

## OpenOffice.org 1 software meets finance company's needs for Microsoft Office compatibility and cuts costs

*It's a 'warts and all' story - we tell you the good points ... and the not so good.*

*Your current software may cost you more than you realise. It's not just the price on the box - complying with the small print in the licence is expensive too. And non-compliance can land you in court!*

*Cost is important...*

*...but even 'free' software is no good unless it meets your company's needs*

This Case Study shows how OpenOffice.org 1 software helped a small finance company gain a competitive cost advantage over much larger competitors, and helped the IT infrastructure keep up with the rapid growth of the company.

### **Background**

"FinCorp" is a small but geographically dispersed company, with approximately twenty employees working in six offices in three continents with five working languages. In an industry dominated by three global giants, "FinCorp" manages rapid growth thanks to innovative products and rigid cost control.

In support of this strategy the complete IT has been outsourced. The outsourcing service company was asked to come up with solutions to provide a reliable IT infrastructure at very low cost. An audit of the existing IT shows that a significant part of IT costs was spent on licenses. At the same time, management has trouble tracking all licenses due to dispersed organisation and rapid growth.

### **Solution**

As one measure, the outsourcing service company suggested replacing the Microsoft Office software on employees' computers with OpenOffice.org 1, the leading open-source office productivity suite. At first glance, OpenOffice.org 1 had several advantages:

- it supported all the languages used by "FinCorp"
- its free licencing model removed the need to track licences
- a Total Cost of Ownership study demonstrated that there were significant ongoing cost savings to be made by migrating to OpenOffice.org 1

However, there were more important considerations - would OpenOffice.org 1 meet the business critical requirements of the company?

- would "FinCorp's" current and future workforce make the transition to this unfamiliar software?
- "FinCorp" regularly exchanges documents in Microsoft Word format with clients - was OpenOffice.org 1's claimed Word compatibility up to the job?
- would OpenOffice.org 1 be able to produce all the standard documents in use at "FinCorp"?
- "FinCorp" uses a number of specialised financial plug-ins produced by third parties for Microsoft Excel - how would OpenOffice.org 1 handle these?

*It's a good idea to have someone experienced help you migrate.*

*Beware of buying software that 'only works with Windows' - would you buy a car that only ran on one brand of petrol/gas?*

A 'no' to any of these would have ruled out the use of OpenOffice.org 1 completely.

## **Migration**

Further work by the outsourcing company demonstrated that these potential show-stoppers were not an issue. The migration went ahead. Seven months after migration most users are happy with OpenOffice.org 1 - even those who did not go on the training courses! Calls for support died away rapidly. Users quickly got used to saving documents in Microsoft Word format for external circulation (and learned how to avoid one or two issues), and their external correspondents have not noticed any difference. The outsourcing company successfully converted all the standard documents and helped the company tidy up and standardise its paperwork in the process.

## **And the not so good**

OpenOffice.org 1 simply cannot work with Microsoft Excel specific plug-ins - something potential migrators need to know. However, in this case a completely different approach side-stepped the problem. One issue that still hasn't been completely resolved is the level of support for macro recording and editing with OpenOffice.org 1. Although this capability is starting to emerge with OpenOffice.org release 1.1, it still has some way to go before matching the similar capability for end-users in Microsoft Office.

## **And the winner is...**

"FinCorp" is now a convinced OpenOffice.org 1 convert. OpenOffice.org 1 has become a cornerstone of the IT infrastructure and will be employed in a number of new and unexpected ways. In the planning stages are plug-ins for custom financial functions and using a database for file storage, indexing and archiving. "FinCorp" is happy that OpenOffice.org 1 is an excellent package to do business with.

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OpenOffice.org 1 is the leading open-source office productivity suite, containing a world-class word processor, spreadsheet, drawing package, presentation manager, and database user tools. It is currently available in many different languages for Microsoft Windows, Linux, Sun/Solaris, and Mac OS X (beta) under X11. It is easy to use, free of licence fees, and offers a high degree of compatibility with Microsoft Office files.

The mission of the OpenOffice.org community is to create the leading international office suite that will run on all major platforms and provide access to all functionality and data through open-component based APIs and an XML-based file format. For more details, or to download the software free of all licence fees, visit <http://www.openoffice.org>.



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