Enterprise resource planning system lets IT firm adopt electronic reporting

Paramount Computer Systems is a leading Information security technology and consulting company in the Persian Gulf region. Paramount, headquartered in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, installed a Microsoft Dynamics AX Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to eliminate its extensive manual reporting, which was proving impractical as the company grew. The ERP has led to faster generation of project reports and timely management reporting.

Expectations
- Provides detailed accounting and project reports
- Eliminates paper-based reporting to management
- Allows reports based on wide choice of criteria
- Delivers detailed reports with just a few clicks
- Passes IT security firm's own security tests

Industry
IT Services

Country or Region
United Arab Emirates

Customer Size
105 employees

Number of Users
6 users

Connect with Paramount Computer Systems

in

"We can now get project-wide details along with profit or loss information straight from the Microsoft Dynamics AX System. This vastly improves our view of project performance."

Krishna Kumar, Chief Financial Officer, Paramount Computer Systems

Project information easily accessed thanks to enterprise resource planning system

Paramount Computer Systems helps organizations implement security technologies, policies and processes to protect critical information from external and internal threats. The United Arab Emirates company is ISO 27001 and ISO 9001 certified, a Dubai SME 100 company, a winner of the prestigious Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Business Award and a Great Place to Work company. Paramount had been using a Tally enterprise resource planning (ERP) system for more than half of its 20-year existence. However, Tally is mainly an accounting tool and the fast-growing Paramount was relying on an ever-larger flow of manual management reports, including Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

After a management buy-out in 2008, it was clear that the Dubai-based Paramount was becoming a victim of its own success and required better management and accounting software.

The opportunity to act came at the beginning of 2013 when Krishna Kumar joined the company as Chief Financial Officer, with a brief to replace Tally with a new ERP.
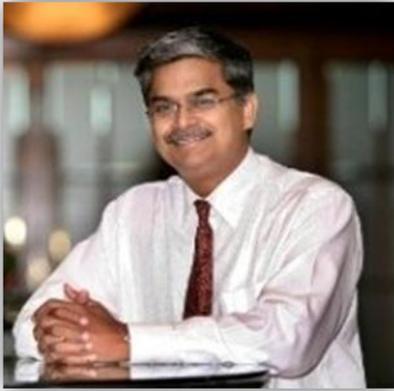
Project data needed

The ERP had to handle project activity, says Kumar: "We didn't know how projects were performing in the long term. That was the major problem." The company also wanted to eliminate a lot of manual project reporting.

Paramount therefore mapped its processes and an in-house team worked out what the new software should do. "We were very clear about what we wanted," says Kumar.

In early 2013, Paramount called in the local Microsoft partner Levtech Consulting, which it had known for some time. "A known devil is always

Microsoft Dynamics

better than an unknown angel" says Premchand Kurup, the Paramount Chief Executive, with a smile. "They were very committed and worked hand-in-hand with our team, which was very critical."

A Paramount team of four worked with five Levtech Consultants. The combined knowledge and skills in the Paramount and Levtech teams embraced both ERP and business processes. This was the primary reason for the project's success, says Kumar. The Microsoft Dynamics AX system also satisfied Paramount's needs, he says: "It matched exactly what we wanted."

Convinced that Microsoft would be around for the long-term, in January 2013 Paramount opted for an AX ERP, with the expected six-month implementation period beginning in February. AX includes the "very flexible" Management Reporter, for analysis of financial statements.

Paramount also decided to replace its hardware to give spare capacity for growth over the next three to five years.

Clear specification

"Paramount was very clear on what they wanted," says Levtech's Business Development Manager Oommen P. Oommen. "It made life quite easy for us." However, he recalls plenty of questions, including the deliverables to be expected and the work to be done on site. "That was something that they were very keen to find out during the pre-sales talks," says Oommen. Paramount also placed a lot of importance on Levtech providing the right consultants, including people with accounting and finance skills.

Price was not a major factor, adds Oommen: "A lot of the importance for the selection was given to the quality of the software and not really the pricing." The IT security company understood better than most customers the real costs of an ERP.

For Levtech, Paramount was a refreshing change, says Oommen. "It was a pleasant challenge because we dealt with a group of people who understood the nuances of ERP implementation and the importance of project management."

The only AX modification was that Levtech added a version of Paramount's reporting sheet. The switch to electronic reporting was relatively easy because the manual reports were already very well designed and detailed, says Kumar.

None of the managers had AX experience and Levtech provided "excellent" training, says Kumar. He adds: "I think we still learn new stuff almost every day."

Kurup adds: "One of the important things about AX is it is very easy to use. It is very easy to learn and the user interface is very simple."

Premchand Kurup

Chief Executive Officer
Paramount Computer Systems

Premchand Kurup has over three decades of IT industry experience, including 25 years in the management of technology-based businesses.

Kurup embarked on a strategy consulting exercise for Paramount in 1998 and enabled the transformation of the company from a PC supplier to an information security company. As the Chief Executive of the company from 2002, he orchestrated its growth into regional markets.

In 2008 he executed the first management buy-out (MBO) of an IT company in Dubai Internet City by enabling the exit of the founder of Paramount and funding by Finance House (www.fh.ae), a large institutional investor from Abu Dhabi.

Microsoft

Paramount Computer Systems' Technology Environment

Servers	SQL Enterprise edition
ERP system	Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012
Business database	Microsoft SQL Server
Communications infrastructure	Cisco Systems, Juniper and RSA
Desktop systems	BYOD (Laptops)
Deployment strategy	In the cloud
IT organization	In house

"The kind of functionality available on AX is phenomenal from a standpoint of getting information that will enable us to run the business. It is extremely comprehensive."

Premchand Kurup
Chief Executive
Paramount Computer Systems

Reporting boost

"We are very happy with what can be done with AX," says Kurup. "The kind of functionality available on AX is phenomenal from a standpoint of obtaining information that will enable us to run the business. It is extremely comprehensive." The AX system means faster reporting, allowing more time for other productive activities.

"Our reporting practices and our information collection have improved significantly," says Kumar. "We can now get project-wide details along with profit or loss information straight from the Microsoft Dynamics AX System. This vastly improves our view of project performance."

Before the installation, Paramount did penetration and vulnerability tests on its existing system. It repeated the tests after AX was installed and found no need for extra AX security, says Kurup. However, it did beef up its own infrastructure security, including adding multiple firewalls, multiple switches and two-factor authentication for remote access.

Paramount plans to increase the number of AX users from the initial 6 to 15 after completion of dashboards in April 2014.

Oommen sees three main AX benefits for Paramount: "The project management and accounting [modules], ease of use because of familiarity with other Microsoft software and the AX dashboards for reporting."

Kumar considers Tally a "flat" system, whereas the AX system allows Paramount to get a variety of information, defined by industry, region or other parameters: "That was a very great help for us."

Paramount is rare in that it stuck to Levtech's recommendations. That allowed, for example, the impressive switch of about 25 projects in a single country from manual to AX reporting in about six months. "They have followed the course we advised and that probably brings a lot of value," says Levtech Program Manager Sreedevi. "The team has maintained all the procedures and policies, which is commendable."

Next Steps

- Connect with Microsoft Dynamics
- Become a Dynamic Business
- Learn about partner solutions available in the Microsoft Dynamics Marketplace

Microsoft