

PASTEL BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE CENTRE MAKES MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS EASIER FOR DUST-A-SIDE

JUNE 2008

Dust-A-Side, a South African company providing dust control systems to all major mining groups in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, has used the Business Intelligence Centre (BIC) from Softline Pastel to improve the production of management reports at mine, regional, and holding company level.

Dust-A-Side provides specially trained human resources, equipment, and a bituminous product that is sprayed on to dirt roads at mines in order to reduce dust levels, reduce wear on truck tyres and filters, and enable heavy duty vehicles to work even when the roads are wet. Maintaining dirt roads with Dust-A-Side services also saves mines the cost of tarring their roads, many of which have to be abandoned when new shafts are opened.

A user of Pastel Partner for eight years, Dust-A-Side wanted to manage each of the 58 mine sites at which its product, personnel, and equipment are situated as individual profit and loss centres as well as be able to consolidate each site into its relevant region.

“When we got Pastel Partner, I deliberately set up the general ledger so that each mine site was a sub-account, with an eye to eventually producing management accounts with which each site manager could run his operation as a mini business,” says Dust-A-Side financial manager, Pieter du Toit.

“This meant that when Pastel BIC was launched, we were ready and never looked back. Now, at the click of a button, we can provide each site manager with a forecast against which he must order his product and report on variations.

”Pastel BIC also automates our factory planning, so that we know how much product to produce at any given time. It has also streamlined the management of our outsourced transport.”

Joanne Barnard, of JB Accounting, Dust-A-Side’s Pastel BIC implementation partner, says that Pastel Partner is the ideal solution for Dust-A-Side because “it is so easy to work with. There’s a logical process you can follow, especially if you know something (about accounting). It gives you the facility to start off with generic accounts in a very simple structure and then build from there, depending on the types of reports you want.

“I design new reports when Dust-A-side requests them and then, once I’ve installed them, they are able to maintain them in-house. Because I know BIC and Dust-A-Side’s business very well, turnaround times for creating new reports are very short.”

Dust-A-Side is in the process of expanding further into Africa as well as setting up an office in Australia. “Pastel Partner with the BIC module has scaled very nicely to accommodate Dust-A-Side’s growth and, as a consequence, increasingly more complex reports covering a significant range of products and services,” Barnard says.

Dust-A-Side offers its customers two different kinds of contracts: a litre contract, in which product, personnel and plant are charged for separately, and a square metre contract, which provides an umbrella price covering product, personnel and plant.

“Consolidating those two quite different ways of costing could, in theory, be quite difficult,” du Toit says, “but BIC makes it all happen very easily. It’s an extremely good management tool.”

Softline Pastel national sales director, Bridget du Toit, says, “We haven’t scaled down larger systems. We’ve built BI tools for the SME sector from the ground up, so they fit the needs of this sector like a glove. We’ve also made our BI tools look like the office software most SMEs already have, so users can get results immediately in both a query and a reporting format with which they are comfortable.”