



CASE STUDY

Studio 100 improves employee engagement with ERP upgrade

Avanade moves the media giant into the cloud
with a new Microsoft Dynamics 365 platform

Business situation

Sunsetting an aging system presents opportunities for improvement

Studio 100 is built on creativity and grows through the power of imagination. Based in Belgium — with operations around the world — the company produces popular television series and theater productions for children, as well as TV, musicals and stage shows aimed at teenagers and adults. Always looking to entertain its audiences, Studio 100 also owns several amusement parks across Europe, and plans to continue expanding into new markets.

“We’re always looking to expand,” said Lieven De Geeter, Director Procurement, ICT & Facilities, Studio 100. “We are quite ambitious to bring our content all over the world.”

Behind the scenes, however, Studio 100’s ERP needed more than a simple costume change to help facilitate this growth. The Microsoft Dynamics AX 4.0 platform, implemented by Avanade in 2008, had reached its end of life and could no longer be updated. Its supporting tools and applications had been built over the years for administrative activities including collecting and managing royalties for licensed merchandise, invoicing, time sheets and expenses. These tools were also outdated and in need of attention.

The system’s age wasn’t the only issue. The AX 4.0 platform was complex and difficult to use, which caused frustration among Studio 100’s non-technical employees. Additionally, the on-premises infrastructure couldn’t be accessed by creative teams on location in an easy way. In some cases, production and labor costs couldn’t be submitted until long after a project had wrapped, making accurate budgeting difficult and slowing expense approvals and payouts. Studio 100 needed a tool that could perform these functions in real-time.

As an industry leader, the company knew that it was time for a major overhaul of its core system, and wanted a single solution that could meet its needs while prioritizing user-friendliness and accessibility. It needed insight, intelligence and innovation to modernize its operations and continue its global expansion, and knew that moving its ERP into a more flexible cloud environment was the way to go.

After evaluating several solutions, Studio 100 decided that Dynamics 365 was the best platform available. When it came time to picking a delivery partner, the choice was clear — stick with the team that you trust. The company was confident that Avanade could do the job right, thanks to our 10-year relationship and extensive experience leading digital transformation projects for clients across multiple industries

The scene was set.

Solution

A new platform takes center stage

Work on the Dynamics 365 implementation began with a comprehensive envisioning phase — using Avanade’s business advisory expertise — during which our team worked with Studio 100 to get a detailed understanding of what its people do and how they do it. This ensured that all requirements could be incorporated into the solution with an intuitive user interface design.

The company’s new cloud platform will primarily be used by the finance, procurement, supply chain and sales teams, but will also make life easier for creative users in the field by allowing them to submit purchase requisitions and expenses on the fly. The solution incorporates several new tools from independent software vendors (ISVs) to replace the previous administrative applications, including:

- **United ERP:** Built specifically for the entertainment industry, this tool handles all royalty management, including invoicing and fee collection.
- **AXTension:** This add-on manages invoice processing. Invoices and expenses are added to workflows and can be registered, approved and paid out quickly.
- **Lasernet:** All documents can be managed, modified, shared and maintained through this tool.

The cloud platform is easily scalable for future growth. As Studio 100 acquires more companies, these companies can be quickly integrated into the same central system for increased visibility and efficient operations.

During the implementation, our team used an agile delivery method, which was a first for the client, and something they quickly came to appreciate. “In the end, agile brings a lot of benefits,” explained De Geeter. “It allows you to go faster by concentrating on those things that are important at each step of the process.”

The agile approach — along with a strong, collaborative working relationship between Avanade and the client — also helped to immediately identify and mitigate any challenges as they arose during the project. “Our relationship over the past 10 years has brought a lot of open communication,” De Geeter noted. “With this project we had a couple of issues, and could always talk to Avanade and quickly find a solution together.”

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Results

A round of applause for a successful partnership

Upon launch, Studio 100's Dynamics 365 platform will be used by nearly two-thirds of its 200-plus employees, and will provide the capabilities and user-friendliness the company has been looking for. While Studio 100 will always maintain a hybrid-cloud environment — it prefers to keep much of its content stored locally — the company believes this project will be a stepping stone to doing more business in the cloud. This will help it boost operational agility, increase insight and become a more intelligent enterprise.

The project also demonstrates the importance of having a trusted adviser for large-scale digital transformation projects. Peter Kips, Functional Analyst, Studio 100, summed it up: "We look for parties that think like us, and are proactively thinking up solutions tailor-made for us. They have to understand our mindset, make suggestions and deliver products that answer our needs," he said. "Avanade has succeeded in performing this way over the past years, and we were very pleased with that."

With Avanade's help, Studio 100 has proved itself to be an innovative company, well equipped to lead the way in the era of intelligence. Backed by the right technology, it will continue to bring joy to millions of people around the world through the stories and experiences it brings to life.

About Studio 100

Studio 100 was founded in 1996 by Gert Verhulst and Hans Bourlon. The company has become a unique international company in family entertainment, with a very strong reputation. Studio 100 guarantees a wide range of quality productions in the field of family and child entertainment: television, movies, books, magazines, CD's, merchandising, own broadcasting channels, digital platforms, shows and theater productions — everything is being developed in-house. The theme park division of Studio 100 runs six popular theme parks: four in Belgium (Plopsaland and Plopsaqua at De Panne, Plopsa Indoor Hasselt and Plopsa Co), one in the Netherlands (Plopsa Indoor Coevorden) and one in Germany (Holiday Park). The expansion of multiple complementary activities around the various Studio 100 characters is one of the company's strengths.



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 30,000 professionals in 24 countries. Visit us at www.avanade.com

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