



CAPTAIN CASHFLOW

Captain Cashflow: a full managerial finance forecast before your morning coffee

- The SME market had demanded a better cashflow forecasting tool
- Dartamon Consulting designed and started building a fast-acting cashflow forecasting tool that harvests data from the accounting system Quickbooks
- The success of the project is based on Dartamon's existence on the intersection of management and technology consulting, solving business problems with the best available technology.

Background

The evolution of automated accounting tools over the past 10 years has removed tedious data entry work from the finance and accounting departments of small- and medium-sized businesses. This led to a greater demand for tools that would allow them to make even more informed financial executive decisions.

Dartamon Consulting conducted a market research study surveying potential SME customers on what their needs and desires were for new financial tools.

The Challenge

Most of the customers surveyed had asked for a better cashflow management tool. The major demand of the survey participants was a system that omitted accounting factors such as depreciation and strictly focused on cashflow items such as cash paid to vendors, invoices due, payroll and inventory purchases.

The second major demand of surveyed customers was ease of use. They wanted full integration with their existing accounting systems, zero setup costs, low upkeep and low time investments in learning the tools.

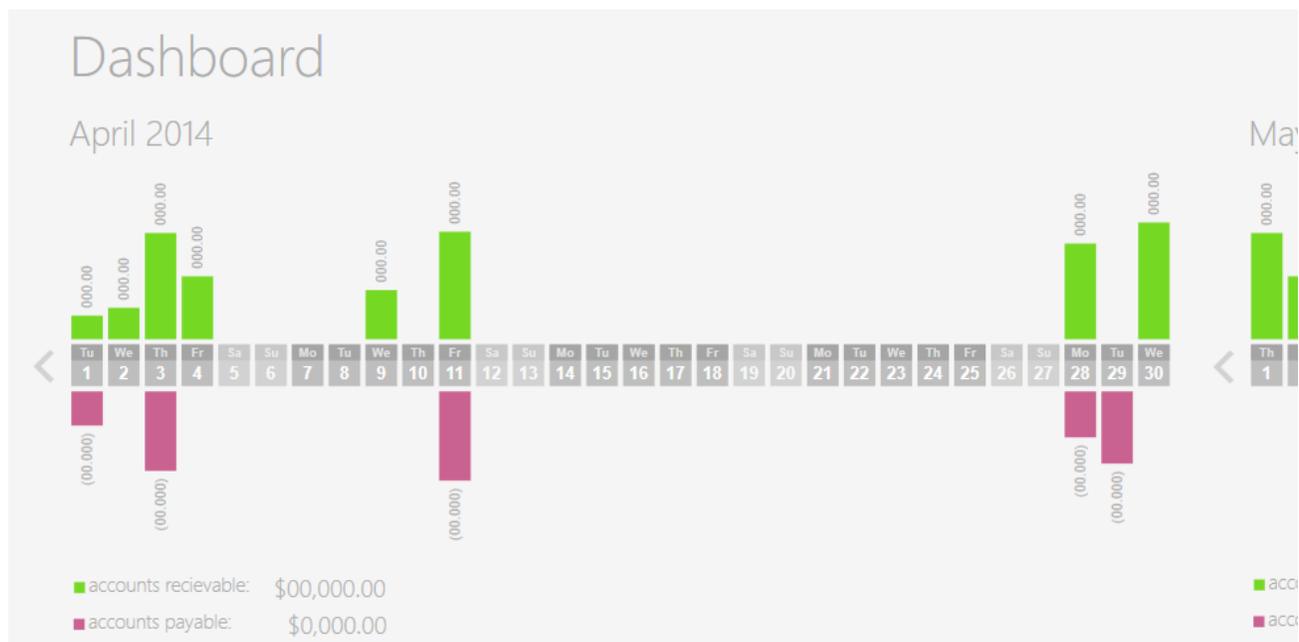
The Vision

The Dartamon team envisioned a simple system that would give you a complete forecast of where your business' money will go and come from without a single click before you have your morning coffee. It had to make dealing with finances an easy check-in instead of a chore of grinding through paperwork.

In order to achieve that, Dartamon decided to leverage its partnership with Intuit, the producer of the QuickBooks accounting package, in order to automatically import data from their accounting system. Customers would get the data that they need about past, current and future cashflows (data from accounts receivable) and could then supplant it with their planning data (entered manually or from other packages in the future).

The cashflows themselves would be represented via movable elements containing graphs that indicate the levels and flows of cash in the business. Since all cashflows were now represented as levels and points in time, it would be easy to do a sensitivity analysis or compare a budget forecast to the actual data: the customer would just position the graphs with the planned data alongside the graphs with the actual data.

Finally, the customers would enter the planned projections into the system in the forms of date-range predictions (e.g. the user expect to sell X dollars of product Y every month until the end of the year) that would automatically come together to create the complete forecast for the company. The projections could be easily adjusted in order to accommodate changing forecasting needs of the customers.



Execution

Captain Cashflow is currently under development with an expected release timeframe of Q4 2015. Future development will also include integration with Salesforce customer relationship management to better understand the financial perspective of customers and also integration with the Xero accounting system.

The Takeaways

At Dartamon we live on the intersection of management consulting and technology consulting. When a client comes to us with a business problem that they would like a technical solution for, we thoroughly analyze the problem from the perspective of business value and select the right technologies and vendor partnerships that are in line with creating more value for the client. It is a critical part of our delivery to understand the dollars and cents of our clients' businesses in order to build systems that perform to their satisfaction.