

COMPANY	Proten Limited
LOCATION	Australia
INDUSTRY	Wholesale and Distribution
PRODUCT	EXO Business
PARTNER	Indivia

Developer and chicken farming business gets financial clarity without having to pay for all the bells and whistles.

OVERVIEW

Originally founded in New Zealand in 2001, Proten is a broiler chicken farming business and green field developer. Now solely based in Australia, the company has operations in three regions and multiple farms within those regions. To ensure the success of major development projects, Proten depend on financial clarity and precise reporting. But until recently, it was taking a long time to achieve either.

REPORTS TAKING TOO LONG

Proten were using Premier, which worked just fine as an accounting system, according to former CFO Gael Hargreaves. But to secure funding and stay compliant, Proten's banks and quality surveyors require the business to submit timely reports. And Premier wasn't the right tool for that.

"To produce the sort of breakdowns we needed," says Ms Hargreaves, "we had to come up with workarounds – and that took a lot of time."

In the end, Proten realised they were only going to get the visibility they needed with a system more suited to their business model. So they started looking for a replacement.

WHY PAY FOR FUNCTIONALITY YOU NEVER USE?

The choice of systems was overwhelming, according to Ms Hargreaves.

The problem, she explains, is that there's plenty of good software out there, but a lot of it is bloated with unnecessary features and functionality.

"We were at a stage where we wanted the next generation of financial tools, but didn't need all the bells and whistles of a full-blown ERP system like Great Plains. That's when we started looking at MYOB EXO."

"With EXO," says Ms Hargreaves, "we realised we wouldn't be over-buying for functionality we weren't going to use. It seemed like it would be a natural migration from Premier too."

EXO's SQL platform was another deciding factor, according to Proten's CFO.

"There are a number of desktop or web-enabled applications that we're thinking of using in the future. It's reassuring to know that when we're ready, EXO will be compatible."

A HELPING HAND WHEN IT'S NEEDED

To help implement EXO, Proten turned to MYOB implementation partner Indivia, who Ms Hargreaves describes as “very responsive” – especially during the planning and migration phases.

“Thanks to Ashwin (Proten’s Indivia consultant) and his clear explanations, she says, we were able to visualise how the system might work for us.”

Indivia remained on-site throughout the launch, to make sure everything ran smoothly. Since then, they’ve taken a step back.

According to Ms Hargreaves, “We just wanted time to get used to the system by ourselves. We’re over that now, and ready for the next wave of activity.”

BETTER CONTROL OVER PAYG AND SUPER

As well as replacing their book keeping system, Proten were keen to get better functionality around payroll. For that reason they brought EXO Payroll on board, alongside EXO for Business.

“We needed a better audit trail around the various allowances and awards that our staff get paid,” remarks Ms Hargreaves, “and Premier couldn’t really give us that. So we jumped at the opportunity to implement a custom-designed payroll system like EXO Payroll.

“For us, it’s all about minimising human error, and EXO’s allowed us to do that.

“We have more control at a group level for setting up different pays,” adds the CFO, “as well as more control over when certain entitlements are paid or not. The controls are very extensive and once they’re set up you don’t have to worry about them.”

Reporting is much better as well.

“Things like PAYG and super are just easier and faster. It’s fair to say we’re really enjoying the system.”

THE ADVANTAGES OF EXO

When asked how the reporting has improved since having EXO on board, Proten admit it took a little while to settle on which reports to use.

“We’ve changed some reports and others are still in the pipeline, but it’s an area that through development we can get exactly what we want.”

As for visibility of day-to-day processes, there’s been a massive improvement, according to Ms Hargreaves.

“Being able to drill down and quickly get an answer is like night and day compared with Premier. I’m not looking at hard copies as much any more, and I can get all the information I need at the click of a few buttons.”

Another big advantage with EXO, according to the CFO, is being able to rely on real-time data.

“We have a number of cost areas we keep an eye on,” explains Ms Hargreaves, “and electricity is big one for us. With EXO, all we need to do is enter the meter readings and the data is available to analyse straight away. We don’t need any second or third party processing.”

WHY WAIT?

As a parting question, we asked Proten whether they had any advice for other businesses contemplating a move to EXO.

Ms Hargreaves told us: “There’s a mindset that you have to install a system like this after a month end, or at the end of the financial year.

“Maybe it makes sense to do that so that you’re not half way through a process like payroll, but you could actually switch over to EXO any time you want. You’re using a new set of tools, but the data gets migrated over as if it had always been there to start with.

“It’s a far less daunting task than some people might think.