YHA use Microsoft Dynamics GP to build a leaner Finance and Reporting Environment.

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At a glance

Company Youth Hostel Australia

Industry Accommodation Services, Tourism, Not-for-Profit

Location Sydney, NSW

Solution Microsoft Dynamics GP 2018

Function Financials

Key Points

- YHA wanted to develop an out-of-the-box, integrated financial management system with simple reporting tools that would provide robust analytics to improve operational and payroll services and enhance employee productivity.

The Organisation

YHA is the largest provider of budget travel accommodation in Australia, with a network of more than 70 hostels in every state and territory around the country. YHA is also part of the world's largest budget accommodation network, Hostelling International (HI), which has more than 3,500 hostels in 60 countries.

"We were compelled to work with Professional Advantage after receiving numerous recommendations and attending several of their workshops. After getting to know the Professional Advantage team, we were confident that they were a good fit for our business and had the capacity to grow our digital solutions in the future."

Stuart Briggs, YHA Financial Controller

Challenges

Prior to April 2018, YHA had not undertaken a major financial system upgrade in 20 years. To remove inefficiencies attributed to manual processing and reporting tasks, YHA was looking for a fully-integrated digital financial management solution to deliver a leaner, more agile, and responsive function for the recently restructured organisation.

The Solution

Professional Advantage proposed sophisticated Microsoft Dynamics GP integration of existing YHA software with ADP payroll, and the Medius Flow suite comprising Chart of Accounts; Capital Acquisition Requests; Vendor Master; Supplier; Hostel Property Management; and miscellaneous bank transaction imports using the SmartConnect Integration tool to automate data processing and accounting functions.

An in-depth analysis and design process preceded a carefully staged two-and-a-half-month implementation program to embed the full-service suite of integrated tools, whilst avoiding interruption to critical business operations prior to the launch of the new platform in April 2018. Software solutions introduced by Professional Advantage aimed to support the recent move to a national governance model by dramatically reducing the volume of manual finance and accounting operations within the organisation. It also allowed for the reduction of finance personnel located around Australia, and for production of timely, and (wherever possible) automated, analytic reporting of business performance.

The SmartConnect Integration Tool manages complex data mapping from a variety of input methods and formats. With automatic data validation and Windows scheduling functionality, minimal manual intervention is required to ensure data integrity and operation of tasks.

Just some of the benefits to YHA of integrating Microsoft Dynamics GP with the Medius Flow group and Hostel Property Management software via SmartConnect include:

- Data integration via CSV, Excel, XML, and ODBC scheduled to run in real time or on customised schedules is fully validated to ensure its integrity.

- Replacement of manual export of Chart of Account amendments with integrated workflows between Medius Flow and Microsoft Dynamics GP via Smart Connect.

- Replacement of manual Capital Acquisition Request processing between Attache and Medius Flow using an automated SmartConnect integration.

- Automatic processing and reconciliation of approximately 400 weekly invoices via SmartConnect integration.

- Complete payment record extractions are processed by SmartConnect and automatically mapped back to Medius Flow.

- Automated import of miscellaneous bank transactions such as bank fees and interest, credit card payments, loans and the like into Microsoft Dynamics GP via SmartConnect integration.

- Creation of a dynamic "self-service" reporting platform with the option of manual or regular scheduling of reports to meet financial and business productivity goals.

Results

In the 6 months since implementing Microsoft Dynamics GP, YHA has experienced significant improvement in financial management processes, resourcing, and reporting.

● **Productivity gains**
Three financial roles have been removed from the organisation as a result of Microsoft Dynamics GP's more efficient financial management tools, sophisticated integration, and automated reporting functions.

● **Improved payment methods**
The introduction of BPAY facilities for streamlined payment services.

● **Best practice systems**
Financial processes have been improved with features such as batch processing, entry reversal, dynamic chart of accounts, end of month reporting, data extraction, robust analytics, and improved security and auditing.

● **Self-serve reporting tools**
Managers in 25 hostels and regional offices around Australia have real-time access to intuitive and detailed drill-down reports compared to the previously centralised, flat, manual reporting function. Managers can extract historical and forecast budget information with the click of a button.

The Future

As YHA continues to refine functionality and streamline reporting to suit business requirements, they will explore additional integration tools and powerful Microsoft Dynamics GP SQL features to develop business intelligence and improve budgeting processes and customised reporting functionality.

> As a leader in the budget accommodation industry, YHA remains ahead of our competitors concerning sound financial management of our extensive network of hostels. We are excited to build on the robust Microsoft Dynamics GP platform in the future with additional integrations to ensure we offer the very best systems and services to our members.

Stuart Briggs, Financial Controller

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About Professional Advantage

Professional Advantage is an international IT consulting and solutions company, with 30 years of experience in helping organisations achieve more by improving their business systems through industry leading software solutions. Originating in Australia, it is one of the country's most awarded solutions providers. The 250-strong team covers seven offices across three continents, and has successfully worked with over 1000 organisations.

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