



Global NGO VSO Transforms Its Financial Operations with Rapid SunSystems Upgrade and Cloud Migration

VSO, a leading international development charity, successfully upgraded from SunSystems 6.3 to 6.4 while migrating from a third-party hosting service to Touchstone Cloud in a rapid implementation that delivered immediate benefits to users across 20 countries.

The upgrade, managed by Touchstone, not only resolved critical system stability issues but also reduced monthly reporting time while delivering an improved support experience for the global NGO in their use of Infor SunSystems.

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) is a well-established international development charity with over 60 years of experience supporting communities across the developing world. Originally focused on sending UK and European volunteers overseas, VSO has evolved its model to primarily use volunteers from in-country as well as from other developing countries who bring deeper understanding of local language, culture, and context.

Operating across 20 countries, with 15 countries hosting active programmes, VSO focuses primarily on sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, maintaining a truly global operational structure with teams distributed across multiple continents.

THE CHALLENGE

VSO faced multiple challenges that necessitated urgent system modernisation.

Formerly hosted by a third-party data centre, the organisation was experiencing technical issues with their existing SunSystems 6.3 platform, including frequent system crashes, an outdated Infor Q&A 10 reporting platform causing performance problems, and complex remote desktop access that created connectivity challenges for their international offices. In addition, multiple bugs were affecting daily operations across their global network.

Beyond technical limitations, VSO were operating under a split supplier arrangement that caused delays and inefficiencies when resolving system issues. The organisation also faced funding pressures due to a 40% reduction in UK government overseas aid, making cost-effective solutions essential. They needed faster, more reliable financial reporting across their global operations while addressing structural issues within their chart of accounts.



From a user experience perspective, the existing systems slow performance was impacting productivity across all offices. Staff had to navigate complex access procedures through remote desktop connections, work with limited reporting functionality, and manage time-consuming consolidation processes that were hampering monthly financial reporting.

As Global Finance Operations Lead Nicola explains: "*We were bouncing between two suppliers, and it was delaying processes. If we had a bug that we needed fixing, it was bouncing between Touchstone and our third-party hosting provider, and it was very frustrating for all involved.*"

“My work has become faster, and accessibility is a lot easier compared to the previous version. It has also become more efficient for posting and extracting information”

- Lowell, Grant Finance &
Operational Manager- Philippines

THE SOLUTION

Touchstone implemented a comprehensive migration strategy that addressed both technical and operational requirements through an accelerated timeline designed to meet VSO's business continuity needs.

This included the successful migration to the Touchstone Cloud, ensuring a secure, scalable, and future-proof environment. The implementation delivered an integrated transition from SunSystems 6.3 to 6.4, simultaneous upgrade to Infor Q&A 11 for enhanced reporting capabilities, and consolidation of all support under a single supplier model to eliminate previous coordination issues.

The technical enhancements gave VSO web-based access that replaced complex remote desktop requirements, providing direct desktop access to Q&A functionality. This improved system stability and performance while introducing enhanced consolidation capabilities that would streamline VSO's monthly reporting processes.

The project maintained a collaborative approach between VSO and Touchstone teams, ensuring post-implementation support and efficient bug resolution.

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I am thrilled that our vision became reality. This project was to empower our finance teams worldwide by making the system truly fit for purpose. The long hours of preparation, testing, and training finally paid off after GO Live, when the users enjoyed the remarkable efficiency and stability of the new system.

The collaboration with Nicola, Clare, IT team and finance colleagues during this period was exceptional. Our Touchstone consultant Tatiana, project manager Cate, and Rory were incredibly supportive and instrumental to our success.”

- Miriam Muritu, Finance System Manager

VSO's successful upgrade to SunSystems 6.4 and migration to Touchstone Cloud exemplifies how the right technology partnership can deliver transformational outcomes even within demanding timelines and budget parameters.

THE RESULTS

This comprehensive upgrade resolved critical technical challenges while positioning VSO's global operations for enhanced efficiency and growth.

Through Touchstone's collaborative implementation approach, user requirements remained central to every decision, ensuring immediate, tangible benefits across VSO's 20-country network from launch day.

Operational Improvements

The migration has delivered exceptional results across multiple operational dimensions. Most notably, monthly reporting processes have experienced a revolutionary transformation— management accounts that previously took up to 8 hours are now completed in just two, representing a productivity gain of up to 75%.

System reliability has reached new heights with the complete elimination of previous crashes and a substantial reduction in technical issues. Users now benefit from accelerated report generation, enhanced processing speeds, and significantly improved system capacity and stability that supports VSO's expanding global operations.

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The new SUN and Q&A is great, there is now clear description for errors when posting. The fact that we can run reports from our desktop makes a huge difference, because you can run reports much quicker unlike previously, where you had to log in through the RDS which took some time, and depending on bandwidth, it would freeze sometimes and log you out if you had a slow internet connectivity.

Running reports is a bit faster now and, generally, the layout and presentation in SUN is much cleaner. Transitioning from one page to another is smoother and faster as well. I haven't noticed any lagging or freezing yet on SUN, making it much more efficient.

In general, I think the new SUN and Q&A makes us more productive. Doing away with RDS made a significant difference in terms of speed. ”

- Walter Munhangu, Grants Compliance Officer - Zimbabwe

The upgrade has introduced sophisticated capabilities previously unavailable in VSO's legacy system. Users now access comprehensive expand, drill-down, and summary report functions alongside powerful transaction drill-down capabilities that provide unprecedented insight into financial data.

Enhanced User Experience Across All Markets

The user experience transformation has improved equally remarkably. Direct desktop access to Infor Q&A v11 has eliminated the complexity and inefficiency of remote desktop connections, while the refined, intuitive web portal interface has streamlined daily interactions for users worldwide.

International offices operating with limited infrastructure have particularly benefited from enhanced connectivity solutions. The upgraded search functionality, complete with saved search capabilities, has transformed routine tasks from time-consuming processes into efficient, one-click operations.

Strategic Operational Advantages

VSO's operational framework now features streamlined consolidation processes and a reduced dependency on technical support interventions.

The transition to a single supplier model, where Touchstone takes full responsibility for supporting both the front-end SunSystems application as well as the technical infrastructure the software is hosted on, has eliminated previous coordination delays and communication bottlenecks, while new reporting capabilities include advanced scheduling functions that the team plans to implement for further automation gains.

Planned report scheduling functionality and improved data accuracy through accelerated processing positions VSO for continued operational excellence and strategic decision-making across its global network.

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Touchstone is proud to work in close partnership with VSO, whose work transforms the lives of millions worldwide. We have supported VSO's use of Infor SunSystems for many years, and this most recent project has not only upgraded them to the latest software versions but also delivered a step change in system performance.

With SunSystems now hosted in our Touchstone Cloud, VSO benefits from an enhanced and more responsive support experience as Touchstone assume full responsibility for both application support and infrastructure management through our Helpdesk.”

- Syed Bokhari, Account Manager at TouchstoneFMS

About TouchstoneFMS

TouchstoneFMS was the ideal partner for this project, bringing extensive expertise in implementing Infor SunSystems globally, along with a strong track record of supporting organisations in the Education and Development sectors. With a proven track record of successful implementations, we deliver robust financial management solutions tailored to the specific needs of our clients.

About VSO

VSO is the world's leading independent international development organisation that works through volunteers to create lasting change. VSO runs a vast range of projects spanning our three global programmes; resilient livelihoods, inclusive education and healthy communities.



If you have any questions, or would like to discuss your business requirements in person, please do get in touch:

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