

Sapphire Case Study: The Hoseasons Group



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Andrew Taylor

**Manager of Internal Controls for
The Hoseasons Group**

SUNSYSTEMS

About The Hoseasons Group

The Hoseasons Group is a subsidiary of the US based Wyndham Worldwide Corporation - one of the foremost providers of travel and real estate services in the world. The Hoseasons Group is made up of a number of well established brands, all of which focus their attentions on the needs of the holiday maker. A firm believer in the old fashioned values of service and courtesy, the company takes pride in operating to high standards of quality, innovation and customer care.

Background to the case

Hoseasons was bought by Wyndham Worldwide in January 2010 to operate alongside its existing UK rentals business The Holiday Cottages Group, renamed The Hoseasons Group. Both organisations were using Infor FMS SunSystems for accounting, albeit different versions from different providers, so following the acquisition it was good practice to move onto the same, latest version. It made sense to take advantage of economies of scale and deal with one provider.

"Effectively, following the acquisition, we were two businesses operating as one; using two different versions of SunSystems made reporting difficult" explained Andrew Taylor, manager of internal controls for The Hoseasons Group, "We were keen to take advantage of new functionality available in the upgrade and also to rationalise our chart of accounts and suppliers listing."

Sapphire already supported Hoseasons' SunSystems application and was invited to present a proposal for the migration and continued support.

Why Sapphire was chosen

Andrew explained "Our account manager was very helpful and did thorough investigation following our initial discussions. The presentation given by Sapphire was tailored towards our specific requirements and wasn't used as a selling exercise." He went on to say "Sapphire's methodology and approach seemed more robust and seemed to be more experienced. The presentation put together by the account management team was to the point. And of course, it also came down to price and best value for money."

Implementation

From start to finish the project took eight months elapsed time including planning and processing. Andrew said "The Sapphire consultant that we worked with came in from time to time as required and we were happy to hit all our deadlines. There was a lot of work going on behind the scenes. In addition to moving to a single system, we took the opportunity to make some improvements internally and have been able to cut down on the number of different reports that we need to run. A lot of changes were made to the chart of accounts and to Q&A*."

Andrew feels that the new version of SunSystems is good and the general feedback from the team has been very positive. The consensus is that the new graphical interface is more user friendly and makes SunSystems even easier to use.



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The Hoseasons Group has fourteen concurrent users of SunSystems at three offices. SunSystems has been integrated with Hyperion and looking ahead there is the potential for the company to integrate the reservation system for more automation of processes.

Benefits

Since both companies were already using SunSystems before the acquisition (“Ledger entry and the fact that it is a robust accounting system make SunSystems a good fit for our sector”), Andrew tells us “the combined reporting that we will now have is really the key new benefit. We will be using SunSystems smarter; for example, with the chart of accounts we have statutory reporting, tax reporting any Hyperion mappings which allow results to be pulled out in five different formats.

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Advice to others considering upgrading systems

Andrew shares his experience saying: “Take stock of how you currently use your system. Spend time up front thinking about how you would like the system to work and lessons you have learnt from previous implementations and what you might have set up differently in retrospect. A systems upgrade is a good opportunity to make changes, to the chart of accounts, for example; make sure you get the most out of your upgrade. In advance of the project at The Hoseasons Group a Sapphire consultant came in to do a complete audit of how we were using SunSystems and we found it extremely useful.”

Working with Sapphire

“During the upgrade the Sapphire application consultant we worked with was great” said Andrew, going on to expand “The support provided, by one member of the support team in particular, was excellent – for both migration teething problems and issues with our old system. He always responded swiftly and knowledgeably and was willing to go that little bit further to make sure we achieved the solutions that we needed. His efforts helped the process go a lot smoother than it would have done otherwise.”

Regarding the on-going working relationship Andrew says “The service we receive from Sapphire’s Support team is very swift in response to telephone or email queries. We also find the WebEx offering very useful – one of the team can take over one of our computers remotely to sort something out; we can just watch and learn.

“I would recommend Sapphire for the experience of the team and the fact that they are friendly, whilst always remaining professional. The knowledgebase of the support desk – they seem to know all the answers to all our questions! – and the extended hours of support offered also stand Sapphire apart from other providers.”

And finally

Andrew concluded: “I would recommend SunSystems because it is a simple to use and cost effective solution – especially for an organisation of our size. It’s modular, so you can pick and choose the modules that you need for your accounting requirements. Being a Windows based system, SunSystems has a fairly familiar user interface and integration with Microsoft Excel through Q&A is extremely useful.”

**Q&A: Infor PM Query & Analysis (formerly know as Vision) is a dynamic set of business intelligence tools. Using familiar desktop applications, users can quickly and efficiently create reports on information held in Infor FMS SunSystems.*