

## Sapphire Case Study: 19 Entertainment



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**Mike Feely**

**Finance Manager**

**19 Entertainment**



### Introduction

19 Entertainment is the world's most exciting and innovative entertainment company. Founded in 1985 as an artist management company by Simon Fuller, 19 Entertainment was bought by CKX, Inc. in March 2005. The company has in recent years diversified to become a group of over 20 organisations. 19 Entertainment continues to redefine the rules of entertainment and achieve success for its creative and commercial partners, with triumphs including Pop Idol in the UK and American Idol in the United States.

### The search for a new financial accounting solution

Significant growth and diversity of 19 Entertainment meant that the financial management team found that Sage, their existing accounting package, no longer met their requirements. They had a need for a financial accounting solution that would give them consolidation and flexibility.

Following a review of the accounting packages available on the market, the decision was taken to implement Infor FMS SunSystems. 19 Entertainment is made up of a number of statutory organisations, so SunSystems is a good fit as its excellent functionality make it possible to run 1 set of ledgers, rather than multiple sets; enabling consolidation of accounts for the group. Mike Feely, Finance Manager at 19 Entertainment, said *"We have lots of projects and divisions, so the ability to cut and dice results – for example by project – is very useful."*

### Sapphire's credentials

Commenting on why 19 Entertainment decided to work with Sapphire Mike states *"We chose Sapphire as our implementation partner as they are the leading provider of SunSystems."*

The Project Management team at Sapphire ensured that the implementation of SunSystems at 19 Entertainment went smoothly with Mike noting *"The initial roll-out phase was pretty quick, just 3 or 4 months, which was well inside of our expectations."*

Now that the solution has been in use for a while, Mike says *"SunSystems delivers pretty much everything we could want from an accounting package and the Vision reporting tool extremely flexible. Since implementation we have benefited from significantly improved reporting – previously there was a reliance on use of Microsoft Excel."*

The team at 19 Entertainment remain pleased with the decision to work with Sapphire; *"We enjoy a good working relationship with Sapphire"* states Mike, going on to add *"The support provided is first-rate: the support team are very responsive and provide an excellent service via the support hotline and by email. The support desk is never understaffed and we always get the answers we need within a few hours"*



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Speaking on the day to day use of SunSystems Mike says *“It’s different to smaller packages, so it took a little while for some members of the team to get used to it: SunSystems forces you to use basic accounting principles more than smaller systems. It’s pretty straight forward to train people that are new to SunSystems in the use of the solution; we now have no problem in training new starters in-house. I would say that we typically have 10 people at our London HQ logged into SunSystems at any time.”*

#### Understanding your business

Mike advises others undergoing a review for a new financial accounting solution take as much time as possible over the planning stage, and really understand the output of the system before implementation. He recommends SunSystems as a *“good mid-tier package that is very flexible, with good reporting capability.”*

Ian Caswell, Managing Director at Sapphire, concludes *“SunSystems copes well with multi-currency reporting, so is great for organisations with operations in more than one country. Also, I am often surprised by the number of organisations that are forced to rely on spreadsheets for important management information as their finance systems don’t work hard enough for them – it can cause disconnection between business strategy and operations. The unique combination of flexible analysis capabilities and integrated business analytics means that SunSystems delivers powerful reporting coupled with real-time alerts in order to highlight areas that need immediate action, anywhere within the business. In the highly competitive entertainment industry this kind of timely information is invaluable.”*