

Foxwoods Resort Casino



About the company.

In 1986, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation of Connecticut opened a bingo hall called Foxwoods. By 2005, it had grown into an entertainment complex covering 4.7 million square feet and attracting more than 40,000 guests daily. Today, Foxwoods Resort Casino is the world's largest casino complex comprising:

- Six casinos
- Fifty restaurants and retail stores
- Three hotels
- A 1,400-seat theater
- Convention and meeting facilities

Based in Ledyard, Connecticut, Foxwoods employs 12,000 people in a resort setting with gaming space of 340,000 square feet. For more information about Foxwoods Resort Casino, visit www.foxwoods.com.

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CATHY KELLERS, ASSISTANT CONTROLLER FOR BUDGETING AND REPORTING, FOXWOODS RESORT CASINO

Setting the strategy.

Foxwoods had been using a cumbersome spreadsheet-based budgeting system and an outdated performance management (PM) system that did not keep pace with its spectacular growth. The manual system made data unreliable, and outdated reporting tools hindered decision-makers. The finance team spent weeks every year manually consolidating budget data from hundreds of worksheets and uploading the data into an accounting application.

“We have more than 70 departments in all,” says Cathy Kellers, assistant controller for budgeting and reporting at Foxwoods. “Each department budgets its costs and revenues at every conceivable level of detail.” Kellers and her team compiled revenue data in worksheets from the resort’s thousands of gaming tables and slot machines, plus its restaurants, bars, and retail outlets. Consolidating and uploading all that data took at least 16 hours, and Kellers had to repeat that process at least six times during the annual budgeting cycle.

The resort’s internal reporting tools were equally frustrating. Managers who wanted to justify their budgets or compare their actual performance against budget projections had to send a request to the finance department. Kellers’s team exported the latest data from the system into a worksheet and sent it to the manager. Managers could create only basic trend-line reports, and they didn’t have enough information to make timely business decisions. In addition, data input errors were common. Kellers adds, “After staying up late to get everything ready for a meeting with senior management the next day, I’d walk into the meeting with inaccurate reports.”

Getting business specific.

Foxwoods began looking for a software solution that would empower users to conduct detailed planning, budgeting, and forecasting by line item, department, and employee. “The sheer effort involved in preparing budgets every year is what motivated us to look for a better solution,” Kellers says.

Foxwoods had an aggressive implementation deadline to meet. “Budgeting normally begins here in April, and we didn’t select the vendor until March,” she says. “Rapid implementation was important because Foxwoods has a September 30 year-end, and we must provide the budget to the owners by October 1. That budget sets spending and revenue guidelines for everyone, so it must be timely and comprehensive.”

The finance team narrowed the field of software vendors to three and invited them to present their solutions. After reviewing product features and licensing details, Foxwoods selected Infor™ PM. Foxwoods was impressed that Infor PM included all the performance management tools they needed in one package. The application also worked well with the data consolidation, analysis, and reporting tools that Foxwoods already used. In addition, Foxwoods appreciated the positive attitude of Infor and its technology partner, Strafford Technology.

“Infor and Strafford Technology were the only vendors that had no issues with our deadline,” she says. Strafford brought in staffers to deploy the new solution, including customizing the software. Infor PM’s Excel Services feature made data easy to import and export to and from Excel worksheets.

facts at a glance

- > companyFoxwoods Resort Casino
- > solution..... Infor PM
- > industry.....Media & Entertainment
- > employees.....12,000
- > country.....USA

Less than two months after implementation began, Foxwoods was using the new system. “We didn’t have time to do a lot of testing, so we jumped right into production,” Kellers says. “But there really weren’t any problems.” Implementation, including training and support, came in under the projected budget. The solution’s intuitive web-based reporting dashboard minimized training.

Seeing results.

Infor PM simplifies Foxwoods’ financial tasks by streamlining the budgeting and forecasting processes, reducing data errors, and providing on-demand reports. Now managers have the information they need to make better decisions. “We have a system that our people accepted right away and really enjoy using,” Kellers says. “The accuracy of our reports also makes everyone happier.”

With PM, Kellers can now consolidate and upload departmental data in hours instead of weeks, consolidating the annual budget numbers in about 10% of the time that it once took. “We reduced the time it takes to consolidate our budget data from 96 hours to 9 hours,” she says. Also, because the new solution streamlined the functions of the old payroll system, it displays payroll data instantly. The finance team no longer has to spend two hours waiting for 23 linked worksheets to open on a computer every time it does payroll.

Kellers likes her team’s independence in managing data security without having to wait for Foxwoods IT. What’s more, if an employee needs answers about how to use a feature of Infor PM, the user can query the Infor AnswerLink site and receive an answer within an hour.

Because PM is fully automated, it practically eliminated errors formerly caused by manually entering and moving data from one file or system to another. Kellers asserts, “If you’re doing a financial task manually with software, there’s probably a better way to do it,” she says. She is impressed by new solution features such as “worksheet details,” which automatically update Excel data.

PM also makes analyzing budgets easier than before by helping managers and finance people drill down to see how lower level data impacts top-line numbers. Kellers adds, “Infor PM offers worksheet attachments that allow us to see all the assumptions that justify the budget. The

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attachments break the budget down into greater detail—by month or by vendor or as needed. If some new cost hadn’t been factored into the budget, the department can say to senior management, ‘See, we’ve got this new thing we have to deal with now.’”

With Infor PM, department managers no longer rely on the finance team to create key reports. “Department heads are in a much better position to know when something might be impacting performance and therefore should be investigated further,” Kellers says. “On-demand reporting gives our department managers the information they need to make the right decisions. Now they can see when to make course corrections—before small problems turn into big ones.”

In summary, Infor PM helps Foxwoods to:

- Consolidate data in hours, not weeks
- Reduce data-input errors
- Provide more detailed reporting
- Facilitate better decision-making

Doing business better.

After achieving streamlined financial processes and timely business decisions with Infor’s integrated solution, Foxwoods is confident that Infor will help it meet its evolving needs. Because of Infor PM’s error-reducing features that run transparently in the background, Kellers no longer worries as much about the accuracy of her data. “When I go into a meeting now, I know that what I have is accurate. Infor has made a tremendous difference for us, and we’ll look to them for our future needs.”

About Infor.

Infor acquires and develops functionally rich software backed by thousands of domain experts and then makes it better through continuous innovation, faster implementation options, global enablement, and flexible buying options. In a few short years, Infor has become one of the largest providers of business software in the world. For additional information, visit www.infor.com.

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