

BSMART CAPE CONSUMERS

IDU impresses Cape Consumers with seamless implementation and service.



TIME FOR CHANGE

Two years prior to the writing of this case study Cape Consumers got a fresh start, appointing a new Managing Director, Marthinus Fourie, a new Financial Director, Monty Stephenson, and promoting Theresa leRoux to Financial Manager, as well as adding two new executives for IT and Sales & Marketing. This new EXCO team set a turnaround strategy in place to run until December 2015, when it would roll over into a new 5-year growth strategy with the goal of growing their R1 billion turnover to a R10 billion turnover.

With this strategy in mind, they had realised that it was time to move from their current spreadsheets to a more professional and sophisticated software that would help to improve systems and support the new vision and growth of the company. Although they weren't actively looking to upgrade as yet, when they received the introductory call from IDU, they were in the perfect space to take it on.

ABOUT CAPE CONSUMERS

Cape Consumers (Pty) Ltd was founded in 1947 as the State Employees' Buy-Aid Association (SEBAA) offering discounts to a small group of members.

Since then, Cape Consumers, a registered Credit Provider has grown into a giant with more than 30 000 cardholders, more than 10 000 retailers and an annual turnover in excess of R1 billion.

Cape Consumers exists solely for the benefit of its cardholders and the principle behind the business is very simple: using the combined purchasing power of the cardholders, Cape Consumers negotiates discounts with selected retailers on behalf of cardholders. This discount is then paid as a bonus (in November) to the cardholders based on their purchases for the preceding purchase year.

"I had met IDU owner and CEO, Kevin Phillips, years ago when I was with Ernst & Young through their Entrepreneur of the Year program, and our IT Executive, Louis Volschenk, had previously worked on the idu-Concept software at the law firm ENS, and was very impressed," says Monty Stephenson, Financial Director at Cape Consumers. "When we met with Kevin and he spoke of how he developed his business and idu-Concept and his philosophies towards business, we realised that IDU was the perfect fit for us."

Part of the new Cape Consumers' management approach was incorporating new ideas and input from all levels of the company. "We wanted to do something more decentralised and give more ownership to business unit leaders allowing us to move away from a top down budgeting system and IDU allowed us to do that." explains Stephenson.



THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Cape Consumers team was impressed with the professionalism and speed of the implementation process.

"From a financial perspective, the project management was done right from the outset," says le Roux. "They facilitated a comprehensive scoping workshop, in order to get a deeper understanding of our business and our specific needs. They followed this with documentation outlining exactly what was in scope and what wasn't, a clear project plan with timelines and costs and outlines of what would be needed from us."

"They gave us the worst case scenario in terms of timelines and costs and explained that both could be kept down by the project manager, myself, being involved from the get go," says le Roux. "I was able to manage spend incredibly well, by their tracking progress on the project budget and keeping me constantly up to date."

"The experience for me was outstanding," says Stephenson. "I have never seen someone grasp what we do and who we are so quickly. Very few service providers can meet both IT and financial requirements and IDU combines financial understanding with the highest class of tech knowledge."

"Kevin is a Chartered Accountant and a business owner himself, so he clearly understands how important quality of service is and exactly what small businesses need and has built his team accordingly," Stephenson expands. "The service is consistently excellent, whether you are dealing with the CEO or the consultant doing the implementation - and this is undoubtedly due to the company leadership."

"Managing version control in spreadsheets was a nightmare, and this would only worsen as we grew. Every time we rolled the budget forward, we would lose all previous comments and calculations and documents and have to start over. I love that this is no longer an issue with idu-Concept."

***Financial Manager
Theresa le Roux.***

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Cape Consumers particularly admired the delicacy with which the IDU team approached the change management aspect of the transition, from their presentation to the EXCO and the users, to the way they presented the workshops and facilitated the move.

“They did a comprehensive, easy to understand presentation to EXCO,” says Stephenson, “And their knowledge and passion for their product and understanding of our needs won the team over. They understood the importance of support in getting everybody on board.”

Le Roux adds, “The training was very hands on and interactive and they offered 1-on-1 training where it was needed, ensuring everybody felt confident in the software. There are 30 people in the company and around half of us will be using it regularly, so buy in and comprehension was really important.”

“I have never encountered another service provider who instills such confidence in the understanding, knowledge and skill of every member of their team,” says Stephenson. “I knew at every step that I would get the same impeccable service no matter who I spoke to – and the fact that I had access to anybody and everybody across all departments of the IDU business only strengthened that confidence.”

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.

IDU IN ACTION

“It is really easy to use and the monthly commenting and indicators add real value to us,” says le Roux. “Also, it allows us to read the numbers straight out of Sage-Accpac, so the numbers have more integrity.”

UPGRADING TO ENTERPRISE

After only 3 months on the standard budgeting model Cape Consumers decided to upgrade to the Enterprise package, giving them full access to the additional modules, particularly Business Intelligence.

“We started investigating developing our own BI a short while ago, but our IT Executive, Louis Volschenk, had informed us that it would be an incredibly time intensive project,” says Stephenson. “When the IDU team told us about their BI offering, we were easily convinced that the benefits of upgrading far outweighed the financial investment.”

“We are so excited to access the full power of BI to look at our financial and non-financial information,” says le Roux. “It will add such value to EXCO decision making and enable us to plot a clear roadmap, and because of the real-time make tweaks as we go.”

IN REVIEW

“The IDU team were incredibly professional, flexible, adaptable and always available,” says le Roux. “They went above and beyond when helping to set everything up, even helping me to upskill to get the most from the software. The team were easily able to adapt to whatever requests we made, navigating their software with ease and making it work.”