



West Australian Newspapers Holdings



Company Facts

- Location: Perth, Western Australia
- Industry: Media & Publishing
- Website: thewest.com.au

The West Australian

“After 25 years of a custom-built system, we didn’t just need the right ERP platform to replace it - we needed the right partner to help us implement and build on it. We found that partner in Precise.”

Robert Ingley

Group Management Accountant
WAN

Western Australia media outlet WA Newspapers commissioned Precise Business Solutions to help them implement Epicor ERP as part of its drive to realise new cultures, efficiencies and technologies to support the challenges of today’s fast moving business environment.

Customer profile

Robert Ingley had seen a thing or two in his time with Western Australia Newspapers. Mr Ingley, Group Management Accountant at the publication, quips that the media outlet was using green screen computers when he joined the company more than 25 years ago, and continued to do so for decades after.

Over that time, West Australian Newspapers had about grown to 40 mastheads, ranging from regional and local papers to radio stations across the huge state of Western Australia – making it one of the most geographically dispersed media outlets in the world, and creating some unique business management challenges over the years. Combined with that, media outlets around the world have had to come to grips with the realities of the digital age. In recognising these challenges, the company knew it had to modernise, to be better prepared for the next evolution of its model. From Mr Ingley’s perspective, nothing moved the company into that next generation like its adoption of an Epicor ERP solution with Advanced Requisition Management (ARM).

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

EPICOR SOLUTION AND SERVICES

- Epicor Advanced Requisition Management (ARM).
- Epicor next-generation ERP.

BENEFITS

- Substantial increase in efficiency.
- Integration of finance and others business units.
- Increased visibility across the business.
- Ease of integration with other applications and access to real time data.

Transaction volumes a major concern

“With our range of different businesses across such a large area, we had become very inefficient in our data collection, information management or reporting,” Mr Ingley recalls.

“Everything was entered into a green screen application, journals were going into a mainframe, the system only really looked after accounts payable and we were reporting up to four weeks after month end.”

West Australian Newspapers looked at several vendors prior to selecting Epicor. Early in the process, one pulled out because it couldn't handle the volume of the company's transactions. Mr Ingley noted that the nature of running a newspaper means handling huge amounts of transactions through Accounts Receivable.

“Surprisingly, we quickly found that even newer solutions available in the market place were simply not scalable enough for West Australian Newspapers because of the sheer number of transactions it must process and the variety of sources these relate to.” West Australian Newspapers has to deal with advertising agencies who purchase ad space, companies who pay subscriptions directly and receive discounts, individual advertisements from local subscribers, shops who buy the papers, expenses for delivery services and other transactions.

“We had something like six different types of customer billing,” Mr Ingley explains. “Every ad that flows through comes from an advertising system and then moves to Epicor, which deals with all the billing. That's about one million transactions a year - it's huge. But Epicor gobbles that up and stores it right down to the Nth degree for every ad in the system.”

Implementation was easy thanks to some 'very clever people'

The decision to choose Epicor was easy - it could handle the heavy load of transactions, was intuitive and user friendly and did not require much IT intervention or training. The final key element though, was their choice of partner to help with the project. Mr Ingley says he was thoroughly impressed by a group of “very clever people” from Precise Business Solutions who made the implementation smooth and quick.

He says the Precise Solutions Architect ensured the Epicor platform not only played nicely with other key line of business applications but utilised Epicor's advanced service oriented architecture to facilitate the integration and work as part of

their broader IT strategy.

There was a Technical Consultant always on hand to help manage the deployment and was extremely knowledgeable and helpful for all technical inquiries. Another Senior Consultant was tasked with looking over the after-integration processes, and the fourth main implementer helped the process through lateral thinking and solving all integration issues. Over time other consulting resources were used to implement specific financial, supply chain and procurement elements and improved business processes.

Underlying this was constant, proactive and careful project management and executive sponsorship built on trust and mutual desire for a great result, working closely with West Australian Newspaper Holding's team and leaders.

The result: highly successful go live on time and on budget. These were very important outcomes for the Board, made of up of a number of Australia's top echelon business people, who had evaluated long and hard the business case for the project.

“Because of the system's strengths and user friendliness, we also didn't need to bring in consultants all the time to nurse things along – we were able to manage and adapt it as we needed to ourselves,” Mr Ingley says.

Big company, big results

Mr Ingley states that one of the best results to come from Epicor has been improved efficiency across the business. Before Epicor, the paper had 30 people on staff to handle all the transactions. In the three years since implementing the solution, it has cut this number down by more than a third.

And Epicor's Advanced Requisition Management (ARM) function, an extension of the standard purchasing functionality, has allowed West Australian Newspapers to integrate all of its procurement and inventory controls with its financial systems, and extended to greater visibility and management of the data in areas such as the company's cash flow. The West Australian Newspaper Holdings team was able to configure much of this on their own and brought further improvements and significant savings to the business.

Looking ahead, the media company says it expects their industry to continue riding a period of massive change. Thanks to the flexibility and agility of Epicor it can easily integrate new systems and entities, the solution can be adapted as required to meet new challenges or take on new opportunities no matter what growth and change lies in the future.



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