

Frontier Services



Frontier Services eliminates the 'fragile final mile' of spreadsheet budgeting with MIS Budgeting, Forecasting & Reporting



About Frontier Services

Frontier Services is a not-for-profit organisation which provides community services across approximately 85% of the Australian landmass.

This includes some of the most isolated and remote parts of the continent where other agencies do not operate. Its work includes twenty patrol ministries and over sixty five community service programs such as aged care, aged support services, home and community care, children's services, student group homes, community settlement services, family support, migrant support services, financial advocacy and remote health clinics.

Frontier Services has a budget in excess of \$25,000,000. It operates 106 separate cost centres of which over half are required to do annual acquittals for the government funds.

"It is so reassuring to know that spreadsheets have been removed from our budgeting and reporting processes and we are now operating with system derived data."

Stephen Reddish
Frontier Services
Finance & Administration Manager

Challenges

The Frontier Services budgeting process consisted of a series of spreadsheets with the final budget then being uploaded to the accounting system for reporting. While Excel was flexible and users were familiar with it, it presented a series of issues to users and management. These issues included:

- A lack of transparency & auditability in the budgeting process.
- Difficulties in consolidating the information.
- Difficulties in managing the various budget versions.
- The time the budgeting process took.
- Difficulties in uploading the final budget to the finance system.
- Workflow issues with regards to chasing up budget builders.
- A lack of control in the process with reliance on key individuals.
- A lack of real integration with existing source systems.
- Having to manipulate reports, as opposed to being instantly available directly from the system.

Solution and Implementation

To address these challenges, Frontier Services together with Professional Advantage implemented the MIS Budgeting, Forecasting and Enterprise Reporting application.

The implementation approach taken was to re-do the budget for the previous year using MIS as the results were already known. This provided the opportunity for a near perfect parallel run. This also gave Frontier Services the ability to process the MIS budget without the pressure of having rigid time-lines which are often associated with the annual budget.

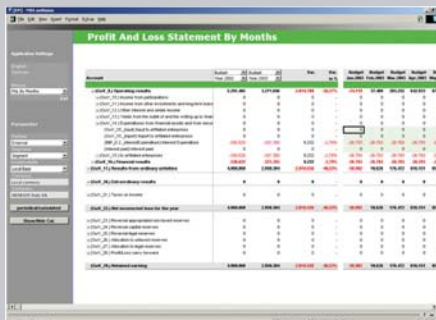
"I had not envisaged the detailed questioning that came from Professional Advantage throughout the design and prototype development phases. This was great as it allowed us to consider why we had done things in the past, and where necessary, alter our processes and move to a best practice approach," stated Stephen Reddish, Frontier Services Finance & Administration Manager.

"Another benefit we had never expected was that MIS assisted us in identifying small errors in our spreadsheets and even in the way actual transactions had been posted in our accounting system" continued Stephen.

Frontier Services



"Professional Advantage's experience with previous implementations was certainly valuable."



"...to offer our managers a view of relevant information which can assist them in executing on our strategic plan..."

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Some of the benefits arising from the project

- Total transparency in the budgeting process as budget holders can view information as it is added.
- All information is held in a consolidated form.
- Supports the bottom up approach to budgeting required by Frontier Services.
- Real integration to source systems meaning:
 - Last years actuals can be extracted, uplifted, and then used for budgeting.
 - Once finalised, the budget can be seamlessly uploaded to the finance system.
 - Actuals can replace the budget through the year to deliver a rolling forecast.
- Web based format allows users to enter or view information anywhere they can access the internet.
- Comprehensive suite of reports delivered covering Profit & Loss, Balance Sheet and Cashflow formats with embedded variance analysis.
- Automated allocation and spreading capabilities let users dynamically build and manipulate budgets, plans and forecasts.
- Easy to use "what if" modelling capabilities allow users to work through various scenarios.
- Validation checking at entry point.
- Configurable workflow steps control the process of creating, revising and approving budgets.

Conclusion

"The implementation process ran smoothly and it is so reassuring to know that spreadsheets have been removed from our budgeting and reporting processes, and we are now operating with system derived data."

"I am looking forward to a shorter budgeting cycle next year and having reports build up as we enter information which will provide us with a clarity of perspective on the budgeting process, and how things are looking without having to wait right until the end of the budgeting cycle. Over the next year we will also look to use more of the enterprise reporting capabilities that are inherent to MIS, to offer our managers a view of relevant information which can assist them in executing on our strategic plan" said Stephen Reddish.

About Professional Advantage (www.pa.com.au)

Professional Advantage was established in 1989 and today employs around 300 people in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, London and Fargo. The company is the largest provider of leading business management systems, such as:

- Performance Management (Business Intelligence)
- Financial Management
- Process Management

Professional Advantage supports over 800 clients nationally and its multi product offering is complemented by its development, systems integration, consulting, training, and support services.

Professional Advantage is the winner of many business and vendor awards, including Infor 2007 Australian & New Zealand Reseller of the Year and Microsoft Inner Circle and President's Club Member 2005.

The company's clients include medium to large public and private companies, government departments and not for profit enterprises. [For more information go to www.pa.com.au.](http://www.pa.com.au)

