Leading Further Education College Group

Transforms Reporting and Budgeting Processes

with Eclipse and Sharperlight

Further education college group transforms reporting and budgeting processes

This leading UK college group, offers a wide range of educational options including A Levels, vocational courses, professional qualifications and High Education degrees.

In order to ensure that all finance and business management systems in use were able to keep pace with expansion plans and changing requirements, it was important that the group take advantage of any new functionality available in the latest releases of their business application software.

As part of this strategy, the group embarked on a project to upgrade their Infor SunSystems financial management software from SunSystems v4 to SunSystems v6. In addition to the SunSystems application, there was a suite of key custom reports that had been developed using the Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) that also needed to be upgraded.
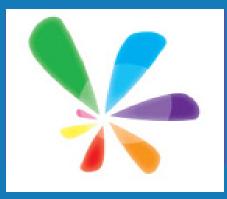
Because of the differences in data structure between SunSystems v4 and v6, it was clear that the SSRS reports could not be upgraded and a new set of reports would need to be re-written from scratch. This would result in the group incurring considerable costs (an external technical resource would be required to re-write the reports) and would also increase the time required to complete the upgrade.

The organisation was not keen to take this approach and asked Eclipse to review the existing SSRS reports, with a view to identifying and recommending any possible alternatives.

On completion of the review, Eclipse recommended that Sharperlight should be implemented to replace SSRS. Not only would Sharperlight provide the group with a cost effective, fast to implement, easy to use solution, it could also be used to improve re-

Eclipse combines Education sector experience with reporting and budgeting expertise

-porting capabilities across multiple software applications (not just SunSystems) and to streamline activities/processes across the finance function.

As part of the upgrade, the SSRS reports were re-written and were enhanced to provide cost centre managers with secure, self-service access via a web portal/dashboard, enabling them to run, view, download their own reports on demand. Previously, the SSRS reports were run by a system administrator as and when required, then emailed to the appropriate cost centre managers.

Since the successful completion of the upgrade, use of Sharperlight across the organisation has increased to enhance the budgeting process. Historically, total annual budgets by cost type/cost centre were loaded into SunSystems for the whole year, which meant that some cost centres would spend their entire annual budget for a specific cost type within the first term.

Using Sharperlight, Eclipse developed a web-based solution which enabled cost centre

budget holders to split and restrict the yearly budget amounts across the specific college terms. Using this approach, when PO's are raised in the Proactis Purchase to Pay solution, budget information is read directly from SunSystems and the user defined splits and ratio's are applied to ensure real time control of budgets on a term/year to date basis is applied.

Since implementing Sharperlight, the organisation continues to benefit from an easy to use, web based, real-time reporting solution, which makes it easier for staff to make accurate and timely business decisions. The custom budget checking solution has enabled staff to ensure that overspend against budget, at an account and cost centre level, is minimised.

Additionally, Sharperlight is able to provide many more opportunities to reduce manual activities, duplication of effort and streamline processes across the organisation.

To find out how Eclipse can help transform your organisation's reporting and budgeting processes please call +44 (0)203 866 8800.