FOCALPOINT

FOCUS SOFTNET GROUP OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

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FOCUS
Solutions that move business

FOCAL POINT

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Customers and Partners,

Welcome to another edition of Focal Point.

October was an exciting and eventful month for us. We unveiled Focus 8, the next generation ERP solution, at an exclusive event held for our customers and partners. Focus 8 was given a huge thumbs up by all who attended with many showing keen interest in deploying it for their organizations.

Our participation in GITEX Technology Week 2014 was a success with Focus signing on new customers and partners from different countries across the Middle East and Africa region.

This edition of Focal Point covers two interesting case studies. The first case study is from UAE where Taaleem, a school management company deployed Focus i for its backend operations and a bespoke solution for its frontend operations, which has helped the company integrate its operations and plan its future growth. The second case study covers Bahrain-based Gulf Corporation for Technology (GCT), which deployed Focus i to automate its business processes and reduce data redundancies.

Apart from our newest feature releases, we have introduced a special knowledge zone where experts from Focus share their insights on the latest trends, products and market segments.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Focal Point.

We look forward to your valuable feedback as always.

Sincerely,

Ali Hyder
Group CEO,
Focus
Softnet Fz
LLC.

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Taaleem plans future growth with bespoke solution from Focus Softnet

UAE-BASED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMPANY TAALEEM USES SEVERAL FOCUS SOFTNET SOLUTIONS, AND BESPOKE SOLUTIONS DEVELOPED IN TANDEM WITH FOCUS, TO DRIVE ITS BUSINESS

▶ Kapil Kapoor, Chief Finance Officer, Taaleem.

Taaleem began operations in 2004 as Beacon Education, a school management company which was set up to develop and run high quality education projects. The company opened its first four schools in 2005. In 2007, National Bonds, a Dubai-based Private Joint Stock Company with around 50% ownership by the Government of Dubai, through a newly set up investment vehicle Madaares PJSC, invested in Beacon Education.

Taaleem's main activity is the development and management of early childhood, primary and secondary schools. With quality at the forefront of its offerings, Taaleem tailors each project to answer the specific educational requirements of a wide range of families by offering top international curricula including National Curriculum of England (British), American Curriculum, the International Baccalaureate, the International Primary Curriculum and its multi-lingual, custom early childhood programme, the International Curriculum for Languages and Creative Arts (ICLCA).

"Taaleem, which means 'education' in Arabic, is committed to inspiring students and helping them to identify and develop their passions and talents. Our vision is to become the most respected provider of early childhood, primary and secondary education in the UAE and GCC region. We are committed to the highest standards of international education so that our students are able to compete on the global stage and become successful and responsible world citizens," said Ros Marshall, CEO, Taaleem.

Some of the schools owned and managed by Taaleem are Al-Mizhar American Academy, Dubai British School, Greenfield Community School, Jumeira Baccalaureate School, Uptown School and The Children's Garden in Dubai and Raha International School in Abu Dhabi. The combined experience of its core team of senior education leaders in international education policy, operations and global management best practices means Taaleem is well positioned to ensure the creation of truly exceptional schools that satisfy the most comprehensive and exacting education developmental requirements.

"Our association with Focus Softnet began

in 2008 when we were introduced through one of our associate companies, National Bonds, a Focus customer. Taaleem was looking out for a stable and reliable vendor that not only offered a strong backend ERP and accounting system but one that could also create customized, bespoke solutions for us for the frontend too. We met the Focus team, saw their product demos, did our own research and were impressed with the features and functionalities of their back-end ERP system and hence we decided to implement it immediately at our sites," said Kapil Kapoor, CFO, Taaleem.

In 2008, Taaleem deployed Focus RT, a real time ERP accounting solution that seamlessly integrates all facets of the business, and started developing a credible database. At that time Taaleem also worked with Focus to develop bespoke Procurement and Budgetary Management tool and School Invoicing tool which was implemented a year later in 2009. In 2010, they upgraded to Focus i, Focus Softnet's highly customizable ERP accounting with business intelligence tools, which was done seamlessly.

"We were happy with Focus RT and subsequently with Focus i, which offered us a very strong backend without any issues on reliability or support. The Focus i upgrade was seamless and the implementation swift," Amit Kapoor, Taaleem's, Finance Manager added.

Towards the end of 2012, Taaleem decided to go with Focus Softnet on developing and deploying the bespoke frontend solution, which they termed as version 2.0 implementation. This was to be an upgrade of the Procurement and Budgetary Management tool and School Invoicing tool. Since it was a brand new customized solution and required ongoing technical and development support, the project was

1,000+
Taaleem employee contracts managed in Focus' bespoke solution.

managed by Focus Softnet's India development team.

"Our earlier frontend system, although bespoke, was outdated and deficient for new business realities. We chose Focus Softnet to develop this system for us because we wanted to integrate the frontend system with the backend ERP system so that the database tables would integrate with each other. Since the backend was already a Focus ERP and the company had strong development capabilities, we decided to go with them on this project too," Kapoor explained.

With version 2.0, Taaleem deployed the invoicing and procurement modules. The company decided to push the boundaries of the system by adding more features and functionalities to make it a truly integrated frontend bespoke model for them. Taaleem added a contracts management module to version 2.0, which is expected to help the company manage all their employee contracts effortlessly.

"We have more than 1,000 employees including teachers, support staff etc. within our schools and the turnover in this industry is high. It is difficult to manually handle so

"We used our past experiences from the operating problems that we faced and made a list of them before we embarked on the new virgin development."

Kapil Kapoor
CFO, Taaleem

many contracts at 10 different schools without duplicating efforts and wasting precious time. With the new contracts management module, Taaleem's central office supports all the schools in processing the contracts, from the point of issuing LOIs (Letter of Intents) electronically to e-filing of the attested documents," said Sagar Dharmadhikari, Financial Controller, Taaleem.

"Furthermore, to meet their needs of the school, Focus is also assisting us to develop bespoke CRM system. This system is in the final stages of deployment and is expected to support the marketing and admissions team in Taaleem. By having the CRM part of the existing database, we would have a solid foundation to develop fully-integrated systems encompassing all of our stakeholders — students, staff and parents," Dharmadhikari added.

The frontend system is web-enabled and hosted on a central Taaleem server located at its data center. The company has a single login credential for all its staff and users with different departments logging into the same system but using their own aspect of

▶ Taaleem is committed to the highest standards of international education, says Ros Marshall.

▶ The company already had good experience with Focus RT, according to Amit Kapoor.

▶ The Focus solution helps to eliminate manual processes and improves efficiency, says Sagar Dharmadhikari.

functionality. Another change that Taaleem wanted to the system was to sync data as everything was connected at one single point. So even if the system was disconnected due to the internet being down, they would not lose any new data entered as it would be saved and synced later with the main system once the internet was connected again.

"For example, if a parent came to pay the fee and the internet was down, the server would not be accessible and hence the payment receipt would not have been generated. That is usually the downside of a web-based application as you are relying on the ISP provider for connectivity. Hence, while upgrading our frontend system, we ensured that the two modules, School Invoicing and CRM, were able to work even when the server was not reachable. Our staff could raise invoices even when not connected, which could later sync with the central database once internet connectivity was restored. This was some clever thinking done by Nisith Naik of Focus Softnet and his team to develop syncing tables using new technologies," said Kapoor.

"Another important feature was the way the new coding was done, where our staff didn't have to wait for the whole page to download but only the fields that required to change were refreshed. We used our past experiences from the operating problems that we faced and made a list of them before we embarked on the new virgin development. Apart from users' feedback, we took all the inputs given by the team to actually design and build our application, which would ensure these problems were taken care of or resolved," he added.

"Upon receiving feedback from Taaleem on the challenges faced by them on their day-to-day operations and taking their user experiences into consideration, we developed and upgraded their new frontend

▶ Taaleem manages several schools in the UAE, catering to different international curricula.

system — version 2.0. We moved on to a new technology called the Windows Presentation Foundation, where Taaleem was the first customer to use it from our end. Although all our applications are currently built on Windows Presentation Foundation, Taaleem was a bespoke implementation and it was the first one," said Nisith Naik, Regional CEO, Focus Softnet.

The version 2.0 project went live in September 2013. Taaleem invested in new hardware to support both the frontend and backend system implementations for security and resilience purposes. Taaleem conducted training for its staff with the training process continuing throughout the year. There were some glitches in the migration and implementation and these are being worked through.

Apart from its regular arrangements for onsite IT support, the

"We were happy with Focus RT and subsequently with Focus i, which offered us a very strong back-end without any issues on reliability or support."

Amit Kapoor
Finance Manager, Taaleem.

company had dedicated local support from Focus Softnet and trouble shooting support available from the development team in Hyderabad.

Taaleem uses the complete integrated backend Focus i solution for book keeping and accounting and the frontend bespoke solution for online application, student registration, fees management, online procurement system and employee contracts system. The Focus Softnet system has helped Taaleem get reliable data and reports quickly and has helped the company to save time by reducing duplication of efforts.

"Our long term goal is to have all our systems for HR, school management, facilities, and marketing to be automated and integrated. These are all critical functions that we have within our organization where every aspect of each department should get captured. There is no point in having independent systems that don't talk to each other. We do have other third-party systems such as payroll management running independent of our main backend and frontend systems. Our aim is to get to a point where all of these systems will be integrated into the main Focus system. We want to ensure that all our stakeholders i.e parents, students, employees and vendors are covered in our systems. The next stage for us is to integrate our pay roll system into our current system," Kapil Kapoor concluded.

Taleem has long term plans for expansion and intends to open its eleventh school in 2015. The bespoke frontend Focus solution and the backend Focus ERP system will help it scale up its operations seamlessly in future.

▶ The Focus Softnet team were out in force for GITEX 2014.

Focus Softnet gets great business results at GITEX Technology Week 2014

FOCUS SOFTNET UNVEILED ITS MUCH-AWAITED NEXT GENERATION ERP SOLUTION, FOCUS 8, LAUNCHED ITS ONLINE APP STORE AND SIGNED NEW CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS AT THE EVENT

Exhibiting for the eighteenth consecutive year, Focus Softnet unveiled its much-awaited next generation ERP solution, Focus 8, launched its new online App Store and signed on new customers at GITEX 2014. Focus also recruited new partners to expand its channel network in the Middle East and Africa.

"GITEX has given us a great response and leads over the years. It has been a great platform for us to raise Focus' profile, position and brand image that we have gained over the years in the Middle East. It also provided us an opportunity to strengthen our rela-

tionship with our customers and key partners and develop many new prospects across the MEA region," says Ali Hyder, Group CEO of Focus Softnet.

"The response we received this year was the best ever for Focus. We launched Focus 8 and were happy with the feedback we have received from our existing customers as well as prospects. Our sales team is busy following up on the potential leads we received at Gitex and we are confident these leads will result in business for Focus. Going by the response we received this year, we are looking forward to an even bigger, better and more successful

GITEX in 2015," Hyder adds.

At GITEX 2014, Focus Softnet showcased its recently launched Cloud-based solutions and mobile apps for its wide-range of enterprise, SMB and vertical-specific solutions including healthcare, property management, POS, Restaurant solutions to name a few. The company also promoted its Managed Services, HR and Recruitment services, Business Process Consulting and implementations services at the exhibition. Through product demos at its stand, the company highlighted that its solutions are highly customizable and can be adapted to suit its customers' business needs.

Focus 8 GLOBAL LAUNCH RECEIVES

FOCUS SOFTNET'S CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS ATTENDED THE UNVEILING OF FOCUS 8, NEXT GENERATION ERP, IN HUGE NUMBERS

Focus 8, the next generation ERP solution, was launched globally with much fanfare on October 12th, 2014 at GITEX Technology Week 2014. The product was unveiled at an exclusive event held at the Shangri-La Hotel Dubai, where Focus Softnet's customers and partners attended in huge numbers. The Focus 8 launch event was a grand success with customers giving it a thumbs up and showing keen interest in deploying it for their organizations.

TREMENDOUS RESPONSE

Eugene Sergeev / Shutterstock.com

▶ Bahrain-based GCT has selected Focus i to manage its pharmacies and wholesale and retail operations of its medical equipment and consumables division.

Gulf Corporation for Technology automates processes and cuts data redundancy with Focus i

GULF CORPORATION FOR TECHNOLOGY (GCT), A LONG TERM USER OF FOCUS SOFTNET SOLUTIONS HAS SELECTED FOCUS I TO AUTOMATE FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL PROCESSES AND MAKE BETTER DECISIONS

Gulf Corporation for Technology (GCT) was founded in 1945 by late Burhanuddin Al Awadi, as a pharmacy based in Manama city center, Bahrain. The pharmacy commenced operations with the trade of pharmaceuticals and general consumer items for the retail and wholesale market and gradually included active participation in governmental and institutional sales by participating in tenders. Hence the company had to expand its operations to meet with the demands of hospitals and clinics.

The company started the Medical & Scientific Division to look after the trade and service of medical and scientific equipment, which contributed significantly to the growth of the company. As the arena of business activities widened, a new company called Gulf Corporation for Technology (GCT) was incorporated in 1995 to mainly look after the sales and service of medical, scientific, educational and industrial equipment and supplies. GCT began to cater to hospitals, educational institutions, schools and universities, various industrial units and other developmental projects.

From its humble beginnings in 1945, GCT has now grown to achieve an annual turnover of $55 million with a work force of over 120 employees spread over 11 locations across the Kingdom. Some of the Group's registered businesses are Gulf Corporation for Technology wll, Gulf Pharmacy, Al Muwassa Pharmacy, Ibn Sina Pharmacy, Arad Pharmacy, Busaiteen Pharmacy, Community Pharmacy, People Pharmacy, Saar Pharmacy, Diyar Pharmacy and Al Seha Pharmacy.

"Over the last few years GCT has grown tremendously. As our business continued to expand, we began looking at getting more out of our business applications and systems.

Implementing a good enterprise software system to help our growth plans had become a top priority for us," says Dr Khalid B Al Awadhi, Chairman and CEO, GCT. "In 2003, we signed up with Focus Softnet for Focus 5 and subsequently upgraded to Focus 6 in 2005 and Focus RT in 2007, which helped us streamline and automate our business processes and operations. In 2011, we upgraded to Focus i which enabled us to automate our financial and operational processes and helped us make informed business decisions."

GCT reviewed ERP solutions from several global vendors and zeroed in on Focus after following a very strict evaluation criteria. Focus Softnet understood the company's requirements and created customised modules to address those requirements.

"We chose Focus as they provided the perfect business vertical specialized solution. The software was very user-friendly with the customization available at UI level to create business flow and process rules," Dr Al Awadhi adds.

GCT deployed Focus i, a cost-effective solution that combines Focus' highly customizable ERP with business intelligence tools. Focus i is a revolutionary product that enables companies to automate their financial and operational processes and helps them make better decisions by organizing, analyzing and reporting the data they generate. It is not only scalable, flexible and easily customizable but it is also easy to use. Another major deciding factor for Gulf Pharmacy in choosing the solution was the vendor's local after-sales service and support.

"The major challenges that we faced were handling multi location POS, stock tracking and stock reconciliation and integration of

▶ GCT began its business as a pharmacy. The company has now expanded into medical supplies and equipment.

data from all the locations with online posting. Focus i provided us real-time, multi-dimensional posting of transactions, which resulted in real-time reports. With this implementation, we also wanted to reduce data redundancy and redundant data entry," says C S Kumar, Senior Manager Finance, GCT.

GCT implemented the Finance, Inventory, POS and Payroll modules of Focus i. The solution integrated Gulf Pharmacy's operations at multiple locations with real time updates and online accessibility. The solution helped the company in reducing data redundancy and redundant data entry with automated inventory posting to G/L from all locations. The software automated business processes such as invoicing and sales and purchase orders within one system's improved forecasting accuracy.

"We use Focus i for front office and back office operations of all the pharmacies along with complete wholesale and retail operations of our medical equipment and consumables division. Focus i helped us integrate each division within the organization where we could function as one single unified entity.

$55m
Annual turnover of GCT

"We chose Focus as they provided the perfect business vertical specialized solution. The software was very user-friendly with the customization available at UI level to create business flow and process rules."

Dr Khalid B Al Awadhi
Chairman & CEO, GCT.

▶ Focus i has enabled real-time reporting for GCT, says C S Kumar.

The transactions and business processes between different divisions became smoother and faster with negligible human error. With Focus i, we were able to get accurate real-time data and reports and the system gave us access to a 360 degree view of what's going on through it's 'dashboards'," Kumar explains.

Focus i also integrated business processes, offered one central database with no duplication of data, a powerful BI tool to view reports in multi dimensions. It provided an easy-to-use, powerful reporting across the whole suite, and therefore the whole organization, and the same look-and-feel across the whole system, making training and using the Focus i solution very simple and very straightforward, he added.

GCT has streamlined and centralized its operations, creating a more efficient workflow between departments and functions. Focus i has increased transparency within the organization, reduced human errors and ensured that the company's business processes are simpler and faster. ▶

Focus strengthens East Africa operations

FUTURE KENYA TO PROMOTE AND DEPLOY FOCUS SOFTNET'S ENTIRE RANGE TO CUSTOMERS ACROSS KENYA

Focus Softnet has signed Future Kenya as its new partner in Kenya. According to the terms of the partnership agreement, Future Kenya will sell, deploy and support Focus Softnet's entire range of enterprise and vertical-specific solutions as well as offer a full range of services to customers across the country.

"Africa is a very important market for Focus. Signing on the right partners and empowering them with the required knowledge, skills and support has been a huge part of Focus Softnet's growth strategy for Africa. We were looking for an established local partner with strong expertise in the enterprise software solutions domain and Market Mate helped us to identify the right partner in Kenya. After reviewing a number of companies, we felt Future Kenya was a perfect partner as they have more than 15 years experience in the ERP space and requisite market knowledge, expertise and an extensive channel network to promote our solutions and grow our business and market share," said Jawad Ali Khan, Regional CEO, Focus Softnet.

"Focus Softnet already has a local office and customers in Kenya and this partnership will demonstrate our commitment to them by offering local support and services. We look forward to working closely with Future Kenya's team to support them with the right resources and training,

Future Kenya has been signed as a strategic partner to help build Focus Softnet's presence in East Africa.

which in turn will help them promote and sell Focus' solutions more efficiently," Khan added.

Future Kenya is a solutions and service oriented company providing comprehensive business software solutions and services to Kenya and Tanzania's small, medium and large businesses. Incorporated in 1999, the company has been an established player in the ERP space in the East African market.

"The ERP market in Africa is growing at a rapid pace as government organizations and mid-sized companies are increasingly looking towards technology as a business enabler. There is a huge market for ERP solutions that offer flexibility and a low cost of ownership and Focus Softnet offers solutions that are not only feature-rich and customizable but also absolute value for money. We reviewed a few ERP solutions in the market and found that not many vendors had products that were inclusive to most vertical segments. Focus Softnet was the only vendor that had an extensive range of solutions for different verticals, which could help fill this gap. We are excited to partner with Focus Softnet in Kenya and look forward to working closely with them to offer our customers the best solutions, services and support on the ground," explained Naved Sheikh, CEO, Future Kenya.

Focus Softnet offers a wide-range of solutions that integrates people and technologies to deliver quality products and innovative solutions to business challenges across the world. Focus uses the latest technologies to develop their products and customizes them by offering regional specific features, which reduce the time of implementation.

FOCUS ON FEATURES

FOCUS SOFTNET HAS ALWAYS BEEN AHEAD OF THE CURVE IN SOLUTION DEVELOPMENT, THROUGH CONTINUOUS PRODUCT INNOVATION

FOCUS CRM   **FOCUS i**   **FOCUS POS**   **FOCUS e-RMS**

CRM

Tags
Tag search results, users can tag and get results of records tagged by them and other users also. Search can be with respect to a particular module or it can also be global for all the modules.

Crystal Reports
Crystal reports can be now integrated with Focus CRM through external reports option.

Multiple Print Layout Selection
Now user can select desired print layouts while printing the document. He can select any layout in any of the module/s.

GPS Integration
Sales executives travel route and their current location can be tracked in run time. And also latest activities of a specific user can be monitored.

3D graphs and Date formats in Dashboards
Users can now customize graphs with multiple measures, and Dashlets can now have a view of different date formats.

Focus i

Excel based Voucher Print layouts
New feature provided where user can design the document/invoice print layout in excel and fetch the desired data from input screen using Variables. The Excel layout can be selected directly from the application print option.

Set your own email text at body
This feature allows users to set their own text as Email body by defining an extra field in header of a document. The text entered in this extra field will auto-picked as body content of the email.

Viewing multiple linked documents in single base document
Wherever more than one document is linked to a base document, a drop down box in entry screen is provided in base document to list the documents which are linked. E.g. if single sales order is linked with multiple sales invoices then in the sales order screen the user can see a list of and view linked sales invoices.

Printing of Ageing Slabs LedGER
Now, one can print balance amount from customer/vendor with Ageing Slabs in footer of the general ledger.

Retail POS

Batch report printing
Batch report allows user to print multiple reports in single click. The created template can be defined as a shortcut and user can send all reports included in the batch list to print/export/e-mail.

Option to edit/cancel home delivery transactions
This option allows user to edit quantities, add or remove items and and also to cancel home delivery orders.

Option to restrict EOD if any pending home deliveries
This features allows to restrict EOD process in case of any home delivery is pending.

Option to re-print bill EOD wise
System provides security and restricts users to reprint previous date bills.

Restriction of products by Outlets
While creating the product, user can assign the outlet/s which can sell this product.

Daily/Monthly Member Schemes
Member based schemes can be defined on Daily/Monthly, Number of times in a day basis.

e-RMS

Single click takeaway
Instead of two step process of order and then bill settlement, bill settlement can be completed in a single click for takeaway orders.

Pole display
Once the item is selected, pole display allows customers to view the item details and price, and can be configured by counter.

Posting of transaction if rate is 0
It allows to post zero value transactions where item rate is '0'.

Allow to split/void items after printing bill
Selection of this option allows user to split the items and also void items after printing bill with due approval by manager.

Allow complimentary after settlement
This feature allows to mark an item as complimentary after printing the bill; complimentary items will be printed in the footer.

Offline Synchronization
Offline synchronization allows user to manually export the data from outlets and import in server and vice versa.

Focus on **Focus 8**

FOCUS 8, FOCUS SOFTNET'S NEW ERP, ENABLES ORGANIZATIONS WITH SEAMLESS DATA SYNCHRONIZATION ACROSS ALL LOCATIONS

Focus 8, a revolutionary new product from the arsenal of Focus Softnet, comes packed with features, both new and enhanced, with one objective — to revolutionize the ERP experience and enable you in more ways than ever before. The product has been designed with a significant emphasis in revolutionizing the following activities:

Growth & Scalability	Advanced Workflows
Online & Offline Sync	Advanced Authorizations
iOS & Android Compatibility	Advanced Escalations
Advanced Business Intelligence	Communication Tools
CRM Integration	Advanced Report Writer

Focus on Growth & Scalability

The old adage, 'the only thing that is constant is change' comes to mind when looking at the scalable architecture and design of Focus 8. In today's dynamic age, organizations grow rapidly, change direction almost instantly, and scale up or scale down depending upon circumstance. As such, the requirements of the organization continually change from time to time, and a feature, process, or method that was relevant at one point, now is no longer required; much rather it becomes a hindrance.

There comes a time for most companies where it has to move in the direction of adopting an ERP solution in order to continue its growth trend. A long term perspective is key, where the selected ERP solution grows with the organization as it grows, not just in the number of users, but the size, scale, number of transactions, departments, locations, verticals, entities, and business interests. This is where Focus 8 shines brightest.

Focus 8's unique scalable design allows it client organizations to easily add users, departments, locations, processes, authorizations and workflows, business verticals or domains, and various other growth driven attributes with ease and without the need to program or develop any code. The permissions and configurations of the ERP are agile enough to handle the additional workload with tremendous agility.

The fundamental objective has, and will always be, to fit the customer, no matter the scale of their operations. ✈

Focus 8's unique scalable design allows its client organizations to easily add users, departments, locations, processes, workflows, and various other growth driven attributes with ease.

▶ (left to right). Sherif Fouad, Head of Finance, Gulf Livestock with Zameer Ahmed Qureshi, Branch Manager of Focus Softnet.

Gulf Livestock to deploy Focus PMS

GULF LIVESTOCK SELECTED FOCUS SOFTNET'S FOCUS I AND FOCUS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO HELP MANAGE ITS BUSINESS

Established in 1982, Gulf Livestock Company is a UAE-based Public Limited company. With varied business interests, the company's main activity is trading in livestock, fresh and frozen meat, and all meat processing activities. However, significant revenues are achieved through real estate leasing by routinely acquiring residential and commercial properties and leasing them out. As such, the company has evolved into a fully-fledged leasing and facilities management company in addition to its core activities.

The company, being a listed entity in Abu Dhabi, demands the highest standards in business governance and has purchased an extensive spread of ERP and IT solutions from Focus Softnet to manage its financials, accounts receivables, accounts payables, general ledgers, fixed assets, HR and payroll through the respective modules within the Focus i ERP solution. It has also purchased the Focus CRM, with its sales and service desk modules, Focus PMS (Property Management System), and the Focus FMS (Facilities Management System).

This end-to-end integrated solution environment will uniquely position the group to maintain a firm grip on its business, deliverables, and business objectives. Being a listed company, its complex and unique requirement of Shareholders' Dividend Management Module will also be developed by Focus.

The Focus PMS is capable of handling the company's end-to-end requirement for leasing management. Also, the company routinely provides Facilities Management Services to its clients as well, and Focus' FMS solution is an ideal fit for this area of business. The unique capability of Focus Softnet in providing all these diverse but integrated systems on one platform compelled Gulf Livestock to adopt Focus' systems. ⚡

CUSTOMER WINS

Focus Softnet gaining new customers across multiple sectors

Al Sudair Factory
Al Sudair Factory, a subsidiary of Al Mutlaq Holding Company, is the leading manufacturer of furniture in Riyadh. The company currently uses Focus RT and is now upgrading to Focus i with MRP module to manage its manufacturing.

Shalimaar Pellets & Feeds Pvt. Ltd.
Shalimar Group, a INR 2000 Cr. Indian business conglomerate, in feed manufacturing, hatcheries, contract farming, processing plant and retail has chosen Focus to streamline operations and enhance business processes.

Regent Foods
Regent Food Corporation is one of the most recognized snack food manufacturing brands in the Philippines. The company chose Focus RT because the software had all the modules and features it was looking for and, and also had the advantage of customization.

Intex Resources Phils Inc.
Intex is a diversified mineral exploration company based in Oslo, Norway. Intex chose Focus RT for its competitive pricing, customization capability, flexibility, ease-of-use, solution delivery timeline and strong local support from the Focus team in Philippines.

Arabian Farms
Arabian Farms is focused on poultry farming and is the largest supplier of SAHA brand eggs in the GCC region. The company evaluated about eight different products from the market and decided to deploy Focus i with mobile apps for its quick implementation, integration with PDA capabilities and flexible interface.

Sunrise Enterprises
Sunrise Enterprises is the manufacturer, supplier and trader of a wide range of water treatment solutions and related items. The company chose Focus i to streamline its operations and enhance its manufacturing processes.

LILA Polymers Pvt. Ltd.
LILA Polymers Pvt. Ltd. is into international trading, distributing and indenting house for all types of polymers. It signed on Focus i for its features, simplicity, prices and customization capabilities.

SH Pharmaceuticals ltd
SHPL is a young, dynamic and one among the fast growing pharmaceutical companies in India. It enjoys a distinguished status being one among the top 150 pharmaceutical companies. The company selected Focus i as it was user-friendly, simple, affordable and customizable.

Real estate sector embracing benefits of ERP

REAL ESTATE BUSINESSES ARE ADOPTING ERP SYSTEMS TO BOOST REVENUES, CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INTRODUCE PROACTIVE GOVERNANCE, WRITES ROHAN TEJURA, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, FOCUS SOFTNET

The real estate business is a highly fluid and complex environment that operates within its own set of rules, paradigms and parameters and faces its own set of challenges. The one common thread amongst the various activities in the real estate domain is the criticality of time. More so than in any other industry, time plays a huge factor in value, revenue, and deliverables.

As such, the dependency of the industry on smart, flexible and robust ERP systems comes as no surprise. In fact, what is surprising is that the industry's adoption of ERP technology took so long. Current solutions available in the ERP domain have specialized capabilities to govern the requirements of various attributes within the industry, ranging from landlords who wish to sell and/or lease their real estate holdings, developers who need to build and sell their real estate, manage their procure-ment of materials and labor services, as well as govern their revenue collections from customers, and also facilities management companies that provide maintenance and various other services to real estate communities.

The sales perspective

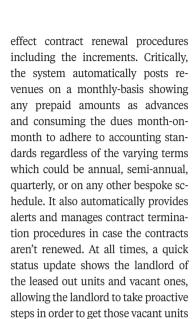Regulatory authorities have various stipulations in place for sales of properties that are under construction as opposed to sales of properties that are complete and ready-to-occupy. For properties that are under construction, sales proceeds can only be collected against the accomplishment of milestones, and further, for each sale, the percentage, values and terms of collection usually differ from purchaser to purchaser. Moreover, for developers, the quantity of units available for sale is rather large, and therefore real-time information of the status of saleable units (available, reserved, or sold) is important to know across the sales force.

Integrated ERP systems provide robust capabilities of integrating the entire sales force onto a common platform thereby ensuring real-time transparency within the system for units which are available, reserved, or sold. Furthermore, the construction module monitors the progress of the development of the site, and can raise alerts when payment collection milestones have been reached, thereby automatically prompting developers and initiating collection requests automatically across all purchasers as per their own terms and conditions. The system further monitors the status of the collections and proactively sends out reminders, overdue notices, and alerts ensuring that adequate follow ups are in place.

Moreover, purchasers can be provided with their own logins on websites where they can manage their profile information, monitor the progress of construction, look up their payment information, and obtain indicative information as to when their next payments are due.

A crucial administrative activity of commission payouts can get rather complex when commission payouts are subject to sales slabs, base commissions, internal sales teams, external sales agencies, and referral agents as well. Once the structures of commissions are defined, these complexities are automatically computed by the ERP systems and payouts are executed by the system itself.

The leasing perspective

More so than any other aspect of the real estate industry, a landlord's revenue from his real estate holdings is largely due to the attribute of time. Time decides the value of his holdings, and time decides the incomes from those holdings. This, in fact, becomes more and more complex to manage, as the quantity of marketable units increases. As such, there are usually different terms and conditions for each lessee as to the rate of the contract, tenure, increment, and terms of termination. Not to mention the added complexity involved in managing post-dated-cheques that are involved with lease management.

The leasing management modules intelligently and automatically monitor the contracts of all the lessees for the landlord, and provide alerts and reminders on depositing post-dated-cheques as and when they become due, and

effect contract renewal procedures including the increments. Critically, the system automatically posts revenues on a monthly-basis showing any prepaid amounts as advances and consuming the dues month-on-month to adhere to accounting standards regardless of the varying terms which could be annual, semi-annual, quarterly, or on any other bespoke schedule. It also automatically provides alerts and manages contract termination procedures in case the contracts aren't renewed. At all times, a quick status update shows the landlord of the leased out units and vacant ones, allowing the landlord to take proactive steps in order to get those vacant units occupied as well.

The development perspective

One of the most complex and challenging activities of the real estate business is the actual construction of the project itself. The increasingly fluid nature of projects, their development, changing market scenarios and sentiments, and long tenures of development demand that the systems of governance be amenable to change, and still deliver on time.

The new suite of real estate ERP solutions thrive in such environments. The development management modules have a huge variety of features that provide complete end-to-end governance of development projects, a few of which are explained here. The budget and engineering modules use intelligent 'Bill of Materials' (BOM) and 'Bill of Quantity' (BOQ) to estimate the budgets. The version tracking capabilities of the system allow for variances and changes, maintaining a historical track from version to version. Budgets can also be defined with variance tolerances as a percentage or absolute value, allowing the ERP to automatically seek approvals from predefined authorities on such situations, which can be defined for specific users, projects and hierarchies. As the project

development progresses, the systems are capable of keeping a watch on the stocks of consumables and materials that are required and proactively raise purchase requests ensuring that materials are always available when they are needed to ensure continuity of construction work. Moreover, the systems are smart enough to place orders only when stocks are required and not sooner thereby making the most efficient use of cash-flows as well. The systems also feature robust and integrated approvals and escalations ensuring that timely decisions are requested for and made proactively, and if not, suitable escalations are made to ensure that progress does not stall. Overall, the entire suite of features ensures that delivery of the projects occur on time, and within budget, making sure that delay penalties are avoided.

The facilities management perspective

A core activity of the industry is the facilities management service provided by service providers to real estate societies. These range from standard maintenance and upkeep of the common facilities and amenities of the society, to the security services provided, and other services including civil work, plumbing, electrical, cleaning, and troubleshooting.

The all-inclusive nature of today's ERP systems provide facilities management organizations to define schedules of routine maintenance work, and have attached inventory control for consumables and, also asset management capabilities for managing assets utilized in their line of work. Additionally, the system also provides occupants of societies with the capability to login to a website and request services for their individual units as well.

Go mobile

Most importantly, with the integration of various platforms, these technologies have now been brought

▶ New ERP suites can be vital in proper management of many different aspects of the real estate business, says Rohan Tejura.

"For the first time, IT and ERP technology is right there, matching the requirements of the industry."

Rohan Tejura
Assistant Vice President,
Focus Softnet

forward onto mobile devices providing complete flexibility and portability to all users of the enterprise systems whether they are developers, field engineers, leasing and sales forces, or tenants and occupants. Moreover, the real-time capabilities of the system ensure that up-to-the-minute accurate information is always provided to the users at all times ensuring crisp and informed decision making.

The real estate industry has, no doubt, evolved over the decades in its scale, reach and ambition. Over time, more and more complex projects are being unveiled featuring belief-shattering features, size, scale, and sheer volume. One thing is for sure; the boundaries have already been stretched, and will be pushed even further. However, for the first time, IT and ERP technology is right there, matching the requirements of the industry, and making way for even more revolutionary landscapes and skylines of the future. ⚡

CLOUD INNOVATION

SYED MOHAMMED, EXECUTIVE VP, FOCUS SOFTNET SAUDI & BAHRAIN, DISCUSSES THE BENEFITS OF THE CLOUD COMPUTING MODEL

Cloud computing is, essentially, the sharing of hardware to servers, bandwidth, applications, and other computing resources in a secure and virtually private environment through the internet. The core benefit is the pay-as-you-go model that allows organizations to do away with expensive costs of deployment, and also affords them the flexibility of trying out solutions before committing to a high purchase cost.

Moreover the scalability allows user organizations to roll out new locations, hire additional resources, and immediately scale up their ERP requirements by simply purchasing additional licenses as required.

However, the nature of the service means that client organizations can no longer customize the ERP experience to suit their own needs, but rather need to adopt the standard practices as provided by the cloud solution. The other aspect to remember is that cloud requires a stable internet connection — if the internet goes down, so would their operations.

Quick & costing saving

From a cost perspective, cloud computing makes tremendous sense as a method of consuming technology. Cloud computing has various billing models, and parameters, the most common of which is the pay per user per day/month. This allows an enterprise to obtain one enterprise license and register named users under this enterprise. The user can easily obtain access to the application wherever they are, so long as they have a stable internet connection.

For most SMEs, the per user model will make sense, but for larger enterprises it may be more cost-effective to purchase the application on premise, so organisations need to be aware of the cost of licensing. However, enterprises are also finding the advantages of private cloud deployments, in enabling flexible and fast access to computing resources.

Moreover, the biggest advantage is that the enterprise is no longer responsible for purchasing and maintaining hardware or expensive server software licenses.

Data protection, redundancy plan and security

Data protection, redundancy and security are the most notable USPs of cloud technology, and typically this is what is aggressively marketed by most cloud solution providers. The obvious benefit is that with these responsibilities managed by the vendors, it provides client organizations with tremendous peace-of-mind. However, it is important to conduct due diligence prior to the selection and appointing of a vendor.

Most cloud solutions are designed to provide fail-over systems and redundancies to give seamless operations, and as such, the probability of

Cloud computing can be a fast, flexible and cost effective way to access IT resources, says Syed Mohammed.

client system outages is restricted to negligible odds.

However, the critical aspects to watch out for are the security and sanctity of your organizational data. Most geographies around the world have strict laws that ensure that the cloud vendors provide adequate security to ensure that your data is protected from theft, and also from error.

Clearly systems and solutions are definitely in place to protect organizations from these risks, but again the responsibility of verifying that they are in use remains with the consumer.

Future of Cloud

It is clear that cloud computing is here to stay. Factors including process standardization, dependable internet connectivity, data storage availability, and lower costs of enterprise solutions, have all increased the feasibility of cloud. The cost-to-benefit ratio and the shift from capital expenditure to operational costs is making a compelling case for cloud technology, and Focus will definitely add to its already prevalent cloud offerings in the years to come.