



ERP deployment helps DIS see the full picture



Industry

IT

Key challenges

- Multiple systems and paper processes unable to keep pace with business growth
- Recent migration to private cloud revealed existing finance app was not cloud compatible
- New finance app needed, with an interest in ERP

Solution

- Full deployment of cloud-based NetSuite ERP across every area of the business
- Custom script to deliver additional capabilities
- Identification of alternative integrations to reduce cost

Business benefits

- Consolidated visibility over business performance
- Streamlined financial management
- Improved order management with serialised items

Cloud-based NetSuite solution streamlines operations to deliver greater visibility

Data Installation & Supplies (DIS) is an innovative IT provider specialising in connectivity, cloud, and security services for UK customers.

Having experienced a period of significant growth, several of its existing systems and legacy processes were no longer fit for a business of its size.

In an effort to modernise, DIS had already migrated most of its apps and infrastructure to a private cloud, but during this project discovered their finance software would not be compatible with this environment. This led to an evaluation of suitable ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) systems that could modernise not just finance but all aspects of their business operation.

After exploring many alternatives, DIS identified NetSuite cloud-based ERP as its chosen solution, and engaged Highlander to oversee the entire deployment.

Company overview

Established in 1983, Data Installation & Supplies Ltd are one of the UK's most innovative and knowledgeable Network solution providers, offering connectivity, cabling, security, cloud, and data services to customers across the UK.

The challenge

With over 40 years heritage and ambitious plans, DIS was keen to modernise its IT infrastructure to create an environment more suited to a business of its size.

"In recent years the company has seen some significant growth, but we were still relying on a lot of outdated processes" commented Adam Foster, Technical Director at DIS. "We needed to find a modern alternative that could deliver what we required today, plus evolve to meet new demands tomorrow".

Having previously identified an ERP platform as a future investment, the emerging challenges with the current finance software saw DIS bring forward its plans and begin a detailed search for a suitable solution as a priority.



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Adam Foster, Technical Director at DIS

“We looked at several different ERP platforms, as well as alternative point solutions but we couldn’t find anything that worked for us” Foster explains, adding “some offered the functionality we were looking for, but the implementation costs were excessive. Proposals we received kept missing our needs”.

A chance meeting with Highlander Managing Director Steve Brown put DIS onto cloud-based ERP platform NetSuite as a possible option. The fact that Highlander themselves used the solution and operated in a similar field, gave DIS confidence in both the tech and their ability to deliver the project.

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The solution

NetSuite was chosen and DIS engaged Highlander to work with them on the project. Following a thorough pre-sales assessment, the overall cost including implementation was still above DIS’s budget. Undeterred, DIS worked with Highlander to refine the day-one scope and identify capabilities that could be grown into over time, to get closer to the budget. This included a change in the resource management tool originally proposed to a less expensive alternative available through NetSuite’s SuiteApp marketplace.

With the project agreed, Highlander aligned a dedicated NetSuite consultant as a project owner who would not only liaise with Foster and the DIS team, but also manage liaison with NetSuite and other third-parties where needed.

During the implementation Highlander undertook several meetings with stakeholder groups across the business to better understand their needs, a process which served as an eye opener for both Foster and his colleagues.

“The implementation was a big learning curve for me” Foster remarked. “As part of the management team I’ve always had a stake in areas such as finance and sales, but throughout the process I learned so much about how different members of the team work”.

With the detailed nature of the implementation requiring significant input from all areas of the business, the knowledge and insight of Highlander’s team proved to be an invaluable resource. “The team at Highlander were a huge help. They fully understood how NetSuite needed to be set up for each department, and had the knowledge to bridge any gaps or misunderstandings. As a similar business to us they know how we work and the terminology we use, so they didn’t need time to get up to speed”.



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Adam Foster, Technical Director at DIS

The initial stages of the implementation were challenged by Covid-19, limiting the amount of on-site work that could be undertaken for several months. "Even in the face of the unexpected Highlander remained hugely supportive" says Foster. "We were grateful to them for undertaking the project with a fixed implementation cost which was a huge help in this scenario, while the 6-month payment break on licenses before implementation was another commercial gain".

In addition to timescales, DIS's existing processes also created unforeseen obstacles, especially in relation to how sales orders are processed. Out-of-the-box, NetSuite can process individual sales orders to generate purchase orders and invoices, but there was no functionality to add additional sales orders and raise the associated POs for long-term projects, something which was a key requirement for DIS. To overcome this challenge Highlander developed custom script that could perform this action and enable DIS to raise purchase orders without triggering additional invoices to customers.

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Business benefits and results

Improved visibility with everything in one place

With finance, CRM and order and resource management all deployed with a single integrated solution, DIS now enjoys much improved visibility over business performance. "We have a much better understanding of how we're performing as everything is there on a single dashboard. We used to just look at our Profit and Loss account, but now every sale is identified by department so we can see exactly how each area of the business is performing" Foster explains.

Streamlined finances

Built around a sophisticated finance platform, NetSuite not only delivers for DIS's finance team, but also offers the rest of the management team real-time insight into financial performance, as well as the ability to review and reconcile costs post-project.

Additionally, Integrated payroll management enables an automatic calculation for engineers working on an hourly rate, saving hours of admin time for the payroll team.



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Specialist solutions



Infrastructure



Protection



Cloud



ERP



Workspace



Services

Better order management

According to Foster “The serialisation of items has been a huge help with our order management. Now whenever we need to investigate a particular item for a return or a support query, we have all the information linked together as a complete chain. The customer, item, and serial number are aligned to a purchase order, invoice, and sales order all accessible in a few clicks”.

Working with Highlander



“As a similar business to us, Highlander were living proof that NetSuite could work. We’ve really felt the benefits of a cloud-based ERP, and this owes so much to Highlander’s diligence, knowledge, and understanding of not just the platform, but how a business like us operates.” Adam Foster, Technical Director, Data Installation & Supplies Ltd



Email us at hello@highlanderuk.com or call us today on **+44(0)114 292 3800**. Visit www.highlanderuk.com
Highlander Computing Solutions, Systems House, Shepcote Office Village, 333 Shepcote Lane, Sheffield, S9 1TG