

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)

Unisa slices a month off its budgeting burden with IDU-Concept.



THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The university's merger in 2004 with Technikon South Africa and Vista University Distance Education Campus swelled Unisa's student body to more than 253 000 students, 3 800 staff members, assets worth in excess of R3 billion and an annual budget of around R3,2 billion

The administrative complexities involved in budgeting for such an institutional megalith are multifaceted. Annual student intakes around the world, the human resources management of national and international lecturers and tutors, and the amalgamated workflow systems of the three established campuses into a single workable process presented an enormous challenge.

Willem du Plessis, Director of Budget and Management Accounting at Unisa, said the merger increased staff numbers by an extra 1 000 people and burgeoned the annual budget by an estimated R600 million.

ABOUT UNISA

The University of South Africa (UNISA), known colloquially as Unisa, is the largest university system in South Africa by enrollment. It attracts a third of all higher education students in South Africa.

Through various colleges and affiliates, UNISA has over 400,000 students, including international students from 130 countries worldwide, making it one of the world's mega universities and the only such university in Africa.

The university also employs approximately 5500 people.



“Trying to manage a budget of this size using an Excel spreadsheet system rapidly became an administrative nightmare. Data had to be collated, input to Excel and sent to each department. Changes would often have to be applied manually, making the process painstakingly slow and inefficient. We were drowning in paperwork and always fighting deadlines that were impossible to meet using a spreadsheet system,” said Du Plessis.

THE SOLUTION

“IDU-Concept is one of the most extensively used budgeting applications in South Africa. This meant we were able to present Unisa with a tried and tested solution,” says IDU’s CEO Kevin Phillips

“The reporting functionality of IDU-Concept has been particularly useful, enabling managers to be responsible for their own budgets rather than have to rely on monthly data from the budgeting department. “IDU-Concept has easily reduced our budgeting cycle by four weeks – we’ve gained a month of efficiency,” said du Plessis.

“IDU-Concept provides managers with the tool to discharge their financial responsibilities. With cost centre managers managing their financial responsibilities, accountants can concentrate on analysing the numbers,” says Phillips.



“IDU is a proudly South African company and in my opinion the software has been, developed with our unique requirements and collective character in mind. IDU always keep up with the latest technological as well as other related developments at all times. They respond positively to the requirements of individual clients as well as clients within a specific industry (in our case, the Higher Education (HE) sector). Finally the helpdesk and other technical and client support teams are very responsive and operate at the speed of light.” - Willem Du Plessis, Director of Budgets and Management Accounting, Unisa

ABOUT IDU

IDU delivers top of class packaged budgeting, forecasting, performance management and reporting tools to simplify financial management. Our flagship product, IDU-Concept, provides easy, effective budgeting and financial reporting for medium-sized to large businesses. IDU-Concept integrates easily with ERP software, but unlike more cumbersome offerings, IDU-Concept can be implemented quickly, requires little or no ongoing consulting fees and reduces budgeting cycles from months to weeks.