth Webb, Senior Partner at Intouch Business, says: “Our procurement portal is a perfect example of how we remove the limitations of off-the-shelf products by adding critical modules which they lack, and linking with existing applications using the *Servizio* software toolset.

“Our clients no longer need to make do with ‘nearly there’ management tools that frequently fail and result in wasted time and money, demonstrated by the take up from UK and international charities.”

- **Sightsavers Case Study – leading the way in charity e-procurement**  **Sightsavers™**

*Archaic paper based systems, labour intensive tax and currency calculations and out of date paper price lists were just some of the issues constraining Sightsavers’ programme expenditure.*

*Historically, field team members manually inputted equipment information from the IAPB standard list (a catalogue of all products and prices) into spread sheets of goods and services. Once received by the procurement team based in the UK, each request would be individually processed using their old procurement system. Final calculations, including import and export taxes and currency conversions, were performed manually as well as payments for purchase orders on each request.*

*Although the process in place had “best in class” software at its heart, it was designed for use by procurement professionals and was not suitable for large numbers of field users. From start to end the process was time consuming and exposed to human error, with no capacity to increase transactions without large back office investment.*

*Sightsavers is committed to growing their organisation, but not at the expense of diverting money intended for the frontline into back office functions. The system had to change.*

*It had already been impressed with Intouch Business and its software toolset Servizio following the build of an internal corporate dashboard. Sightsavers saw its potential to plug gaps in its existing procurement software and asked Intouch to develop the process.*

*A year on, Intouch Business has revolutionised the Sightsavers procurement process. Using Servizio, the company has delivered a new platform that is intuitive to the users’ needs without the need for training. The click of a mouse puts a piece of equipment into the user’s shopping basket. When confirmed, the once laborious process is now automated, eliminating human error and saving time. Importantly, it also integrates with Sightsavers’ accounts, providing clear visibility on each cost centre, helping the organisation to better understand and support each regions needs.*

*Not only does Sightsavers now have a sector leading procurement portal, clearer visibility of the buying process allows them to negotiate better prices with suppliers. Importantly, in keeping with the charity’s mission, it now has the ability to double the amount of transactions it processes through a quick, efficient and cost-effective system.*

*To date the system has not only paid for itself but Sightsavers estimates to have saved an additional £50,000 since the portal's launch in the summer of 2010 - a saving that will increase due to the extra transaction capacity that Intouch's platform has provided. There are now plans to deploy the portal developed by Intouch Software across all UK non-programme purchasing, saving more money to help eliminate avoidable blindness around the world.*

## **ENDS**

For more information, images or to interview Gareth Webb from Intouch Business or Greg Collins, Operations Director at Sightsavers, please contact Gareth Webb on;

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### **Notes to editors:**

- **About Intouch Business**

Intouch Business [www.intouch-business.com](http://www.intouch-business.com) was set up in 2007 by Gareth Webb and Phil Selley to meet the demand to manage business operations with accurate timely information, delivered using applications over the internet. It is at the forefront of developing management systems for the third sector, reinforced by a wealth of high profile public sector and commercial businesses and organisations including the Crown Prosecution Service Direct and the World Nuclear Association. It's innovative Servizio system is a framework of web applications that can be rapidly assembled and configured to create management systems that work simply and effectively with any specialist business or organisation. [www.servizio.co.uk](http://www.servizio.co.uk)

Servizio is delivered as 'Platform-as-a-Service' using the latest Microsoft.NET technology and is underpinned by Intouch's outsourced business development capability and client support service.

- **About Servizio:**

Intouch Business uses it's innovative *Servizio* framework to customise web applications to create easy to use systems for operations management. No matter how bespoke an organisation's management needs are – from e-procurement to expenditure tracking - the flexibility of the framework and support service offered by Intouch Business means that the end product will deliver exactly what is demanded of it.

- **About Sightsavers**

Sightsavers is a registered UK charity (Registered charity numbers 207544 and SC038110) that works in more than 30 developing countries to prevent blindness, restore sight and advocate for social inclusion and equal rights for people who are blind and visually impaired. [www.sightsavers.org](http://www.sightsavers.org) There are 39 million blind people in the world; 80% of all blindness can be prevented or cured.

- **About IAPB**

IAPB brings together 115 eye care charities worldwide including Sightsavers. The IAPB Standard List project is led by IAPB in collaboration with Sightsavers, Helen Keller International and The Fred Hollows Foundation.

[www.iapb.org](http://www.iapb.org)