

SynergIT helps Steyn City focus on building a city

Steyn City lifestyle resort has partnered with SynergIT to implement a fully independent, secure and scalable technology solution to streamline and customise the complicated network of business operations within its infrastructure.



Steyn City partnered with systems design and architecture company SynergIT to provide a fully accessible, secure and scalable environment to manage its business management software.

SynergERP (a sister company to SynergIT) and a Sage Platinum Partner successfully migrated Steyn City onto their own instance of Sage Enterprise Management (formerly known as Sage X3). This decision has provided numerous benefits to the client, including giving the executive team more time to focus on the strategic development and growth of the company while the software, hosted in Microsoft Azure, takes care of end to end business operations.

Situated north of Fourways, Johannesburg, Steyn City Parkland Residence features apartments, clusters and freehold homes; an 18-hole Nicklaus-designed golf course with award-winning clubhouse; a world-class equestrian centre; fully-equipped gym; and innovative school campus, complete with aquatic centre. Future plans include a City Centre, retail offerings, and a separate high school campus. “We’re still in our infancy, but we’re growing rapidly,” says Steyn City’s Group financial manager, Graeme Visagie.

Until 2017, the financial and accounting function for Steyn City was managed by a group company. Steyn City has expanded exponentially, adding to the environment's complexity, and subsequently, management realised the need for an in-house system running at optimal levels with minimal IT overheads. Key considerations included access, control and security of the business system and the environment running the system.

"We were processing hundreds of transactions through our sister company. It worked well in the early days, but it soon started to put pressure on the team. We, therefore, took the decision to form an independent finance department and brought everything in-house," says Visagie.

Steyn City appointed a new finance team and, after carefully researching and evaluating a number of business management solutions, decided to continue using Sage Enterprise Management. "Our sister company had been using Sage Enterprise Management to manage our operations, and so our new team had already been exposed to the existing software. It therefore made sense to continue with the same software for a seamless takeover," says Visagie.

Challenge

The Steyn City Group comprises several partially- or wholly-owned subsidiaries within the development, including the school, sales agency and CSR department, as well as a joint venture telecommunications business.

"All of these businesses operate independently, using their own siloed accounting solutions. This made reporting and consolidation difficult," says Visagie.

Steyn City partnered with SynergIT to ensure that the hosted environment was well provisioned for the adoption of Sage Enterprise Management, while SynergERP managed the implementation of the solution across the different businesses.

"Steyn City approached us with a need to be fully independent. They wanted to upgrade their Enterprise Management solution and run it in a secure environment that would allow them to better serve the development project of this scope. They also needed to be able to scale the solution as necessary and to access their information on any device, from anywhere," says Brennan Fritz, MD of SynergIT.

Solution

SynergIT and SynergERP were selected as the preferred service provider. "They knew our business inside-out, understood our environment and accounting structure, and we already had a great working relationship with the accounts team, so why reinvent the wheel?" says Visagie.

Visagie gathered input from his new team regarding what they needed from the software to perform efficiently and incorporated their suggestions during the needs analysis.

"Once the company's needs had been accommodated, transitioning to the new software was seamless," says Visagie. "I've implemented several accounting solutions during my career and this was one of the smoothest transitions."

Benefits

With the ability to automate much of the accounting process, the Steyn City financial team has seen a massive reduction in processing times and an increase in efficiency.

"SynergERP and Sage Enterprise Management have saved us a great deal of time. Because the finance team had input into the system, they have taken ownership of their processes, which motivates them to work efficiently," says Visagie. "The SynergERP team is like an extension of our own team: they're approachable, knowledgeable and determined to solve any issues as quickly as possible."

Integration with Steyn City's banking system means transactions can be processed in near real-time. All financial management information is stored in the cloud, on Microsoft Azure, and can be accessed by the finance team 24/7. "It's a comforting solution. I know that if the building burnt down, all my information is backed up and secure in the cloud," says Visagie.

The solution has also simplified the reporting process, allowing the Steyn City financial team to quickly produce reports and management packs for the board in the UK, and to present them in a visual, easy-to-understand format.

Says Greg Palmer, Sales Director for Sage Enterprise Africa: "As a true next-generation enterprise solution, Enterprise Management gives Steyn City complete control over its IT strategy and business processes. Sage Enterprise Management enables rapidly growing organisations such as Steyn City to obtain fast insight into costs and performance, while offering the agility to keep pace with the needs of a growing business and a fast-moving market."

Future plans

Visagie uses the time that automation frees up to focus on the strategic direction of the business.

"Now that we've got our financial processes streamlined – which was my main objective – we're looking at other areas of the business that can be optimised. We're working with SynergERP on an integrated document management solution and an HR solution, which will all be accessible from a single platform, across all our businesses," says Visagie.

"The possibilities for Steyn City to deliver only the best digital solutions to their residents are endless," says Fritz. "If it can be dreamed of, it can be delivered with little effort on Microsoft Azure. Having the ability to quickly and easily add on modules or applications and integrate them into the ERP platform will ensure that Steyn City remains at the cutting edge of digital experiences."

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