

Facts in Brief

Company Profile:

Hilton Haulage Transport Limited is a locally owned company employing more than 160 staff and providing transport and storage solutions to the Canterbury and South Canterbury area. Headquartered in Timaru, the company operates a fleet of 80 trucks and in excess of 100 trailers and holds a significant market share for freight, containers and storage in the South Canterbury area. It services more than 2,000 customers, many of which specialise in the food, agriculture and fishing industries, and handles the delivery of a vast range of freight, from cartons and pallet loads to full truck loads. It supports customers outside the South Island through a number of strategic alliances with other transport companies.

The Challenge:

For the last four years, Hilton Haulage Transport Limited has experienced a significant annual growth rate and needed to automate its job dispatch process to cope with increasing customer demand more efficiently. The company's legacy accounting system could also not cope with the increased volume of transactions.

The Solution:

In May 2002, Hilton Haulage adopted Microsoft® Business Solutions–Solomon® Financials, in conjunction with a Transport Dispatch System (TDS) developed by Solomon Software New Zealand Limited, to streamline the business and further improve the level of service to their customers.

Functional Areas:

Microsoft Business Solutions–Solomon: Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, General Ledger, Fixed Assets, Project Controller

Benefits:

The combined TDS and Solomon solution, which integrates seamlessly, has automated the company's job dispatch process - saving time and money - while creating efficiencies within financial management and reporting.

Platform:

Microsoft® SQL Server 2000

Other Microsoft Technologies

Microsoft Windows 2000 – Terminal Server

Workstations:

Six Concurrent Users (Solomon)
Thirty Concurrent Users (TDS)

Microsoft Business Solutions Partner:

Solomon Software New Zealand Limited

Solomon and TDS Drive the Business Forward at Hilton Haulage

Hilton Haulage Transport Limited is a locally owned company providing transport and storage solutions to more than 2,000 customers, including large national and multi-national food processors within the Canterbury and South Canterbury region. Holding a significant market share for freight, containers and storage within the local area, the company operates a 7-day, 24-hour service to meet customer demands and dispatches on average 12,000 jobs each month. In May 2002, Hilton Haulage adopted Microsoft® Business Solutions–Solomon® Financials, in conjunction with a Transport Dispatch System (TDS) developed by Solomon Software New Zealand Limited, to streamline the business and further improve the level of service to their customers. The combined TDS and Solomon solution, which integrates seamlessly, has automated the company's job dispatch process – saving time and money - while creating efficiencies within financial management and reporting.

Rapid Company Growth Demands New Technology

Mark Woodward, Administration Manager, Hilton Haulage Transport Limited, explains that for the last four years, Hilton Haulage has experienced a significant annual growth rate and needed to automate its job dispatch process to efficiently cope with increasing customer demand.



“Five years ago the company was significantly smaller than its current size,” says Woodward. “There was a surge of farming, agricultural and industrial activity in the local area and our market share grew in line with our customers.

“At the time, we had two to three staff responsible for manual job dispatch. Although this was an efficient process while we were a small company, it became more problematic once the volume of work increased.”

Woodward says that the company’s legacy accounting system was also not in a position to cope with the increased volume of business transactions.

“We were using a basic accounting package and the reporting no longer delivered the depth we required. We needed to separate the company into several trading divisions and need a multi-user system that can handle the finances for a number of departments.”



Hilton Haulage operates a fleet of 80 trucks and in excess of 100 trailers.

An Integrated TDS and Solomon Solution is the Means to Drive the Business

Hilton Haulage spent more than three years looking for a technology solution that could seamlessly manage the company’s job dispatch requirements through to its invoicing and profit and loss.

“We researched at least eight software packages and refined the search down to three local programmes,” says Woodward.

“We finally made the decision to work with Solomon Software and adopted their Transport Dispatch System (TDS) together with the Microsoft Business Solutions–Solomon accounting solution they are supporting.

“The team at Solomon had a strong background in the transport industry as well as broad accounting and business experience. This gave us the confidence that they could support us for the long term.”

He adds: “Both the TDS and Solomon products are flexible and straightforward to customise. The systems interface easily to share data and deliver a seamless experience to the organisation.”

Chris Main, General Manager, Solomon Software New Zealand Limited, says that the company’s TDS solution, built using Microsoft Visual Basic, was developed specifically for the transport industry.



“The system delivers job dispatch, tracking and reporting and has been designed to interface with Microsoft Business Solutions–Solomon, delivering a total business solution to Hilton Haulage,” says Main. “The flexibility of the products’ underlying architecture will also allow the company to easily add new functionality when required - the two systems are complementary.”

Streamlining Job Dispatch Processes While Increasing Financial Efficiency

The combined solution went live in May 2002 and caters for approximately 12,000 jobs dispatched each month.

Hilton Haulage staff are using TDS to generate and track all jobs in real time and deliver sales analysis and reporting. Once a job is complete, the information is seamlessly exported into Solomon, which automatically generates the invoice and manages the company’s financials including Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and General Ledger.

“The TDS system allows us to efficiently track all our jobs in real time,” says Mark Woodward of Hilton Haulage. “We can see what is happening with our freight and vehicles and make timely decisions that ultimately benefit our customers.”

Woodward adds that the seamless integration of the TDS system with Solomon has been instrumental to streamlining the business.



Mark Woodward, Administration Manager for Hilton Haulage Transport Limited

Solomon is delivering enhanced functionality to the Accounts Department and more in-depth reporting, providing valuable insight into the company’s growth.

“Once a job is completed, it automatically becomes a financial record within Solomon. It is a flexible accounting solution and the information the system delivers is very detailed,” explains Woodward.

“We can easily customise the month-end reports to accommodate the needs of different staff members. “Solomon also has the capability to run multi-company reports, which will be an added benefit in the future.”

Solomon Software is also currently installing the Project Controller module within Solomon, which will allow Hilton Haulage to treat each of the company’s vehicles as an ongoing project and more accurately assess costs. Staff will be able to see how much each vehicle is costing on a month-to-date, year-to-date and lifetime-to-date basis and assess profits for nominated time periods.

Looking to the future, Woodward says the company will implement the Solomon Warehouse Management, Inventory and Purchasing modules and will also take advantage of both solutions to take parts of the business online.

“Within the next one to two years, we plan to give customers the option of requesting and tracking jobs online and viewing account queries via the Web. Both Solomon and TDS can interface with the Web and we are confident that the systems will deliver the e-commerce functionality we need to remain competitive in the industry.”



Mansur Zwart, Manager, Microsoft Business Solutions New Zealand, explains that the experience of Hilton Haulage is just one example of the ease of integration between Microsoft Business Solutions applications and third party software.

“Solomon provides organisations like Hilton Haulage strong financial functionality and is flexible enough to interface with other systems, enabling users to easily retrieve the business information they need,” concludes Zwart.

About Microsoft Business Solutions

Microsoft Business Solutions, a division of Microsoft, offers a wide range of integrated, end-to-end business applications and services designed to help small, mid-market and corporate businesses become more connected with customers, employees, partners and suppliers.

Microsoft Business Solutions' applications optimise strategic business processes across financial management, analytics, human resources management, project management, customer relationship management, field service management, supply chain management, e-commerce, manufacturing and retail management. The applications are designed to provide insight to help customers achieve business success.

Globally, Microsoft Business Solutions has 3,800 team members, 6,000 Partners and more than 260,000 customers using their range of products in 132 countries. www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions

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