

# AT8 InfoBlog – Crystal Software Solutions

## Company Overview

Crystal Software was established in 2003 by Jon Whitmore and Patrick Shuker. Their background and experience was gained from working at both Crisp and The Exchange. Shortly after its inception, Crystal successfully sold its solution to L&G, who remain their largest customer. It has since become one of the fastest growing suppliers of Mortgage POS software to the Financial Services industry and now employs over 50 staff based at its midlands offices in Bromsgrove. There are over 6,000 users of the flagship product called 'Momentum' and Crystal state that this coverage means that between 15% and 20% of all UK intermediary-sourced mortgage business is transacted via the Momentum product.

In 2007/8 they had a turnover of £4,000,000 and a profit of £1,500,000. However, with the current economic climate, this performance is unlikely to be matched in 2008/9.

## Product Overview

Crystal's core product - Momentum - is an end-to-end Mortgage & General Insurance sales and compliance system. It is designed to be used by either Authorised Representatives or Directly Authorised brokers. Momentum guides an adviser through a fact find, illustrations, applications and electronic submission, helping to ensure that these are carried out 'Compliantly' and conform to a company's process requirements.

Momentum is built using Microsoft .NET technology and claims to be unique in that it consists of an online extranet using a centralised database aligned to an offline component called the 'Briefcase'. The approach allows corporate users have instant access to the live centralised database for detailed reporting whilst advisers can use the system in the field without the need for an internet connection.

The system is built on a number of framework components that Crystal claim provides both front and back office needs, including integration with many popular sourcing tools and systems. It is primarily a Mortgage POS system, though they have developed Life & Pensions functionality for both L&G and The Vision Network.

They have recently extended the system to include CRM functionality and this work has been done using more advanced Microsoft Technologies along with AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML).

### Solution Strengths

Designed with networks in mind, so supports multiple levels of hierarchy

Includes a wide range of integrations to third parties that are needed to support Mortgage and General insurance sales

Support for an ASP business model, with an online architecture combined with support for offline working

### Key Clients

Major clients include:

- Legal & General
- Mortgage Times and the Vision Network
- Mortgage Intelligence
- Mortgage Next
- The Lime Network
- Thinc
- Mortgages Direct
- Knight Frank
- Mortgage Savings Centre

### Solution 'Sweet Spots'

The solution is most suited to:

- Mortgage Networks
- Mortgage Brokers
- Networks supporting both Life and Pensions and Mortgages but with a Mortgage bias

## Important Notes

The AT8 InfoBlogs are designed to give a brief précis of the key technology suppliers to the distributors of financial services. They are designed for users to gain a quick background on companies and their solutions prior to starting on a formal IT review or supplier procurement. They contain information that is publicly available combined with an expression of opinion formed from AT8's experience of dealing with the leading companies in the market. We make every effort to ensure the information is accurate at time of publishing the InfoBlog, but due to the dynamic nature of the information, it should be confirmed prior to any formal decision being made.

The InfoBlogs are a basic start point that can help in gaining context when considering your e-commerce needs.. It is likely that further opinion or information about each supplier will be needed prior to short listing or selection and AT8 will be happy to help address individual needs with its wealth of additional information and experience. AT8 also has a clear and fast methodology for procurements that has been proven to save time and money as well as improve the outcome of the decision.

If you would like to discuss this InfoBlog further or would find value in an InfoBlog on a supplier not currently published then please contact us at [marketing@at8-group.com](mailto:marketing@at8-group.com) or telephone 0121 314 2504.

## About AT8 Group

AT8 Group is an innovative consultancy company with knowledge, skill and experience across a broad range of Financial Services and IT related disciplines.

Our experience of working with providers, intermediaries, lenders and IT companies puts us in a strong position of understanding needs and opportunities. Our skills allow us to use our knowledge along with our ability to innovate and proactively to create and implement differentiated business improvement propositions that add tangible value to our financial services' clients and partners. In addition, we supplement our own knowledge with current market data from research agencies such as Datamonitor with whom we have a strong relationship and access to their Financial Services Knowledge Centre.

Specific areas of expertise for AT8 include

- E-Commerce Strategies
- Point of sale and Back-Office solutions, including portals
- Procurement and negotiation
- Sales and Marketing strategies
- Financial services Regulation
- International market analysis

AT8 can support and add value to the full lifecycle of a project from the initial idea generation to operating the project and eventually reviewing and renewing the project.



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