

# Customer case studies

## Birmingham Airport

Birmingham Airport is the UK's fifth largest airport, third largest for charter traffic and has the highest proportion of business traffic second only to London Heathrow. In 2005, it handled over nine million passengers through its two terminals.

"FocalPoint offers tight integration with Dimensions and allows Birmingham Airport to control costs and approvals."

Wayne Smith  
IT Systems Manager



<b>Industry</b>	Transport
<b>Geographic</b>	Birmingham
<b>Employees</b>	750
<b>Turnover</b>	£110m
<b>Solution</b>	Dimensions FocalPoint Invu Orbis TaskCentre
<b>Modules</b>	Core ledgers Expenses/credit cards Project management Purchasing Service manager Corrections Asset manager

### The reasons for change

Back in March 2005, Birmingham Airport was using a major US ERP system, which had been in place for nine years with 30 concurrent users and 140 users on the web front end.

Wayne Smith, IT Systems Manager, told us what led them to the decision to change their business systems. "We have a steering group that monitors the performance of our financial systems. For some time we had been aware of the increasing costs of ownership and maintenance. Not only did this include the annual maintenance and support costs, but there was an ever increasing demand on the time of support staff. The system also had a poor image internally so we undertook an exercise to examine the cost benefit of changing the system. Whatever system we chose had to address our issues, but overall,

it was vital to the organisation that a system was selected that supported our core business processes."

Jane Clarence, Financial Accountant, highlights some of the problems with their previous system. "For us in the finance function, data extraction was a big problem. To produce reports, we were having to output the data, re-format it and insert it into Excel. We tried using an Excel add-in, and then our software provider at the time suggested we buy a dedicated reporting and analysis tool. We suddenly realised that the money we'd have to spend on that would go a fair way to buying a brand new system."

### System requirements

Before system selection could begin, the Airport mapped every process that interfaced with their

financial system. That generated a two-inch thick document. The Financial Systems Manager, the Purchasing Manager and the IT Systems Manager did the first pass to see what interfaces they would need for different people in the organisation and therefore what functionality a new financials package would need.

They identified that they were looking for an ERP system with user-friendly, web-based procurement. In addition they needed to be able to track projects, e.g., extensions to terminal buildings. Project managers also needed to be able to access this information. They wanted to introduce a workflow element into the software to reduce manual procedures.

### Choosing and implementing a new system

Jane comments: "When we started looking at what was out there, we realised how much things had moved on in the world of financial packages. We attended the Softworld Accounting & HR Exhibition and that helped us cross a number of vendors off the list, based on the features we'd specified. Just chatting to the vendors on their stands gave us a good overview – it was a useful on the spot test of what they could offer. It was here that we met Access."

The Airport undertook a rigorous selection process where each of the shortlisted suppliers had to demonstrate their systems by following a 100+ page script that covered the main Birmingham Airport business process. Wayne comments, "It was important that our users saw the day-to-day processes being demonstrated rather than a flashy marketing presentation that bore little resemblance to what they would have to use on a daily basis."

Access' solution was evaluated against a number of other systems, including Sage, Agresso, Coda, Exchequer, Navision and SunSystems. Access Dimensions and FocalPoint came out on top and in August 2005, the Airport selected Access' solution.

### An integrated solution

Access proposed an integrated solution incorporating Access Dimensions, FocalPoint, Service Manager, Asset Manager and Invu Document Management.

By using the Access Software Developers Kit (SDK), Access were able to integrate Dimensions with other business critical applications such as the Airport Information System (AIS).

### Purchasing

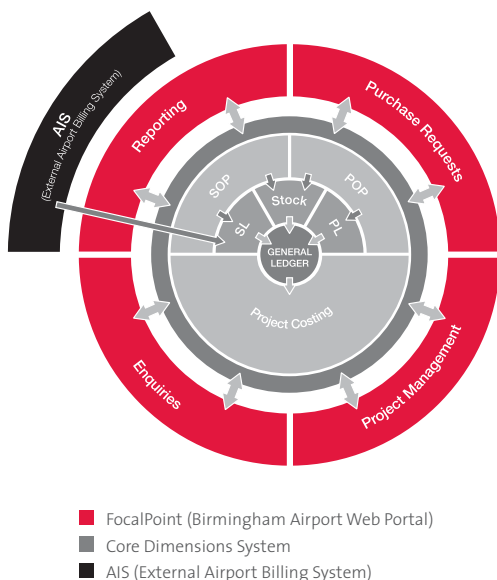
One of the key requirements of the system, over and above general financials, was in the area of purchasing. Birmingham Airport needed both buyers and requisitioners to be able to place orders on the system. Using FocalPoint, all users are now able to raise a requisition by logging in via a web browser. This provides an easy-to-use interface for raising requisitions which are routed through a pre-defined work flow for authorisation. FocalPoint seamlessly integrates with Dimensions to create an order once approval has been granted. Equally, all buyers have the ability to use FocalPoint for requisitions, and in addition, they can raise orders directly from Access Dimensions if required.

module and Orbis TaskCentre, authorisation of purchase orders and purchase requisitions is provided using Microsoft Outlook. The user does not need to be logged into Dimensions, but instead they are routed to FocalPoint via a link provided in the email notification.

The Airport also needed all of the standard features of a corporate Purchasing System. Dimensions allows users to see, at a glance, quantities ordered and delivered, check that purchase invoices are correctly priced and print goods received notes. The system calculates re-order quantities taking into account minimum and maximum stock levels and existing sales and purchase orders. A report shows the value of goods received but not invoiced (and vice versa) so it is possible to accrue for commitments. A user can allocate purchase orders to a specific project and the committed costs of that project are updated automatically within the costing module.

The FocalPoint solution offers very tight integration with Dimensions and is allowing the Airport to control costs and approval of orders throughout the company. Wayne makes the point that "Although Birmingham Airport is using standard FocalPoint, it is branded to appear as part of the internal intranet system. This, coupled with automated logon via NT Authentication, makes the end-user's experience much more simple. They see FocalPoint as an extension of our internal system rather than a new product that they have to learn."

We asked Birmingham Airport why they chose Access for their system implementation. "A key factor was Access' own FocalPoint solution which was not only very user-friendly, but we could see straight away that it would achieve our aims of cost control and approvals. Having their own range of products, their role as Access' only Source Code Partner, plus a team of experienced consultants, we could see the extent of Access' capabilities. We felt confident that



With a combination of FocalPoint, Dimensions' Purchase Control

Access could provide the whole solution for us and they were a company we could work with.”

### **The implementation process**

The system implementation took around four months in response to tight timescales required by Birmingham Airport. The implementation process went very smoothly, partly due to the Airport having strong project management skills and a small but dedicated team of focused staff, coupled with the previous experience of Access. Crucially, the project was achieved on time and within budget.

Rob Parkinson, Director at Access comments: “The implementation of FocalPoint and Dimensions was carried out on time to a short and demanding timescale. Using a workshop-based approach, Access was able to add additional functionality to FocalPoint to meet the requirements for a Phase 1 Go Live. All 150 users of the system were trained by Access in bespoke classroom-style training sessions that enabled a smooth transition into the new system.”

The system is now used by all types and levels of staff including the finance team, general requisitioners for raising purchase orders, as well as managers and project managers for tasks including approving purchase orders, viewing scanned images of invoice and approving invoices.

### **Looking to the future**

Plans going forward include development of FocalPoint, further work with the document management element of the

project, plus additional training on Crystal for the team.

### **Who we are**

Access will give you the advice, tools and clarity you need to make effective decisions, quickly and with certainty. As both a business-focused consultancy and a specialist software developer, we combine our innovative software with practical experience to deliver a solution that’s exactly right for you and your business.

You can rely on us to provide you with a solution that’s simple, proven and relevant to your company. We have over fifteen years’ experience of developing software here in the UK and our regional consultants have tailored and implemented this software all over the UK and Ireland. The expertise we’ve gained gives us an unbeatable ability to accurately assess your needs and deliver maximum impact with ease and confidence.

We’ve won many awards over the years and have once again been voted best ‘Mid-tier Software Package’ at the Accountancy Age awards and also separately by our customers.

All our software is accredited by industry bodies including the Inland Revenue, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Business Software Developers Association and Microsoft.

We believe your solution must be ready for the future, as well as right for today. We design and own our software, so we can continually

innovate to meet your changing needs as well as those of your industry. For instance, we worked with the Carbon Trust and DEFRA to create a way for your organisation to measure its carbon footprint without adding extra administration or complexity to your current processes.

Because your business will constantly evolve, we provide a software solution that grows with you. Our modular software covers a complete range of business, financial and administration processes and can be flexed to give you the precise view of your business that you need at any time.

Our supportive consultants combine their first-class software expertise with in-depth industry knowledge to constantly improve and simplify your business processes so that your solution delivers maximum value and a continual return on investment.

We are driven to deliver high impact, straightforward solutions. We believe in sustainable business and demonstrate best practice. We are committed to reducing our own carbon footprint. We want to help make your business more competitive and successful.

With Access, you can be sure you’ve got the clarity you need to reach your business goals.

### **Further information**

For further information on this, or any other Access case studies, please telephone us on 01206 322575, email [case-studies@theaccessgroup.com](mailto:case-studies@theaccessgroup.com) or, alternatively, visit [www.theaccessgroup.com/downloads/case-studies.aspx](http://www.theaccessgroup.com/downloads/case-studies.aspx)