Helm
BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS

ELEPHANT HILL
www.elephanthill.co.nz

COMPANY

Based in Te Awanga in the Hawke's Bay region of New Zealand, Elephant Hill is a state-of-the-art winery merging traditional winemaking values with an innovative and contemporary style.

OVERVIEW

Elephant Hill's expansion in 2008 increased pressure on internal systems and threatened to obscure visibility over sales and stock.

KEY RESULTS

- Works order assembly processing
- Improved inventory management
- Real-time, cost-centre based reporting

PRODUCTS

- MYOB EXO Business

Hawke's Bay winery now has the ability to see where it's heading as a business

BACKGROUND

Originally solely a producer of premium single-estate wine, the business underwent a $50 million transformation in 2008, adding a restaurant and increasing output.

This put Elephant Hill on the map, but the expansion increased pressure on internal systems and threatened to obscure visibility over sales and stock.

LACKING SOPHISTICATION

In the early stages of the redevelopment, Elephant Hill was using MYOB's flagship small business product AccountRight Premier. And it suited them well.

"We loved that Premier was so simple to use," says Finance and Administration Manager Nicki Bower.

"It was easy to manipulate too," she adds, "but it just wasn't quite sophisticated enough for what we were trying to do as a business. It couldn't handle stock management, or provide detailed reporting on our different cost-centres."

Elephant Hill had given little thought to a replacement when they heard about a system being used by another local winery.

"That system, MYOB EXO, seemed to tick all the boxes," says Bower, "so we contacted MYOB. They put us in touch with local EXO specialist Helm and things moved quite quickly from there."

WORKING WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS

Bower says one of the things she liked about

Helm from the outset was that they came from an accounting background. That, and the fact that they had experience working for other wineries.

According to Dean Tiffen, director of the Hastings-based IT company; "I think it gave Elephant Hill confidence that we were already familiar with their industry. It meant they didn't need to look much further."

Despite such familiarity however, Helm

were keen to understand exactly how the winery intended to operate further down the line – especially as it has a number of different revenue streams.

"We spent quite a bit of time going through their selling process," says Tiffen, "to make sure we got it absolutely right".

TAILORING TO THE WINE BUSINESS

There were several industry specific functions that needed to be created.

One was to create a works order bottling process. This allows the winery to bring the finished bottled stock into the inventory with accurate costing. It's something that used to be done using spreadsheets. Elephant Hill can now track consumables (such as bottles, labels, and caps) much more easily.

Helm also designed custom tables for the reporting of stock wine allocations to major customers from each year's vintage. Actual sales to those customers are tracked via custom reports against the original allocations. This allows the sales team to manage stock availability for new markets.

CRADLE TO TABLE VISIBILITY

The end result is that all workflows now go through EXO. All costs and invoices are tracked through EXO; all debtors are generated through EXO; and, when the wine is bottled, packaged, and labeled, that's tracked through EXO too.

> "All workflows are now tracked, providing a fantastic level of accountability and management. From tank to dispatch we know exactly where the wine is at because everything is traceable. I particularly like the way you can combine reports, or separate them out depending on their cost centres. We are a growing business and MYOB Exo Business is growing with us."
>
> NICKI BOWER, ELEPHANT HILL

In short, from the moment the wine comes out of the tank to the point it's dispatched, the entire process is traceable through EXO. And that means Elephant Hill has visibility of all its products from cradle to table.

The only area where EXO isn't used is in the winery's restaurant.

"Fortunately," says Bower, "we're still able to process the restaurant's invoices through EXO, thanks to MYOB's SQL database".

FLEXIBILITY AND SCALABILITY FOR THE FUTURE

On a day-to-day basis, Elephant Hill regularly refers to EXO's P&L and balance sheet. They also keep a close eye on sales and stock reports.

"I particularly like the way you can combine reports or separate them out depending on their cost centres," says Bower.

What's made the biggest difference of all is that data on sales and inventory is real-time, which means that at any point, simply by dipping into the system, Bower and