

## Finesse Leisure Partnership

Finesse Leisure Partnership is a not-for-profit organisation. Formed in 2004 by Welwyn Hatfield Council, it was set up to manage and develop facilities and services at four of the council's established leisure and recreation facilities in Welwyn Hatfield.

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Philip Nye  
Financial Director



Industry	Leisure
Geographic	Hertfordshire
Employees	180
Turnover	£2.6m
Solution	Dimensions
Modules	Core ledgers Purchase order processing Invoice register Payroll

### The challenge

Formed in late 2003 by Welwyn Hatfield Council, Finesse was tasked with being ready to commence trading in January 2004. This meant that in just a couple of months, a business and accounting system needed to be selected and implemented, without a hitch.

Philip Nye, Financial Director and Company Secretary, had extensive knowledge of accounting packages having sold Sage in the past, and took on the task of finding the right package for Finesse. Having attended numerous Softworld Accounting and Finance Exhibitions, Philip was aware of a variety of packages that could be suitable. Although the timescale was tight, Philip wanted to choose the right solution for the business,

and after reviewing Sage, Pegasus, Sun Systems and Access among others, he narrowed down the field to two solutions: Sun Systems and Access' flagship Dimensions.

"The main criteria that I was looking for in a solution were flexibility, robustness and ease of use" explains Philip. "Flexibility in the coding structure was essential as I would need to analyse the figures by group, by site, by individual facility and at times, even by activity. I was also looking for the robustness and reliability of a SQL Server based system, and ease of use was essential. Access provided all of these – at the right cost. I wrote a paper for the board with my recommendation for Access Dimensions, and they agreed that it was the right way ahead."

## The real challenge

Once the decision had been made, it was essential that the implementation followed a strict and intensive plan. Philip comments, "Our specialist centre put together a very detailed project plan and although we didn't follow it to the letter, we got there in time! The implementation itself was very straightforward – no modifications were required and we only needed three or four days of training, despite the fact none of us has any previous Access experience."

As Finesse had only just been formed, there was no transfer of data to be taken into account or balance conversions to run. "Our sights then were set on achieving our aim – to generate sufficient trade to have a surplus that could be re-invested into the facilities. I knew that a reliable accounts system was at the heart of that aim" commented Philip.

## The results

"Following a three month introductory period, we have now completed one full year's trading. Over the year, we have developed great confidence in our Access solution. We have experienced no major issues and therefore no system downtime. We haven't yet discovered anything in the system that we want to do but can't – the functionality is good. We have also recently changed to Access payroll which handles our complex needs well. Because we have multiple sites and have seasonal changes in personnel, we need the ability to allocate costs individually. With Access payroll, we can easily analyse pay types and cost them separately."

Philip continues, "We have found Access to be a very intuitive solution. I particularly like the way that you can set up user menus to protect the integrity of the data – I have no worries, and neither do the

users, that they will inadvertently change the data." Finesse has also been very pleased with the support that it has experienced. "We chose a local Access Dealer so that they would be nearby in case of problems. I can honestly say they have been excellent in understanding our needs, interpreting and delivering them, without fail."

## Strong reporting

"One of the main benefits of Access is the strong management reporting function that is provided. I am easily able to analyse our costs and income to the level that is required. I use the separate budgeting facility to run a rolling forecast, that – because it is fully integrated with the accounts – is secure and not in danger of corrupting spreadsheets, as I have experienced in the past. These facilities allow me access to better information, better control and visibility over where the business is now and where it is going, and ultimately, better, easier management reporting."

Phillip concludes, "It has been a successful year for us all round. As far as our Access solution is concerned, it has been very smooth sailing. From the initial implementation (that came in under budget as we needed less training than we initially thought!) throughout the whole year, we have no complaints at all. Access has given us a flexible, intuitive and robust solution, at a very reasonable price."

## Looking to the future

Philip is planning to extend Finesse's use of Access, to include more detailed usage in the leisure facility sites. He explains, "At the moment, I send the reports to the sites in spreadsheets. I am planning to roll out Access to the sites so that they will be able to use them for more direct enquiries."

## 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 believe your solution must be ready for the future, as well as right for today. 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.

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)