

Multi-Branch Accounting in an Offline Environment – A Case Study

Client: Fair Exports

The Company

Fairs Exports ('the Company') is an ISO 9001: 2000, HACCP certified company and one of India's leading exporters of meat products. Apart from meat, the Company exports spices, fresh fruits, vegetables, lentils, and garments to clients worldwide. Business has been growing at a very fast rate and the Company expects to maintain its leadership position for a long time.

The Company is headquartered in New Delhi with branches at Delhi.

Challenges

The Company has been using Wings Accounting, the desktop software from Wings, to manage its accounts and inventory at various branches.

The biggest challenge it faced was arising out of maintain accounts in remote branches on individual desktop software products which were not part of an enterprise system. The challenges were:

- a. Since it had not deployed a multi-branch consolidation software, consolidating data from remote branches into one system was extremely difficult and expensive in terms of time and efforts.
- b. This resulted in absence of real time reports about the entire company to top management. This is one of the biggest difficulties in the existing systems making it impossible for management to take decisions based on reliable company-wide information.
- c. Disjointed systems resulted in absolutely no control over branches, usage of the system by them and their transactions. It was theoretically possible for users to alter data already entered without control of the head office. This led to possible leakages.
- d. Consolidating data manually meant movement of entire database files every time. This process was prone to errors.
- e. While the existing systems gave good reports, there was need for more sophistication in the kind of reports required.

The Company, therefore, decided to deploy an enterprise accounting system which would address the above challenges.

The Company chose Wings e-Biz, the new suite from Wings, as the solution of choice.

Offline

The Company's branches, being at distant places, it was not feasible or affordable to setup an online system on dedicated lines. The Company desired to deploy a system which would allow branches to work on local systems with periodic synchronisation, while addressing the challenges listed above.

Software As Deployed

The solution which the company finally deployed consisted of:

- Wings Central, Offline Edition, at the head office, on a Server.
- Wings Accounting at the head office and branches (as Satellites) on local computers.

Wings Central, Offline, was deployed on a Server at the head office. Wings Accounting was deployed at the head office and all branches on local computers.

The head office and branches have broadband connections.

Wings Central was used to setup all Satellite systems at branches where Wings Accounting is deployed. This has setup a live link between all systems and enabled the branch systems to 'talk to' the head office system.

The branches pass accounting and inventory transactions on their local systems where data is stored on an MS SQL Express database. Every evening the branches use their broadband connections and connect to the head office server.

Once connected, the branch systems automatically transfer (in the background) 'incremental files' to the head office server.

The head office server also transfers to the branch systems any changes in product masters, prices and inter-branch transactions. It also transfers changes in User Rights, whenever they are made.

The entire process of synchronisation takes a few minutes.

Once the synchronisation is done, the systems at the branches and head office are upto date.

Reports & Analysis

The Company's management is able to generate all accounting and inventory reports from Wings Central for any branch, any combination of branches and for the entire company automatically, without any manual work.

These reports give management an understanding of various facets of the business which was not possible before the deployment of the software.

Internal Control

Wings Central allows the Administrator to specify detailed rights to individual users. The Company has been able to setup superior internal controls by giving rights to individual users to enter transactions and deny rights to edit transactions which are not authorised.

This and other such strategies have resulted in more and better system-driven controls across the Company. These have also plugged possible leakage points.

Conclusion

The Company has derived enormous value out of the enterprise accounting system deployed. In particular, it has found the offline setup very beneficial and practical.