

CASE STUDY



CLIENT:	Town and Country Style
INDUSTRY:	Import, Wholesale and Distribution
LOCATION:	Australia
PRODUCT SUITE:	EXO Business
MYOB ENTERPRISE PARTNER:	Exoserv

Armadale furniture business finds the perfect partner to build for the future.

Overview

Armadale-based business Town & Country Style import and wholesale unique French provincial, country-style and in-vogue classical furniture, lighting, soft furnishings and accessories.

Since their launch in 2005, they have expanded from a single outlet in Victoria to a successful interstate operation with agent representation in Queensland. They now have two decorator showrooms, warehouse capabilities and regularly introduce complementary pieces to their collections.

Despite success however, this growth has put pressure on internal systems and threatened to impact on Town & Country Style's high regard and standard of customer service.

Life before EXO

For four years, Town & Country Style had been using a combination of Premier and Microsoft Excel, happily for much of that time.



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According to Perri Kallergis, the company's MD, Premier's great when you're starting off small, "particularly if you're service-based.

"But once you get to a higher level of revenue and customers," he says, "or you want to operate a functional inventory system, you need more flexibility and functionality. That's when Premier starts to show its limitations".

Weighing up the options

Town & Country Style spent the best part of a year looking at a range of other solutions including Sybiz, SAP, Sage, Navision and Axapta, but only one stood out. MYOB EXO Business (EXO).

Kallergis lists three clear advantages with EXO. The first, and "most critical" is support.

"The relationship we have with Exoserv [the company that eventually implemented the system] is second to none. They do everything they can to help us."

The second is price.

"EXO is just so much more affordable," he says, "especially compared with something like Microsoft Navision".

Lastly there's the ability to roll Premier into EXO.

"When you package up all three factors," says Kallergis, "and ask yourself which system offers the smoothest transition, the answer is EXO every time".

Setting things in motion

Ironically, it was a consultant working for Sage who first introduced Town & Country Style to EXO. She suggested the company meet up with Andy Ford at Exoserv and things moved on pretty quickly from there.

"Andy and his team came in to get an idea of our business, then returned to give us a presentation based on the components of the program most relevant to our needs," says Kallergis.

"Exoserv really were fantastic. They left no stone unturned in their efforts to tailor the system to our advantage."

Acknowledging the task in hand

Town & Country Style have only been using EXO for a few months and admit it's taken some getting used to.

"It's not that EXO is difficult to use," says Kallergis, "but make no mistake – any kind of implementation like this is a major change.

"The trick is to switch over at the quietest time of year and give your staff a chance to get up to speed without the usual pressures of day-to-day business."

Initial improvements

Familiarisation may have taken a few weeks, but the benefits have been immediate.

"We were drowning in inefficiencies," says Kallergis.

"People were asking simple questions like whether we had something in stock, and we couldn't tell them."

"We now do random stock checks any time of the day and know exactly what's what. And customers have really noticed the difference."

Key to this is EXO's flexibility.

Flexibility means visibility

"Because EXO is SQL-based, there's very little that Exoserv can't do. We simply put in a request for a new form or extra fields and it's done."

This gives Town & Country Style unprecedented levels of visibility on almost any aspect of the business they need.

"I can go into the manager's reports area and get a snapshot of our performance based on KPI, branch, dollar value for sales period, percentage of period we've worked, estimated sales periods – or something else," says Kallergis.

"I can do the same thing with customers too, reviewing them according to various criteria. It's brilliant."

Town & Country Style have also now improved visibility on their revenues and overheads by splitting their branches into different cost centres.

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“This means we can assess the feasibility of each one much more easily, and take steps to ensure we’re as profitable as we can be.”

Looking forward

“We’re not there yet,” says Kallergis.

“It’ll probably take the remainder of the year before we’re using all of EXO’s horsepower. But the improvements we’ve already experienced have made a huge difference.

“Premier had no forecasting or planning capabilities. And it relied on so many manual, on-the-side tasks that it left you swimming in paperwork,” he says.

“Exo has not only allowed us to properly run, operate and manage our business, it’s given us a vehicle to forecast and plan our business going forward.”

The right ingredients

Kallergis is keen to stress that the success of their EXO story is, in no small part, due to the relationship they have with Exoserv.

“You got to have the right people on board with the right structure, sharing the same culture and the same vision – otherwise it’s just like buying used tires.”

“We had to nut things out with Exoserv at the start to make sure they got to know our business. Now, they may as well be part of us. They understand everything we’re trying to achieve.”

“We don’t regret anything about our decision to go with EXO,” says Kallergis.

“It was a big thing to take on and I applaud EXO, Exoserv and my staff for making it happen.”

Client and Enterprise partner details

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