



At a glance

Industry

Not for profit/Charity

Solution

- Infor SunSystems
- Infor ION BI
- iPOS

Challenges

- Ability to manage the growth and increasing complexity of the organisation, now and in the future
- Make the finance department more efficient
- Enable program managers to take more ownership of their budgets and gain easy access to information
- Streamline grant management

Benefits

- Reports now linked to real-time data instead of slow manual spreadsheet extracts
- A single system providing a central point of resources
- Grant management streamlined and more flexible reporting and acquittals
- Accounts payable saved one full time employee

Jumping into the deep end with BoysTown

Members of the public that support charities demand the most out of their dollars, which makes it vital that a not for profit organisation like BoysTown spends its IT budget wisely.

That's why, when it came time to refresh an aging finance system, BoysTown came to Professional Advantage.

Its nearly two-year journey to replace a sixteen-year-old finance system began when BoysTown learned that its existing system would no longer be supported, but as CFO Geoff Walshaw explains, the growth and change in the organisation over time proved the need for change.

"Sixteen years ago, the organisation was primarily doing art unions alone," Geoff said. "In that time, we've grown, and we're providing other services.

“We're a much more complex organisation now, and the system wasn't suited to our long-term needs. But we have to work within a constrained budget, because for any not for profit, diverting money away from service delivery is a big commitment.”

That growth has created a 550-person organisation managing a budget of \$80 million annually, nearly all of which, Walshaw emphasised, is devoted to BoysTown's mission of giving young Australians a fresh start with education, training, job services and more.



Enlisting the consultancy arm of its auditor BDO, BoysTown assessed offerings from SAP, Microsoft and Professional Advantage. Walshaw was also referred to Professional Advantage by two other not for profit organisations that had worked closely with them. The combination of Professional Advantage's experience working with not for profits, along with Infor SunSystems, Infor ION BI, iPOS and XMPPro solutions at their disposal, made working with Professional Advantage the best choice to future-proof the business and support the ten-person finance team.

"Once we made the decision to go with Professional Advantage and Infor SunSystems things happened pretty quickly," he remarked. "We just went for it!"

Infor SunSystems and Infor ION BI went live in January 2012, just a year after the choice was made. iPOS followed in June 2012.

Walshaw sees the improvement in data availability as one of the most vital features of the new environment, since it gets rid of the need to pull data from the system and analyse it in spreadsheets.

He nominates "the efficiency, the ability to analyse data on a monthly basis, and access for the remote staff – these are starting to deliver what we thought the system would give us" as the most significant outcome Professional Advantage has delivered.

Grant management is another big plus, with a growing range of services provided under state or federal government funding.

“ We're able to manage our grants a lot better, with the ability to allocate costs to particular grants. A better ability to report back to the funding body was certainly a key component of our selection. ”

Seizing the momentum for change, Walshaw took a decision that's not for the faint-hearted. Rather than an incremental implementation, BoysTown decided to push the process through as quickly as possible. "We had to jump in the deep end and see how far we could swim" is how he puts it. "We needed to get the system in place as soon as possible. We were having to do it as well as doing our current jobs. We couldn't take people offline to do it."



That process was sometimes terrifying, but ultimately gratifying, something which he attributes to the "fantastic" and professional support Professional Advantage provided.

"People thought we were crazy but we had confidence, and Rebecca Gatehouse from Professional Advantage was very good at reassuring us that it could be done. Professional Advantage is very experienced and professional, it gets done."

"The project leads and developers at our disposal were very skilled," Walshaw continued. "That made the implementation a lot less fraught than it might have been."

At a go/no-go meeting in November 2011, the January 2012 "go live" was fixed, and Walshaw held his breath. He made careful plans to leave room for problems, such as paying as many supplier invoices as possible.

In spite of a nervous January, confidence grew as the month passed: "We got better and better with every day," he recalls. "When we made our first payment run, there was a huge sense of relief. Then at the end of January, we balanced the books with no issues!" The auditors reviewed the implementation and it went through with flying colours, providing another level of confidence for management and the board of BoysTown.

While the project was mainly about future-proofing the organisation, there were also identifiable time and cost savings. Monthly accounts used to take about an hour to input, "now everything is linked and it takes me two minutes. I get data straight out of the system. I just press a button to update."

Giving the regional managers more autonomy was one of the key criteria for the project.



“ *The staff aren't having to build reports for regional managers. They can look at their data realtime anytime they want.* ”

That's a few hours each month to update SunSystems, produce the report and send them out to all the managers. Now we can just tell the managers the reports are ready." The implementation of SunSystems and Infor ION BI has given BoysTown faster access to data and the kind of analysis the organisation increasingly needs.

Within the finance department, processing invoices is faster and accounts payable now only requires two full-time staff rather than three. iPOS has meant faster processing of information and Walshaw says he's seen big improvements in efficiency here also. While the previous system was complicated, there has been much less time dedicated to having to train staff, particularly new staff members, as the user interface is much more intuitive and straight forward.

Overall Walshaw sees the relationship with Professional Advantage as a real partnership. "The team understood our business very quickly and made suggestions for the improvement but they were never pushy. Our project manager at Professional Advantage was very easy to deal with, very professional and that's why it was a relatively pain free implementation. It was a big thing for us and there were times when they sensed that we weren't ready. They were all really responsive, really supportive, from training, all the way through to post-implementation."

He's already planning his next move, an upgrade from SunSystems 5.4 to version 6, to get the benefit of internet-based remote access. The ability for staff to access the system from home, he believes, will bring the next round of efficiency gains for BoysTown.



About us

Professional Advantage is one of Australia's most awarded solutions providers, with over 20 years experience in helping organisations improve their business systems through industry leading software solutions. Our 250-strong team in 6 offices across Australia and internationally has successfully worked with over 1000 organisations.

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Call: 1800 126 499

Visit: www.pa.com.au

Email: enquiries@pa.com.au