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Kevin Cameron
Finance Manager
YHA New Zealand



Fujitsu identified and implemented the best management platform for YHA New Zealand to automate reporting and information management.

At a glance

Country: New Zealand
Industry: Hospitality
Founded: 1932
Employees: 180
Website: www.yha.co.nz

Challenge

YHA New Zealand's financial management system was dated and required significant manual intervention. It required a more streamlined and responsive financial reporting solution.

Solution

The organisation worked with Fujitsu, which recommended deploying Microsoft Dynamics NAV, Continia Document Capture and JetReports. Fujitsu then designed and deployed the new solution.

Benefit

- Critical reports are embedded within NAV, making the organisation more productive and responsive
- Carefully planned migration process ensured minimal disruption to the business
- Significant internal efficiencies introduced into the business workflows, including automatic processing of vendor-related documents

Customer

Since 1932, the Youth Hostels Association of New Zealand's (YHA New Zealand) founding mission has been to motivate and inspire young people from all over the country – and the world – to get out and explore New Zealand. Since those early days, YHA's mission has grown to encompass people of all ages. YHA New Zealand has built an internationally recognised network of quality backpacker accommodation with 14 hostels, and has partner agreements with 28 independently-owned hostels. There are approximately 180 employees in the organisation.

Products and services

- Financial Consulting, Technical, Development and Project Management Services
- Microsoft Dynamics NAV
- FUJITSU Systems Integration
- Continia
- JetReports



Challenge

YHA New Zealand had been using a financial management system that was no longer fit for purpose. The platform was too large and unwieldy and required significant manual intervention. YHA New Zealand wanted to find a more streamlined solution that would more closely meet its needs.

"The previous financial system had been in place for over ten years and no longer met our needs," explains Kevin Cameron, Finance Manager, YHA New Zealand. "That meant month-end reports took longer than necessary thus delaying our reporting cycle and timely management decisions. Furthermore, the accounts payable system was paper based which is problematic in a national organisation and therefore inefficient."

YHA New Zealand not only needed to find a new financial management solution, it also needed to identify the right partner to help implement the new platform. It created a requirement document, rather than an RFP and issued it to the local market.

"We wanted someone with presence in Christchurch who can build a strong local relationship and also has the knowledge and skills to recommend the best solution and go about deploying it," adds Cameron. "Fujitsu was recommended by our auditors and when the team came in to meet us, it was clear from the outset that they talked sense and understood who we are and what we do."

Solution

The Fujitsu team consisted of specialists in the fields of procurement and accounting, including one qualified chartered accountant. This deep knowledge helped the team identify the best management platform for YHA New Zealand.

"Some vendors would send in top salespeople and then hand you off to a junior team when you sign the contract, however, Fujitsu actually put together a team with the skillsets we need and they stuck with us for the whole journey," continues Cameron. "We have gone from not knowing anything about Fujitsu to holding them in very high regard indeed."

Fujitsu recommended deploying Microsoft Dynamics NAV in combination with Continia Document Capture and JetReports, which would give YHA New Zealand the tools it needed to automate reporting and information management. Fujitsu gathered user requirements, designed interfaces, and undertook workshops and training sessions. Over the course of several months, it was able to build and test the new solution.

"Migration was an area that worried us, however Fujitsu provided a very methodical and structured approach, spending a lot of time with us working through the processes," says Cameron. "This enabled us to upskill internal super-users who can then train others to handle the day to day operations of the new applications."

There are now around 40 active users of the new system within management and at head office who can create reports, track accounts and manage invoices seamlessly.

Benefit

The new system has transformed how YHA New Zealand does business. Reports which once took longer than necessary to produce, are now available on demand. This frees up significant amounts of internal resource which can be redeployed elsewhere. Furthermore, by moving to an almost entirely paperless process, the organisation has burnished its environmental credentials.

"We have a commitment to sustainability and by reducing our paper consumption, this new platform helps us meet that commitment," comments Cameron. "It also helps that Fujitsu itself has an impressive approach to green issues."

The familiarity of the Microsoft interface has also enabled the new system to bed in quickly. Now that the solution has proven itself and Fujitsu has demonstrated its own expertise, YHA New Zealand is ready to look at the next steps in the project.

"We are exploring the addition of power-BI reporting to pull financial data straight from the system and provide real-time information," remarks Cameron. "Fujitsu has already begun working on that as well as helping us define our cloud strategy."

YHA New Zealand now enjoys a flexible, responsive and robust reporting platform with excellent local support from Fujitsu. As a result, it can make much more informed management decisions and react to changes in the market more quickly.

"Our relationship with Fujitsu makes us more professional and effective as an organisation," concludes Cameron. "It's about the people and the processes, not just the technology. When they offer advice, we listen."

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