

Nando's

Leading restaurant chain spices up its financial management with Unit4

Overview

With its signature PERi-PERi-chicken dishes, Nando's was hatched from a South African restaurant called Chickenland and its popularity led to rapid expansion around the world. The first UK Nando's restaurant opened in 1992 in Ealing and the company has gone from strength to strength. Today it has 248 outlets across the UK and Ireland and is one of the biggest restaurant names on the high street.

Nando's has been using its Unit4 solution since 2006, when it sought a best-in-class financial management solution that would facilitate current and future growth and change within the business.

The situation and needs

The selection of a new finance system began in 2004 when it became apparent that the company's existing solution was proving increasingly difficult to operate and reporting was unreliable and inconsistent. Michelle Ruddock, Finance Project Manager, commented: "We needed a reliable system that generated accurate and timely reports about the financial and operational performance of the business. We also wanted to automate and streamline a large number of our processes so that we could spend less time slicing and dicing data. Our incumbent solution was inflexible and just not scaling to meet these needs. So we issued a tender document and began our search."

The solution

The team met with a number of potential vendors before short-listing three and it was Unit4's financial management solution that really stood out. Michelle continued: "I have used it before and know that it has the rich financial management capabilities we require, combined with an ability to integrate with the other line-of-business applications that we use within Nando's. It can be easily scaled as our business grows and helps us to make more informed decisions

based on accurate and consistent financial and wider management information."

The benefits

Nando's embarked on a fairly rapid implementation program, working with Unit4 to define the scope of the project and the core system requirements. The system went live in an impressive three months. Michelle added: "The Unit4 team demonstrated a clear understanding of what our business is about and what we needed to achieve. Such awareness ensured that from day one the solution could produce the information we needed, quickly and without manual intervention. Although bedding in a new system brings with it some inevitable and expected teething pains it was a smooth and relatively pain-free process. Importantly we achieved the implementation milestones we had set, on time and within budget."





Today, we have in place a finance system that can facilitate the growth we plan, while helping us to understand our performance in what are undoubtedly challenging times in the wider economy.”

The team at Nando’s is also benefitting from improvements in the flow of information and the level of transparency it now has into its numbers. Prior to its implementation the finance team relied on manual processes to perform simple things like bank reconciliations, where each restaurant had to feed in data which had to be consolidated in yet another process. Bank reconciliations are now automated, which has saved Michelle and the team a considerable amount of time and made the whole process much more efficient. In the same way the expense process has been redesigned and by running a simple routine Nando’s has saved significant amounts of time and reduced the administrative burden considerably.

Today, over 260 finance and non-finance users have access to the data produced by the Unit4 solution and feedback has been positive. Michelle commented: “User acceptance is important when it comes to assessing the overall success of a project and the feedback suggests that our personnel find they are much more empowered since the implementation and can work more efficiently as they are confident

that the numbers are correct. They can produce meaningful financial and operational data at the click of a mouse.

“The ease of use and self-service aspects mean that the managers of our restaurants have an ‘at a glance’ view of their performance and can assess what action needs to be taken to build on success or respond quickly to any issues that arise. From a finance user’s perspective I find it very simple to use and the team is spending considerably less time manipulating data between systems. Since implementing the Unit4 solution, we spend more time analyzing what the numbers tell us and making decisions that will shape our future growth and ensure profitability.”

The challenges of change affect every organization and Nando’s is no different. Unit4 recognizes that system changes will be needed so it has architected its solutions to embrace change and allow businesses to update and amend their solutions quickly and easily even after implementation. This flexibility is proving valuable to Nando’s. Michelle commented: “The software is highly configurable and as we have grown or changed we have been able to make updates to it ourselves without needing to bring in expensive consultants. This agility means we can respond to internal and external drivers quickly and painlessly.”

The solution's easy integration with other line-of-business applications is also crucial, as Nando's is a very innovative business when it comes to technology and has some skilled programmers who have written bespoke applications to meet the business's exact information needs. Michelle explained: "As a best-in-class application, it fits perfectly with our wider IT strategy. We like to develop solutions such as the specialist reporting tool which we created ourselves.

Financials data is pulled directly into this reporting tool automatically and seamlessly so we know that any reports we extract are based on one set of core data and no manual intervention or rekeying has been necessary. We now have up-to-date and accurate information in one place and using our reporting tool we can slice and dice as we need to with certainty that it is accurate and comprehensive. This gives us confidence and peace of mind when it comes to decision making, forecasting and planning as well as saving us time and money."

Nando's is a forward-looking company and is always seeking new ways to do things more efficiently and with Unit4 it benefits from being part of the User Group where it can share tips and ideas with other users. Working with its peers as well as with Unit4 ensures that Nando's stays ahead of the game and maximizes the return on its investment.

Michelle concluded: "Unit4 was the logical choice for us and it has proven itself tenfold. We are confident that this solution provides us with the strong financial backbone we need to grow and meet both our current and future needs."



About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue north of 500M Euro and more than 4000 employees world-wide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, education, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale, and financial services benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

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