

FOSS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Solution Overview

Industry

Waste Management

Microsoft Business Solutions Partner

Tectura Corporation
Bellevue, Washington, USA

Scenario

Foss Environmental Services needed an integrated system that could bring all of their finances in-house and help the company save time and money by eliminating manual calculations.

Company Profile

Foss Environmental Services is dedicated to providing superior hazardous and non-hazardous waste management services to a wide variety of private industrial and government clients.

Benefits

Once implemented, Microsoft Business Solutions will help Foss streamline and integrate their business—enhancing the timely service their clients expect.

Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains

- Financials
- Customization Tools
- Human Resource Management
- Project Management

Demographic Information

Number of Employees: 300
Number of Sites: 6
Number of Users: 25

Migrated from Oracle

When your motto is “always ready” and your business involves cleaning up oil spills and other services vital to the health of the planet, you don’t have time for an undependable business solution that won’t provide real-time data. By moving from Oracle to Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains®, the internal workings at Foss Environmental Services will soon match the services the company provides its clients.

With offices all along the West Coast, Foss Environmental Services handles environmental cleanup projects including chemical and oil spills and the handling of hazardous waste for a wide array of global clients. Originally a subsidiary of Foss Maritime, Foss Environmental Services has been an independent company since 1997.

Oracle to Microsoft Business Solutions

Before the company discovered Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains, Foss Environmental Services converted from JD Edwards to Oracle. Instead of benefiting from an integrated system, the company found it necessary to outsource two key financial elements—payroll and invoicing. In addition, project managers spent hours manually calculating project costs that they were unable to track electronically. Foss Environmental Services determined that the organization needed a new solution.

Microsoft Business Solutions Fits the Company’s Needs

Soon after turning to the expertise of Microsoft Business Solutions reselling partner Tectura Corporation, the advantages of a Microsoft Business Solutions product became apparent. Tectura helped highlight many of the features and functionalities, including full integration, scalability, up-to-the-minute reports and the wide range of available modules. Foss Environmental Services especially liked the opportunity to build a “custom-fit” business solution from the ground up.

A Need for Project Management

Most of Foss Environmental Service’s revenue is project-based, creating unique challenges for the company’s financial system. According to Foss Environmental Services financial controller Blessie Goco, one of the major selling points was the Project Management series. This series will help the company keep up with the demands of the emergency services it often provides. For example, a typical Foss Environmental Services project might involve an oil spill in the Pacific Ocean or a tank truck rollover in the mountains. The company has only hours to respond and contain the spill—and the customer is usually anxious to know the cost of labor and materials.

“In a situation like that, real-time project information is vital,” Foss Environmental Services director of administrative services Art Cowburn says, “You can’t wait a month to report your labor costs to a client. They need to know their costs right away—we need more real time data.”

“In my mind, having an integrated system like [Microsoft Business Solutions] will save a lot of time. Also, the integrity of the data is preserved. We will have more control with an integrated system.”

Blessie Goco
Financial Controller
Foss Environmental Services

Capturing costs as they occur is one of the systems strong suits. Foss Environmental Services will be able to provide clients with the invoices they need as well as reports that track the personnel and equipment allocated to each project. This powerful series generates real-time information regarding project performance, which will help managers track budget costs and timelines. In addition, flexible templates for complex projects and offline reporting will make project updates possible no matter where the projects take employees.

Goco is thrilled by the shortcuts the solution will provide. “Project accounting will be different than what we have now in that you put in the cost, and it generates revenue on the cost side,” she says. This is in contrast to the current method, which involves entering information into Excel and manually tying it to the cost side later in the project.

With Project Management, managers at Foss Environmental Services soon will be able to focus more on projects and less on paperwork. “We’ll be able to get information quickly. With all that has been done manually the past few years, this will be wonderful,” Goco says.

A Better Solution for Human Resource Challenges

The implementation will improve the human resource processes at Foss Environmental Services—especially regarding payroll. Goco and Cowburn expect the flexibility of the Human Resource Management series to provide substantial time savings. Currently, due to the nature of the company’s projects, overtime is common. Because payroll has been outsourced, a two-week time lag has made this kind of compensation information unavailable for reporting and invoicing. With the new solution, payroll will come back inside the company, enabling project managers to calculate overtime into project costs and pull real-time information from payroll into other customized reports.

User-Friendly System

As Foss Environmental Services prepares for implementation, Goco says she feels confident the company’s employees will be able to quickly learn the system based on their skills in utilizing other Windows®-based systems. Knowing that it is Windows-based and easier to learn than Oracle helped with the decision.

The similarities between modules are key to the system’s user-friendliness. According to Goco, entering information into Oracle differs greatly between modules. With Microsoft Business Solutions, the modules may have different functions, but they look similar on the screen and adhere to the same intuitive navigation structure.

Return on Investment

For Foss Environmental Services, moving from Oracle to Microsoft Business Solutions will provide major savings of both time and money on several levels:

- Real-time information will provide invoices within 24 to 48 hours of the start of a project.
- By bringing all of its financial pieces in-house, Foss will have more control over invoicing and payroll.

- Microsoft Business Solutions is less expensive to implement and maintain.
- Incorporating Project Management will enhance the company's invoicing and project management capabilities, allowing it to better meet the urgent needs of its clients.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions

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