



WTS

GDC Communities updates and outsources financial system when company goes through organizational restructuring

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

The Challenge: Avoid the hassles and costs of in-house implementation

Gina Papandrea, chief financial officer at GDC corporate headquarters in San Diego, California, knows all about the differences between implementing a financial system in-house and outsourcing this highly technical and specialized work. She's experienced both scenarios firsthand during a two-year time span.

In 1999, when the company first made the decision to implement PeopleSoft EnterpriseOne Financial and Job Cost software, the new system was implemented in-house. "Even though we hired an IT consultant to help us, there were still many details left up to us, such as the design of account coding structure and custom reports."

In 2000, when GDC underwent major corporate reorganization, it was time to reevaluate management of the system, as well as consider implementation of an expanded hardware infrastructure and upgraded software. The restructured company has a total of 40 employees at six offices in the U.S. and Canada, all of which need to access and manipulate the latest operational data in order to keep the business running smoothly on a daily basis.

"We knew that we really didn't want to go through the same implementation hassles we went through just a year ago," says Papandrea. "Not to mention the large initial capital expenditure of in-house implementation."

Outsourcing was looking better and better all the time.

Industry

Real Estate Development

Company Profile

GDC Communities, headquartered in San Diego, California, and its subsidiary Genstar Development Company in Canada, develop planned communities tailored to meet specific consumer needs. GDC, founded in 1950, was the first to launch lake and golf course communities in Canada and recently launched "e-Communities," which provide fully integrated high-tech neighborhoods. GDC owns 6,000 acres in prime development corridors of major Canadian cities, is currently developing 41 projects, and has an active acquisition program in the U.S. The company has five offices in Canada and one in the U.S.

Situation

As a result of major corporate restructuring in 2000, GDC needed to not only manage its current IT infrastructure, but also upgrade its software and hardware. The challenge was to upgrade the system without a large capital expenditure or hiring additional IT staff.

Solution

Convert from an in-house managed PeopleSoft EnterpriseOne system to an outsourced solution, implemented and hosted by WTS.

WTS SOLUTION: LEVERAGE THE RESOURCES OF EXPERTS

GDC had two primary concerns with selecting an application service provider (ASP): One was the overall competence of the provider to supply reliable services that meet the company's specific business needs; and the other was experience in the real estate industry.

"WTS grew out of the real estate industry, so they really understand what we need our enterprise systems to do," says Papandrea. "We looked seriously at a number of other ASPs, and found that there really wasn't anybody to match the qualifications of WTS to provide efficient delivery of data and technical support."

Papandrea and GDC's auditor visited the WTS Seattle office for a full day, and left with confidence in the company's security and hardware capabilities. "After taking a tour of the facility and checking out the security system, it was clear that WTS's facility was superior to what we had; our company could never duplicate that state-of-the-art environment in-house," said Papandrea.

At that point, Papandrea brought GDC's IT manager into the process, and he picked up the ball and carried it forward. He did all the technical research in terms of WTS's capabilities and he was very impressed with what he found. That cinched the decision to give the WTS partnership the green light.

"From the time we signed the contract to when we were up and running took less than three months. We could never have matched that timeline with our in-house resources," recalls Papandrea. "The conversion was quick, smooth, and successful."

Adds Papandrea, "We're very pleased with WTS as an outsourcing partner. The network speed is now as good, if not better, than when we managed the system in-house; the technical knowledge is first-rate. WTS was even able to work through and solve some issues that our original consultants said couldn't be resolved. For us, outsourcing with an expert is the better way to go."



WHY WTS?

When GDC went through corporate restructuring in 2000, the company was suddenly faced with a problem that plagues many organizations today: keeping up with the constantly changing tides of enterprise growth, while controlling the costs of both IT expenditures and staffing needs.

"EnterpriseOne is a fairly complex software package, and for a mid-size company like GDC it's difficult to attract the level of talent required to maintain such a system," says Papandrea. "It makes much more sense to outsource and leverage the resources of a company like WTS."

At the same time, Papandrea admits that choosing the right ASP partner is critical. "Not all ASPs have the industry knowledge, product knowledge, and financial stability that translates into a service provider you can trust your data with," she explains. "Once we visited the WTS facilities, we knew they were the right solution for us."



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