

CUSTOMER SOLUTION CASE STUDY



Summary



Customer:
Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA)

Country or Region:
Johannesburg, South Africa

Industry:
Economic Development

Company Profile:
The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) aims to be a world-class, area-based development agency for the City of Johannesburg. The agency stimulates and supports area-based economic development initiatives throughout the greater Johannesburg metropolitan area. As a development manager the JDA coordinates and manages capital investment and other programmes involving both public and private sector stakeholders. The JDA promotes economic growth and the regeneration of decaying areas within the city while promoting economic empowerment and productive partnerships. The agency also aims to develop best practices frameworks for area-based development management.

Business Situation:
The JDA is tasked with bolstering economic development within Johannesburg in working towards the Jo'burg 2030 initiative. As such, the agency is primarily concerned with managing development projects within the city while working within strict budgetary and timeline constraints. In so doing the JDA is constantly involved in developing best practices and a knowledge base that is founded by learning from past projects.

Technologies used:
Microsoft SQL Server
Microsoft SQL Reporting Server
Microsoft ASP .Net 2.0

Effective Project Management

The Johannesburg Development Agency has implemented a project management system developed by Britehouse subsidiary, 3fifteen. The solution allows for end-to-end project tracking and management, including financials, projections and contracts.

Client Background

The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) is primarily involved with the management of projects in bolstering area-specific development for the city of Johannesburg. The organisation is focused on promoting economic growth through effective partnerships between both public and private sector entities. The JDA is therefore reliant on powerful, holistic and effective project management tools to enable its core business; that of coordinating and ensuring that projects are timeously completed and within budgetary constraints. Careful monitoring and recording of project-related activities is vital to the success of the agency.

Cohesive Management

In the past the JDA made use of manual processes for project management. This situation did not favour the nature of business for the agency, however, which works on strict budgetary guidelines and timelines. It became clear that a dedicated project management system would be required for effective tracking and management of projects.

Bekezela Mhlanga, IT and Systems Specialist for the agency says that one of the major problems encountered with manual systems was that they did not allow for tracking on spending. The JDA attempted to implement *Great Planes* as a project management system, but this did not satisfy all the requirements of the organisation. Instead, the JDA would use *Great Planes* primarily for financial management.

In seeking a more complete solution, the agency would pursue a custom-developed application that could be tailored to meet specific needs.

Mhlanga explains that the system would be required to handle contracts, project milestones, finances and virtually every other area of management specific to projects.

JDA approached a software developer prior to 3fifteen, but was unable to conclude development with this vendor. 3fifteen was therefore approached to complete development of the system, while making changes to what had already been done, vastly reducing the complexity originally required by the agency and providing the JDA with a custom-developed project management platform that would meet all of its requirements.

3fifteen took ownership of the development project and migrated the solution from Microsoft .Net 1.1 to 2.0. 3fifteen worked closely with JDA contractors to establish what specific requirements the agency would need from the system and set about implementing these.

A web-based application was developed by 3fifteen, using Microsoft SQL server as a database backend and developed using the .Net 2.0 framework.

Adapting the development that had already been done by the original solution developer, 3fifteen made vast changes to the original structure of the application that would allow for the use of templates. Additional controls were created to reduce development complexity and extensive use of CSS and JavaScript was employed to reduce the size of web pages used by the application, thus enhancing the user experience. 3fifteen also re-factored replicated code into a unified code base.

Mhlanga says that controls were set in place that increase the security of the system and reports were added that would provide JDA with specific overviews of entire project spending – a vital component of the system. Forms were also added to manage the budget of entire projects.

The application also integrates with the agency's existing deployment of *Great Planes* for the exchange of financial data with reports being compiled directly from SQL.

“3fifteen has provided the JDA with an integral and vital application for project management that allows us to effectively track financials and timelines in managing various economic development initiatives.”

Bekezela Mhlanga
IT and Systems Specialist,
Johannesburg Development
Agency

Successful Development

The application was completed and deployed at JDA by 3fifteen, who continues to work with the agency in adjusting the system going forward and providing its users with application-specific training.

In this regard 3fifteen undertook to create a user training manual for the custom-developed application, enabling the JDA's end-users to efficiently and effectively utilise the application.

Mhlanga explains that the initial rollout of the application focused on tracking financials, but was soon enabled as a complete project management solution that allows the JDA to track spending on specific projects and make projections in terms of timelines and budgets.

She says that the agency is very happy with the system which meets all of the requirements set out by the organisation, allowing it to effectively track projects within budgetary limits and ensuring that deadlines are met.

From the single web-accessed application, the JDA is able to monitor and manage projects in terms of contracts, finances and project milestones, allowing the 30 staff members at the agency to effectively manage the variety of development projects underway at any one time.

Mhlanga says that the solution is completely vital and integral to the everyday running of the agency, which would be unable to function without effective project management tools.

