

ERA secure savings and protect quality standards for well-run, dynamic charity Canterbury Oast Trust

CLIENT	Canterbury Oast Trust
SECTOR	Charitable Organisation
COST CATEGORIES	Food & Catering

For any charitable organisation, ensuring that costs are tightly controlled is an essential part of its operations.

For Canterbury Oast Trust (COT), whose life-changing work relies on the income generated by its various enterprises, the balance between delivering quality products and service and cost management is vital.

THE CLIENT

Canterbury Oast Trust (COT) is a dynamic and forward-thinking charitable trust set up in the mid 1980s by a pioneering group of parents. Today they support adults with learning disabilities across Kent and East Sussex to live independently and take control of their lives.

The charity has a number of vibrant commercial enterprises that generate income. Including the 100 acre Rare Breeds Centre and Granary Restaurant which attracts over 75,000 visitors a year and The Coterie Tea Room - a bustling café in the heart of the historic town of Rye.

THE CHALLENGE

After meeting Client Relationship Managers, Nick Robinson and Simon Dodson, at a networking event, COT Chief Executive, Gill Gibb, was intrigued by the potential benefits that Expense Reduction Analysts (ERA) could bring. And so, she invited Nick and Simon to carry out a review. Together with their team, Nick and Simon not only secured significant savings but reconnected COT with local supplier contacts resulting in improved service levels and protecting those all-important quality products.

ERA Client Relationship Manager, Nick Robinson, specialises in managing relationships to a client's best advantage and identifying projects for long-term benefits. After analysing requirements and selecting the best-fit team of experts, Nick is able to manage the procurement process on behalf of his clients at every step to ensure quality and service levels are maintained to the highest possible standards.

SUMMARY OF SAVINGS

Food & Catering  23%



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Having an independent third party like ERA review things for us has been extremely beneficial. No matter how good a job you're doing internally, there will always be room for improvement – it's just a matter of whether you have the time, resource and, in this case, the leverage to achieve it. From the level of communication to the ongoing support; it's been a success from start to finish and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Nick and his team to anyone.

SIMON ROBINSON,
HEAD OF FINANCE AND COMMERCE,
CANTERBURY OAST TRUST

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After meeting COT's Head of Finance and Commerce, Simon Robinson, and Head of Property and Infrastructure, Jerry Kenward, Nick wasted no time in analysing which areas of spend could be addressed with maximum impact. Unsurprisingly, food was by far the largest. The Trust's Rare Breed Centre is a huge visitor attraction in Kent and its sizeable restaurant not only caters for the thousands of visitors to the centre but hosts functions and events too. Add to this the Coterie Tea Room in Rye and it's easy to see why food costs are one of the expenses the charity faces.

"The Canterbury Oast Trust is a well run and skilfully managed charity in its own right. The beauty of what we at ERA can bring to a situation like this is our specialist knowledge and sizeable leverage that our clients simply don't have. COT had done a great job in securing the best rates available to them in isolation but by utilising our experience and the sheer scale of our network, we were able to make a significant impact," explained Nick.

Thanks to ERA's considerable experience and expert knowledge, Nick and his team were able to secure a 23% saving on expenditure from COT's existing supplier. And, perhaps more importantly, were able to bring the supplier relationship back to a local level by introducing the Trust's team to a local account manager instead of the national manager with whom they had been dealing. This local knowledge and connection means COT are now much better served by an account manager who understands their business, the area and is more aligned with the Trust's core values.

"One very important point of which we were very mindful was the Trust's very high standards and a to number of specific, almost niche product requirements. Part of our process was to ensure COT had the opportunity to trial various products so that they could have utter confidence in the quality standards prior to making any commitments. It's just another one of the ways we're able to secure tailored best-fit solutions."

The team at COT is small yet dedicated and experienced. In addition to the obvious savings, Nick was able to add efficiency value by rationalising a number of external suppliers and streamlining the process back to a few, best fit providers rather than many. All of which has an impact on the internal resource needed to manage relationships going forwards.

ERA's client relationships don't end with identifying the best supplier and saving costs. Nick and Simon managed the transition to the new and improved service with COT's existing supplier to ensure it was seamless. Ongoing reviews by the ERA team validate that the promised service levels are being met and keep an open channel of communication between all parties. As with most things in life, communication is key and that's something that ERA prides itself on.

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NICK ROBINSON,
CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGER, EXPENSE REDUCTION ANALYSTS

ADDED VALUE

- Introduced local account manager relationship.
- Streamlined and rationalised supply chain.
- Quality standards protected.
- Improved communications with national supplier.
- Access to cost-centre specialists.
- Ongoing audit to ensure quality and savings.