

Avis Europe takes the right road with CODA Financials

Avis Europe purchased CODA Financials in 2007 and today it is the core financial accounting solution used in its Shared Services Centre in Budapest to serve operations across Europe.

Avis Europe is a leading car rental company in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, serving customers via the Avis and Budget brands in over 3,900 locations. The Avis brand operates across four continents via a network of over 2,800 locations in 110 countries, through wholly-owned subsidiaries in 13 corporate countries, complemented by licence arrangements in a further 97 countries.

The key decision

Before selecting CODA Financials from UNIT4, Avis Europe used OLAS, which was a traditional mainframe system. However, the support costs were becoming prohibitively high and extracting crucial financial data from OLAS was time-consuming and ineffective.

Adrian Steventon, CODA P2P Stream Lead at Avis Europe, commented: "Not only were our support costs rising but also generating reporting data was proving an enormous task – taking up lots of time and resource that could be better employed analysing and interpreting our data.

"We evaluated a number of the leading market ERP solutions but found the solutions on offer too prescriptive and the project management costs were high. Conversely, when we looked at CODA we were impressed with the rich functionality and the ease with which data could be extracted. UNIT4 recommended a light touch with only 1 or 2 CODA consultants being involved in the project and the rest of the team being Avis Europe staff. CODA also had a proven track record in the commercial sector both in the UK and across Europe which was important to us. In addition, CODA came highly recommended by analyst house Gartner.

Avis Europe selected the whole suite of CODA Financials solutions, including: accounting; purchasing; billing; fixed assets; the CODA Link process management and finance automation tools; and the CODA XL reporting tool.

The implementation route

Avis Europe deployed CODA centrally in its Budapest Shared Services Centre and provided access to its European operations via the web.

The pan-European implementation began in earnest with a series of workshops, followed by user testing and pilot programmes before the system finally went live. Germany and Portugal were the first of the Avis Europe teams to go live with the solution in October 2007, closely followed by the UK and several other European countries in January 2008.

Adrian explained: "We implemented the system using a dedicated Avis Europe project team supported by a small team of CODA Consultants. The methodical approach we took with each country ensured that we knew what we needed the CODA systems to do in each country and that our teams had experience of the solution prior to go live.

"Because CODA is such an intuitive solution, we really did not need a huge amount of support from CODA consultants, which obviously saved us money, but we knew they were there if we needed them. In addition the speed with which we could roll out the solution meant that by the end of the implementation programme, smaller countries were going live within a month and we were maximising the return on our investment.

"All in all, CODA's flexible approach, its rich functionality and ease of use, combined with its ability to handle the different currency and legal requirements of our European operations, helped in successfully delivering this project."

Delivering results

Today, the CODA Financials accounting software is used by some 40-50 people within Avis' European operations and around 150 in its administration centre in Budapest, while 2,000 plus have access to the CODA purchasing module.

Adrian commented: "CODA is our core financial system and it holds all of our financial data. We feel it offers many benefits but the speed and accuracy with which we can input, extract, analyse and report key financial and business data are among the key strengths of the solution. The data we have on all of our operations is available in real-time so we know we are looking at the up-to-date information and we can drill down into any aspect of the data quickly and efficiently.

"On the purchasing side, the CODA workflow enables us to approve Purchase Orders online and we have been able to move away from a paper-based system. It is so much easier to see where a purchase order is in the system and we can raise purchase orders and pay invoices in multi-currency, which we could not do with our previous system."

Transaction processing power

Invoice Matching adds to the impressive transaction processing power of the CODA Financials solution and it provides enhanced online purchase invoice matching and processing facilities. Matched invoices can be posted to Financials quickly and easily. To enhance this process further, Avis Europe has implemented background matching, whereby invoices are automatically checked and posted to Financials without manual intervention.

Seamless integration

Avis Europe uses its own reporting solution but pulls information from CODA. Adrian reveals: "One of the additional benefits we derive from CODA is that it integrates seamlessly with several of our core business applications, including our reporting system. In addition, we automatically upload Vehicle Rental data from our Revenue Distribution System directly in to Financials which gives us a comprehensive view of our financial position.

"CODA also links with our document imaging system which enables us to view supplier invoices from within CODA. This provides quick, paperless and efficient access to all relevant data when dealing with supplier enquiries."

Adrian concluded: "We believe that CODA Financials is an easy to use product that has demonstrated its ability to grow and adapt with our business. It delivers the information we need in the right format and at the right time.

Avis Europe would recommend CODA as a best-of-class financial management solution that is functionally rich and has the ability to seamlessly integrate with other business applications."

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UNIT4 is a global business software company that creates, delivers and supports adaptable business software and services globally to help organisations manage their business needs effectively. We aspire to set the global standard for business software that helps dynamic organisations to embrace change simply, quickly and cost effectively. We have a broad portfolio of solutions that address different markets, requirements, technologies and types of organisation. The company is a top six mid-market ERP software player globally and the 2nd largest European ERP supplier. With offices in 20 countries worldwide, UNIT4 is headquartered in the Netherlands.

The Group incorporates a number of the world's leading change-embracing software brands, including Agresso Business World, an ERP solution for services intensive organisations, and CODA Financials, a best-of-class financial management software suite. Both solutions are widely used in shared services centres for public and commercial organisations worldwide.

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