WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE
TouchstoneFMS and Infor SunSystems provide best value.

Solution:

- Infor SunSystems
- Deployment across up to 40 police departments, 240 users
- TouchstoneFMS provided systems development, software configuration, systems integration, help desk support and end user training

Benefits:

- Enables its remote staff in 40 police divisions to access needed management and financial information
- Ensures accurate error free information for better decision-making
- Allows faster and more secure payment methods
- Offers rapid and reliable performance
- Increases staff productivity and generates cost efficiencies

The client

West Yorkshire Police is the 4th largest metropolitan force in England and Wales with 8,000 employees, police and support staff.

The challenge

BIt was recognised that making access to information quick and easy for all staff would lead to better financial control and make the force more accountable at a divisional and departmental level. The decision to introduce a management information system from TouchstoneFMS, was prompted by the arrival at West Yorkshire Police of Wendy Scatchard, Central Accounts Finance Manager, whose remit was to implement devolution of budgets to the local police divisions.

At that time, all the force's basic financial operations were provided by the local council, which produced information primarily for the financial accounts. Management information had to be extracting manually, re-keyed in to spreadsheets and distributed to the departments and divisions.

Scatchard describes the issues:

"We couldn't produce any information to send out to the divisions because by the time it was sent out, it was completely out of date. The force and its divisions only had control over general running costs, and if there were any savings to be made though good management, then that budget was not available."

West Yorkshire Police was looking for a system that could be implemented fairly simply, fairly economically and would run alongside the main financial system held at the local council.

"We wanted a system that would enable the divisions and the departments to manage their budgets – to know where they were in terms of their budget at any given time. The whole thrust was on devolution of information, putting control into areas where the resources are kept and the decisions are made." says Scatchard.

The smarter way

The outcome

The Infor SunSystems financial application was implemented in order to use technology to automate processing and to support decision making structures through the provision of timely information. Importantly, West Yorkshire Police was also looking for a system that could both deliver management information and also cater to the requirements of the police overtime budget, which was their largest devolved budget.

In addition to providing better management information, Infor SunSystems also produces a file recording how many hours each police officer had worked that is exported directly into the payroll system.

"We wanted a system to create up-to-date management reports, and that would also link with payroll, so we could improve that whole process." says Scatchard.

West Yorkshire Police appreciated the system's level of analysis and detailed code structure.

As Scatchard explains, "We employ analysis codes extensively: we use one of the analysis codes to identify payroll number, and the account code to identify that it's police overtime, division, and group within that division; then we use other analysis codes to say what week the overtime is worked in."

West Yorkshire Police began to look at the system's application to the purchasing side of their business, and they now use the Order Processing module extensively to process all their orders and invoicing.

"Within the force, we have our own in-house printing and stationery unit, who produce internal documentation and supply stationery supplies. A sales order raised on the system enables the printing department to process the order and invoice accordingly. This makes for a very simple stock control system and keeps the processing of orders and invoices to a minimum which is very cost effective." comments Scatchard.

West Yorkshire Police later committed to replace the local council system and extend Infor SunSystems.

"All the orders and the invoices were being keyed into two systems, and we knew that it would be more efficient to operate one system and avoid this massive duplication of effort. When it came to a choice of systems, we employed a team of consultants to evaluate whether we should develop Infor SunSystems or look at a replacement system; they chose to devlop Infor SunSystems, largely because the application was scalable and flexible enough to serve as our main financial system." explains Scatchard.

In order that Infor SunSystems should be an improvement on the old council system it was designed to replace, West Yorkshire Police began a comprehensive evaluation of the services that the local council had provided them with in order to arrive at a detailed service requirement.

"Fundamentally, we were intent on using Infor SunSystems to automate all these internal and external processes by interfacing with our payroll, vehicle management and payment systems." says Scatchard.

West Yorkshire Police transacts with a large number of suppliers; there are large payments involved and one of the organisation's concerns was that the system had the requisite security mechanisms in place. According to Scatchard, West Yorkshire Police have benefited from the security functionality of the User Verification Module (UVM), to secure error-free data entry, automated payment methods using BACS and a reporting facility built by TouchstoneFMS:

"I want to feel comfortable about authorising payments of millions to the hundreds of different suppliers we deal with. We use UVM to validate at the input stage and we have minimised the number of times we make payments by using the BACS electronic payment system. This means that the information we produce is very up-to-date and accurate. As a final check, TouchstoneFMS have helped us produce reports that allow us to reconcile the Infor SunSystems order processing with ledger payment information."

Concludes Scatchard: "As a finance function, we have already downsized and made and saved money which has been re-invested to meet national and local policing priorities, and we are confident that the new version Infor SunSystems will be able to take us further along this route."