

Sapphire Case Study: Hansteen Holdings Plc



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Janine McDonald
Head of Accounts and Operations

SUNSYSTEMS

About Hansteen

Hansteen Holdings PLC invests in a range of industrial properties located across Europe including the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France and the UK. Formed by Morgan Jones and Ian Watson, who have a proven track record in identifying opportunities requiring intensive management and realising value for their shareholders, Hansteen seeks to profit from opportunistic commercial property acquisitions in the UK as value returns.

Background to the case

Janine McDonald, Head of Accounts and Operations, joined Hansteen in March 2008, to find the company using an entry level Sage solution that was no longer meeting the needs of the financial management team. A requirement for a more flexible system was a key business driver behind finding a new financial accounting solution.

At a previous role Janine had used Infor FMS SunSystems provided by Sapphire. She knew that the solution would meet the needs of Hansteen so put in a call to Sapphire.

“Sapphire were very helpful” said Janine “The last time I worked with SunSystems I was using version 4, but we were looking at the latest version 5 for Hansteen. Sapphire highlighted the differences well.”

Why SunSystems and Sapphire?

“The main reason I had no hesitation in choosing to work with Sapphire again is that they provided a good service the first time around” said Janine, adding “As I had previous positive experience in working with both SunSystems and Sapphire we didn’t even consider other products.”

Features of SunSystems that made it the right choice for Hansteen include the layers of analysis available with the T-codes (Transactional Codes) and the level of reporting possible with Vision. “Vision XL is particularly useful as it enables quick and easy export of information into Microsoft Excel, which can then be distributed to the management team as required” commented Janine.

Implementation

Of the implementation process Janine said “Sapphire provides a clear process for solution design and implementation. Throughout the process our Sapphire Project Manager did a great job of keeping us up to date on where we were in terms of the system design, implementation and also budget.”

Initial roll-out of SunSystems took 3 months. “This was pretty much what I expected” said Janine, “we had some unexpected corporate activity at Hansteen which ate into the time we had planned for the implementation. We had scheduled the project for what I thought would be a quiet time for us, but it turned out not to be the case at all – we had a lot going on!”

Hansteen’s SunSystems solution is operated through Citrix and is performing in accordance with Janine’s expectations. Citrix enables users to access SunSystems remotely via the web; as Hansteen operates in several countries, this was the optimum way in which to set up their solution.



Need More Information?

London

+44 (0)20 7648 2000

New York

+1 (212) 541 2406

Los Angeles

+1 (310) 231 8731

info@sapphiresystems.com

www.sapphiresystems.com



To others reviewing their financial accounting solutions, Janine advises “When you schedule an implementation make sure that you have the resource available – there is only so much that Sapphire can do. You will need to do testing and will need time to do it in.” With regards to initial training Janine said “I would recommend this is done in a proper training environment. Our training was done on-site and in retrospect it might have been better to have done this off-site– there would have been less interruptions and the team would have been able to focus solely on the training.”

There are typically 9 users logged into the system throughout the day at Hansteen. Janine commented “SunSystems is easy to use and new users have caught on quite quickly. It helps that Sapphire built the documents for our implementation, so everything was properly structured.”

Benefits

Janine tells us “We have only recently gone live on SunSystems, but anticipated benefits include increased speed of processing financial information and time saving with less duplication and re-keying of data. The accounts team will be able to compile and report on information to be passed on to directors and the management team faster, thus improving efficiencies across the organisation.”

She went on to add “Working with a flexible financial system will make our operation much easier; the flexibility of SunSystems would be a key reason for us using it and my recommending it.”

Solution enhancement

In addition to Infor FMS SunSystems, Hansteen has implemented the BankLinks for Business (B4B) enhancement solution. B4B provides an interface between the payables module within SunSystems and the services provided by Hansteen’s bank for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

The solution automates and streamlines accounts payables rather than re-keying transactions that already exist in SunSystems. B4B is an easy to use, sophisticated payment management tool catering for global banking requirements including the complexities associated with international EFT.

B4B is also SEPA (Single Euro Payments Area) compliant, helping Hansteen prepare for the future. The SEPA initiative involves the creation of a zone for the euro in which all electronic payments are considered domestic, and will enable customers to make cashless euro payments to anyone located anywhere in the area using only a single bank account and a single set of payment instruments. The project includes the development of common financial instruments, standards, procedures, and infrastructure to enable economies of scale. This should in turn reduce the overall cost to the European economy of moving capital around the region.

Working with Sapphire

Janine said “The Support Desk at Sapphire provides good service – though I haven’t had much call to contact them to be honest. Others that have dealt with the Support Team have provided positive feedback.”

In conclusion Janine said “Overall we find it very easy doing business with Sapphire. They always perform well and I have never had any problems. The team there really try to understand the specific needs and customers’ business as best they can.”