touchstone
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

WILMINGTON GROUP PLC
Remaining competitive with Infor SunSystems and Q&A.

SOLUTION SNAPSHOT

Solution:

- InforSunSytems and Q&A on Windows and MS SQL across the Group
- TouchstoneFMS provided project management, business analysis, integration, software configuration, support and user training

Benefits:

- Real-time data providing high quality, error-free reporting for better decision making
- Enables granular analysis unique to each individual business, whilst providing a single overview at Group level
- Staff can easily access vital financial and management information from anywhere
- Meets the analytical needs of Wilmington Group, providing reports that easily monitor trends, ratios and other factors

The client

Wilmington Group owns key brands in professional publishing and information marketplaces. Their portfolio covers sectors such as legal, power and interior design as well as a number of important products in broader sectors such as automotive, healthcare, catering and entertainment.

The challenge

Wilmington Group consists of many business divisions with each business having its own objectives and responsibilities. It was recognised at a strategic level that there was a need for a Group accounting system that would support the business model, whilst providing clear line of sight reporting from top to bottom. At an operational level, it was imperative that management information be accurate, relevant and timely.

In a highly competitive market, Wilmington Group needed to get a complete picture of the operational efficiency of its disparate business divisions and new ventures.

Wilmington Group conducted a stringent and rigorous review of a number of the systems available in the marketplace and chose to implement Infor SunSystems with TouchstoneFMS as their expert partner of choice.

The smarter way

CASE STUDY (vertical, left margin)

The outcome

The project has provided Wilmington Group with the flexibility and scalability to accommodate their diverse and growing portfolio of businesses within one single, future-proof system. Su Dutta, Director of Group Systems and IT for Wilmington Group comments

"We selected Infor SunSystems for its power, proven performance and stability. The single ledger structure allows you to create a very flexible chart of accounts, and the strong analysis features mean we can quickly and easily extract reports on any aspect of the business. As an international business multi-currency is a key requirement, we were impressed with the number of currencies you can have on a single transaction, meaning not only can we satisfy local needs but also corporate reporting requirements from the one system.

Wilmington Group values the integration capabilities of Infor SunSystems.

"Simple integration with third party applications and tools means Infor SunSystems acts as a data hub from which all of the Group's reporting needs can be fulfilled, and this was important." Adam Harvey, Wilmington's Account Manager "The various add-on modules that easily integrate with Infor SunSystems added real value for Wilmington Group. In particular the Query & Analysis (Q&A) Business Intelligence suite for reporting."

Infor SunSystems' integrated ledger and unrivalled analytical abilities make it very simple for Wilmington Group to reflect changes in their business and meet the different analytical requirements of each separate company.

"You can have unlimited types of journals as well as the 10 fields of analysis on a single transaction. Similarly you can have multiple databases that you can import and export between, "says Dutta.

"So it's that flexibility and simplicity that made Infor SunSystems such a great choice for Wilmington Group - you create an account code once, you don't have to create a whole path of analysis"
"It is very important that as the company grows, either through acquisition or new ventures, we can get them on board very quickly. We have a master analysis structure and chart of accounts in Infor SunSystems so we are able to add new companies in a way that accommodates both the company's existing needs and our Group structure. They can be running on the system within hours."

Infor SunSystems' analysis allows Wilmington Group to capture the dimensions unique to its operational structure.

"We have a large number of varied businesses operating under the Group umbrella and Infor SunSystems gives the management, at whatever level, the amount of detail and information they need. The ability to tailor Infor SunSystems specifically to the business requirements of each company is crucial," explains Dutta. "At Group level we are using the same chart of accounts to secure a single enterprise view; we can then produce detailed analysis by profit centre - such as magazine, training course, web project and so on, as wel as by company or group of companies."

"If you are a publisher of two magazines you easily see production costs; equally, if you are the CEO, you can view the overall profitability of those two magazines, at sales, cost or contribution level. To be able to look at the big picture or drill down to the transaction detail - that's the flexibility in reporting that we need."

Wilmington Group is impressed by the system's intuitiveness and ease of use.

"Infor SunSystems is very user-friendly," says Dutta "you can get as much or as little out of it as you want. It caters equally well for both infrequent and regular users. You can start someone on the system within 30 minutes but you can also still be getting more out of it after many years use. Infor, the product authors, do not let the product stand still and TouchstoneFMS keeps us up to date with product developments."

The ability to access real-time data is another area of significant benefit for Wilmington Group says Dutta.

"With Q&A you are looking at live figures, so the information is timely and accurate. In the publishing and information industry, new competitors are constantly entering the marketplace so you need to identify the profitability of a particular venture fairly quickly. Accurate forecasting and timely information is key."

Reports can be scheduled and automatically distributed via email at month end. According to Dutta, Q&A is proving to be a far more effective way of disseminating data throughout the organisation,

"Q&A is another way of exploiting the complex and varied information held in Infor SunSystems. I love it; it's a fantastic system."

Dutta feels that the working relationship and level of support offered by TouchstoneFMS has played a key role in delivering to Wilmington Group a highly reliable and manageable financial solution.

"The support offered by TouchstoneFMS is second to none. They have a confident, professional approach that delivers - and quickly too."

Dutta is confident that TouchstoneFMS and the Infor SunSystems application will continue to underpin Wilmington Group's corporate goals, supporting future expansion and making information more accessible across the organisation for many years to come.

"We anticipate future acquisitions and further significant growth and we feel confident that TouchstoneFMS and Infor SunSystems will enable us to easily accommodate that expansion as well as carefully track and manage it."