

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG (UJ)

The University of Johannesburg knocks months off its budgeting process with idu-Concept.



THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Following its formation in 2004/5, UJ inherited an estimated 4 000 cost centres, 690 of which are budget cost centres, each with its own individual budget. The processing of data for all of these separate cost centres within the nine faculties of the university on a quarterly basis was an onerous task. It entailed first manually collating the data onto individual Excel spreadsheets for each cost centre, uploading these into Oracle, and then compiling a budget summary for presentation to the university's management.

"The process was extremely slow and time-consuming, and we needed a solution desperately. Ideally we wanted a system that provided us with a complete database that we would be able to access at any time, and in a single report get a feel of how the budget was faring," says Ronel Jansen van Vuuren, director of cash management and financial reporting at UJ.

ABOUT UJ

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) is a public university located in Johannesburg, South Africa. The University of Johannesburg came into existence on 1 January 2005 as the result of a merger between the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), the Technikon Witwatersrand (TWR) and the Soweto and East Rand campuses of Vista University.

UJ has four campuses with more than 8000 permanent and temporary staff: the Auckland Park Kingsway, Auckland Park Bunting Road, Doornfontein and Soweto campuses – all located in the metropolitan area of the City of Johannesburg.

UJ is one of the largest universities in South Africa with a student population of over 50 000, of which more than 3000 are international students from 80 countries.

THE SOLUTION

In May 2008 the university implemented financial budgeting and reporting software idu-Concept. The improved efficiencies and time-savings were evident soon after the three-week rollout of the solution. This was thanks in part to IDU's user-friendly interface for non-financial managers, as well as real-time information being immediately available at any step in the budgeting cycle.

"When we uploaded the 2006, 2007 and 2008 actuals, it gave the users a good idea of how simple a budget process can actually be. Now in budget meetings the committee has all the spend factors visible in front of them, in real time, and can see how much each cost centre is budgeting compared with previous years.

This helps management to make decisions, and is particularly useful with forecasting," says Jansen van Vuuren.

The powerful drill-down capabilities of idu-Concept's reporting module enables analysis of figures through various levels, down to individual cost centres, allowing managers to easily establish which areas within the university are responsible for major budget variances.

"The reporting capability is easily accessible and convenient – we update our actuals daily and cost centre managers are able to see their spending at any time."

The drill-down facility is particularly useful to analyse the institution's payroll, as the human resources division is currently in a restructuring phase, and keeping track of available and unavailable posts would have been difficult to identify before the introduction of idu-Concept.

"Using idu-Concept, we're able to have a clear picture of exactly what employees are in the system and where there are vacant posts. The system provides valuable HR information for the budget controller at the click of a button."

IDU's consulting team identified requirements not previously catered for during the installation. "Our development team then enhanced the system to provide the University of Johannesburg with worthwhile information for improving their HR budgets."

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.

