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ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING WITH INFOR

Effective Public Sector Solutions

In the public sector, change is sometimes hard — but when it comes to modernizing your old legacy systems, change can also be very good.

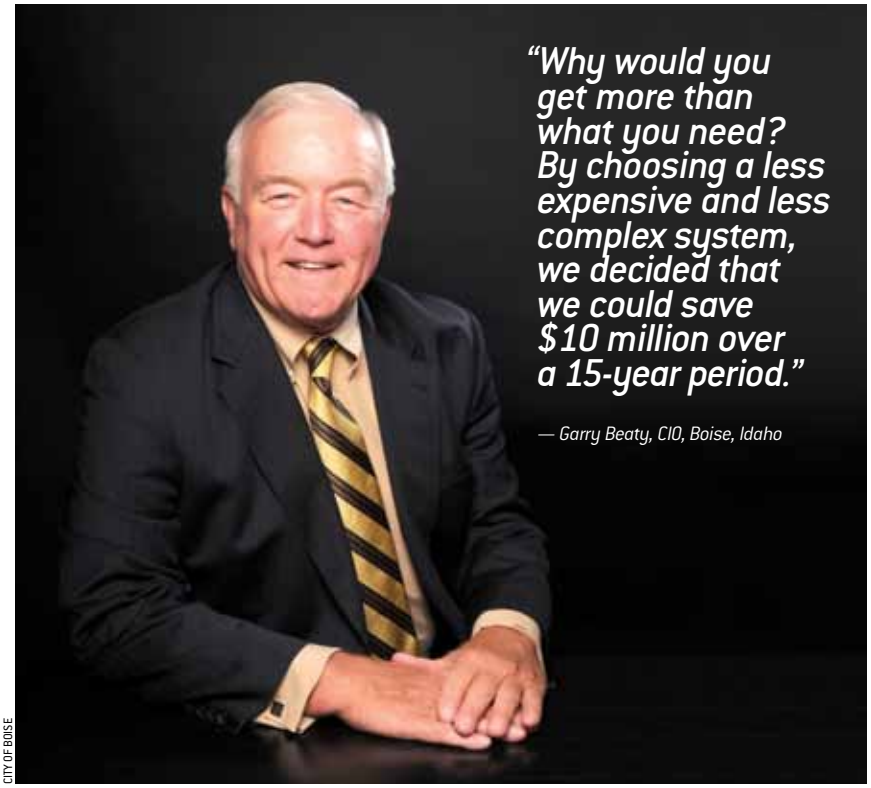
Government entities continue to rely on legacy IT solutions and business processes. These outdated tools and methods — some of which were "born" before the individuals who are working on them — are insufficient to deal with the modern era's financial and informational challenges. For one, they consume an inordinate amount of physical and electronic resources. Secondly, they confine important data to individual silos that are hard for workers outside the immediate department or group to access, making communicating difficult and hampering workplace productivity. While more and more data is collected daily, the lack of an integrated administrative platform makes leveraging all that information a difficult proposition.

In this environment, one way for agencies to deliver better services at a lower cost is to implement an integrated enterprise resource planning

(ERP) system. An up-to-date ERP system can dramatically improve government operations by removing communication barriers, simplifying the reporting and transmitting of data, and reducing costs by putting several important administrative areas onto a single, easy-to-maintain platform. Infor helps make this a reality.

A partner of over 1,200 state and local government agencies and 70,000 customers, Infor's knowledge and wealth of experience with the public sector makes implementing a cutting-edge ERP system a more attractive option than ever. Infor Public Sector's expanding portfolio, including solutions from acquisitions like Lawson, provides the expertise and help government entities need to embrace ERP and reap the benefits of greater efficiency and lower costs.

Governments nationwide — from Long Beach, Calif., to Louisville, Ky., to Boise, Idaho, and everywhere between and beyond — leverage Infor technology to improve their processes, preserve revenue and deliver better services to citizens. The solutions can go well beyond ERP — Infor's public sector tools encompass areas as wide-ranging as asset management, regulatory and compliance management, community development, public safety and more. And Infor middleware connects Infor solutions with outside third-party applications, integrating them seamlessly and providing an even simpler and smoother user experience.



CITY OF BOISE

Public Sector Challenges:

- **Lower tax revenues** and ongoing fiscal difficulties leading to shrinking budgets across several critical areas
- **Outdated legacy IT solutions** that waste time and resources while impeding communication, siloing information and hampering productivity
- **Frustrated constituencies** demanding better service provisioning

Infor ERP Solutions:

- **Serving over 70,000 customers** and 1,200 state and local government agencies
- **Providing improved performance** through consolidation and integration of critical information channels and processes
- **Saving agencies revenue** through greater efficiency

Consolidating enterprise applications with Infor offers agencies a plethora of benefits, including (but not limited to) improved operational efficiencies, greater transparency, better decision-making support and fewer manual processes. The following case study about Boise, Idaho, shows just how Infor solutions save public sector clients time and money by providing a more efficient, integrated user experience with its innovative ERP services.

CITY HALL PLAZA IN BOISE, IDAHO

CITY OF BOISE

Better Fit

Boise, Idaho, makes big strides by switching to an ideal ERP system

A friendly and unassuming city located in the western portion of Idaho, the city of Boise doesn't neatly fit the term "large organization." With a population numbering just over 200,000 and a full-time workforce of around 1,600, Boise — like most municipalities — lacks the mammoth organizational structure of a metropolis like New York City, Chicago or Los Angeles.

As a result, Boise's administrative and organizational structure is significantly different than those of larger cities. Unfortunately, the city's old enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution was designed to fit the needs of a much bigger organization. It was a square peg jammed awkwardly into a round hole, and the results were predictably disappointing. The system's complexity and difficult functionality, designed with the interests of a Tier 1-sized enterprise, continually frustrated Boise's workforce.

"If you were a casual user, it was a complex system to use," says Garry Beaty, Boise's chief information officer. "We were looking for something that was simpler."

The system had another drawback — along with its size and complexity came a hefty price tag, as all those bells and whistles made it expensive to maintain. For a city of Boise's size, the system's financial requirements were especially onerous. "I'm not sure a city of 200,000 needed a solution that expensive or complex," says Beaty.

Lastly, the system simply hadn't been implemented very well in the first place. Different components had been launched separately and by various teams of IT personnel; as a result, its features were not well integrated and functionality suffered even further. "We didn't implement it very well, so we found ourselves in a spot where we didn't really have an enterprise solution. We had a human resources solution and an accounting solution," says Beaty. "And the two systems were implemented at different times and by different teams, so some of the very basic stuff you would expect to get out of it didn't exist."

Beaty and other Boise officials decided that the city's ERP architecture needed a complete overhaul. After admitting the old system just wasn't fitting its needs, Boise started again from scratch. The city sketched out a comprehensive IT plan, a major component of which was to find and install a whole new ERP solution, one that provided all the functionality the city needed without breaking the bank. "Why would you get more than what you need?" says Beaty of the city's new mindset. "By choosing a less expensive and less complex system, we decided that we could save $10 million over a 15-year period."

After sending out RFPs, in November 2010 Boise selected Infor Lawson, an ERP solution from Infor. The solution included three suites to be integrated into a single final system: human resources management, enterprise financial management and supply chain management. The city subsequently contracted with Ciber, Inc. to perform the implementation of the Infor Lawson solution. The implementation project was dubbed "Vision 2020," and began in early 2011.

During the proposal stage, Infor impressed the city with the functionality and scale of its product, which were well suited for Boise's needs. The advantages allowed Infor to beat out several competitors for the project. "We like the product we saw from Infor — and we looked at several," says Beaty.

Infor also passed the all-important "people" test. "We felt that it was a people-oriented company," says Beaty. "It's turned out to be a good relationship."

Now using the Infor solution, Boise is doing things more efficiently — and more cost-effectively — than before. The new system has facilitated smoother operations and limited the complexity and confusion that plagued the old setup.

"We went back and looked at our processes and asked, 'Is this really the best way to be doing business?' We had several receivable

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systems, a fairly complex set of rules around purchasing, so we tried to address some of the process issues," says Beaty. "It's a little early to tell, but I personally believe the new system is easier to use, and I've got a lot of people using it who also think it is."

Making employees' jobs easier has been a major benefit of switching to Infor. Financial reporting and tracking for all users is now easier than ever. "We're very decentralized in the city of Boise," says Beaty. "There's a broad range of people that have to apply some fairly complex purchasing rules around how things get paid. We're trying to simplify those and have a broader cross-section of associates who are able to use these tools."

Additionally, switching to a properly integrated ERP solution also allows Boise to improve its internal communication and decision-making ability. While the old system's structure led to siloed information and difficulty relaying information across departments and technical areas, the Infor Lawson suite makes data sharing and collaboration simple.

"In the old system, it was very difficult to find very simple stuff, like finding out how many full-time equivalent people we had employed. That sounds ridiculous, but when you have two systems [referring to the old solution's HR/accounting divide], those simple things are hard to reconcile. That should be very different going forward," says Beaty.

"The same is true for financial numbers. We're trying to eliminate the number of 'shadow systems' that are out there so that we have one system of record. We think that's possible with this implementation," he adds.

Beaty believes the new system's integrated setup and ease of use is already allowing Boise to free up resources to deliver better services to its 200,000-plus citizens, and will continue to do so going forward. "We have some of the baseline system done internally, so now we get to focus outwardly," says Beaty. "We're paying a lot more attention to our websites, to how people want to pay utility bills and those kinds of things. A better 'customer experience' — that's where we're going now."

With its new ERP system providing a solid "baseline" for future action, Boise is preparing to keep moving forward. "I think we need to look at a continual investment in this project," says Beaty. "This isn't a one-time thing. We're going to continue to invest in the product and try to grow it and spread it across the enterprise. We're trying to take a broad view."

Conclusion:

The right solution for governments at all levels is within reach

Many cities and organizations are in a position similar to Boise. Their needs are impressive, but not overly expansive. A bare-bones system won't work for them, but neither will a Tier 1-optimized system with myriad features requiring a high level of acquired operational expertise. A middle ground must be found that offers the right combination of straightforward day-to-day functionality for casual users and sophisticated performance tools ready for use when needed.

The success Boise had with implementing such an ERP system is well within reach for other municipalities. With the right amount of planning and a productive relationship with a proven technology vendor/adviser, it is well worth making the move to a cost-effective system that provides all the functionality necessary without sacrificing performance and ease of use.

Infor Public Sector delivers a comprehensive suite of integrated, government-specific solutions that drive civic planning and permitting, citizen relationships, asset and work management, utility billing, and regulatory compliance monitoring. Infor solutions increase operational efficiency, citizen satisfaction, government accountability, and process transparency and are transforming how governments provide services to citizens.

For more information, visit http://www.infor.com/industries/publicsector/.

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