For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit: [www.microsoft.com/casestudies](http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies)

**Customer:** Sharjah Museums Department

**Web Site:** www.sharjahmuseums.ae

**Number of Employees:** 462

**Country or Region:** United Arab Emirates

**Industry:** Education

**Partner:** ITQAN Al Bawardi Computers

Customer Profile

Sharjah Museums Department administrates 17 museums in the United Arab Emirates. These include Sharjah Aquarium, Sharjah Science Museum, and Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation.

Software and Services

* Microsoft Dynamics
* Microsoft Dynamics GP 10.0
* Microsoft Office
* Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007

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|  |  | CEP_Masthead_Blue1 |
| Microsoft DynamicsCustomer Solution Case Study |
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|  | SMD_logo.jpg |  | Dynamics HeaderMuseums Department Increases Productivity with Business Management Software  |
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“Most of our HR processes are now managed electronically—there’s no need to consolidate information from dozens of pieces of paper. As a result, efficiency has improved significantly.”

Sofiane Benna, IT Manager, Sharjah Museums Department

Established in 2006, Sharjah Museums Department manages 17 museums in Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The organisation wanted to automate human resources (HR) and financial processes, improve budget management, provide an employee self-service function, and cut the HR team’s workload. It deployed Microsoft Dynamics GP 10.0 and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007. Now, the HR team is more productive and managing financial processes and budgets is easier.

Business Needs

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Sharjah Museums Department manages 17 museums in Sharjah that cover the arts, discovery, heritage, and history—including Sharjah Aquarium, Sharjah Science Museum, and Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation. The museums preserve the culture of the UAE, and, to ensure they continue to provide a valuable service, Sharjah Museums Department must manage costs carefully.

But manual HR and financial processes made this difficult. Sofiane Benna, IT Manager for Sharjah Museums Department, says: “We used a customised application in the finance department that wasn’t designed to work across 17 museums and didn’t have online services. Financial processes, such as purchase requests, were completed manually. If an employee faxed a purchase request to head office, it would be physically delivered to each person necessary to approve it, and then entered into the system.” This method was time consuming and prone to error.



The absence of an integrated system also made it hard to manage budgets efficiently. “Museums couldn’t quickly see how much of their budget allocations were still available, which made planning a challenge. And there was no real-time overview of all museums, so it wasn’t easy to identify how money could be reallocated,” says Benna.

In the HR department, all employee data was stored in spreadsheets, and if someone wanted to update their personal details, or request a certificate, they had to ask the HR team. Benna says: “The team had to update records manually and resolving employee requests was a burden.”

The HR team is also responsible for creating the monthly payroll. Annual leave, attendance, overtime, allowance, and expenses information were delivered on paper, and consolidated by the team. “Relying on a spreadsheet and simple cell formulas to enter payroll data was time consuming. Employees could not work simultaneously and the payroll was prone to human error,” says Benna.

Solution

In early 2009, Sharjah Museums Department worked with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner ITQAN Al Bawardi Computers to deploy a Web-based HR solution using Microsoft Dynamics GP and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007. ITQAN implemented eKawader—a module built in-house and designed for compliance with UAE labour regulations—and an employee self-service portal for HR and finance, based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007.

One of the main goals of the project was to give employees responsibility for their own HR and finance information. Employees self manage many administrative HR and financial tasks though an online Office SharePoint Server portal, designed to resemble Microsoft Office—a product with which most employees are already familiar. “Users can access 16 automated e-services—including purchasing, annual leave, and personal information such as marital status or address details—directly through this Web service,” says Benna.

This service extends to actions that affect the payroll, such as overtime, and expenses. All HR and finance transactions are now processed through workflows, and if a manager is required to authorise a transaction—for example, an annual leave request or a purchase request—he or she is notified by e-mail. “The process is designed to be transparent. The applicant can see the progress of their request at any time,” says Benna.

Sharjah Museums Department also wanted to use Microsoft Dynamics GP to manage budgets. “Budget control is automated now,” says Benna. “Using SmartList Builder, a reporting tool included with Microsoft Dynamics GP, finance users can view and customize reports. Also, by using the portal, any museum can see how much money it has been allocated, and how much is remaining. If it tries to make a purchase that takes it over budget, the system will not process it until funds are reallocated.”

Benefits

Microsoft Dynamics GP has helped Sharjah Museums Department achieve productivity gains across all museums. Employees complete many HR processes themselves, resulting in a reduced workload for the HR department. Financial processes are faster and more accurate, and budgets are better managed.

* **HR team is more productive.** “By giving employees the ability to apply for HR services in minutes, we’ve significantly reduced the HR team’s workload. Most of our HR processes are now managed electronically—there’s no need to consolidate information from dozens of pieces of paper. As a result, efficiency has improved significantly,” says Benna.
* **Payroll has been streamlined.** Payroll is faster to construct than before and more accurate, because data integrity and compliance with regulations is enforced by the system. “Payroll generation is now automated. It’s easier to control and supports the Arabic language as well,” says Benna.
* **Purchasing process is now paperless.** Benna says: “Having a guided workflow makes financial processes—particularly purchasing—easier and more transparent. It’s a much more efficient system because employees can apply and check the status of their request themselves through the portal. It’s faster to approve because any employee needed to authorise a purchase is notified by e-mail, and they can attach and review purchase documents such as quotations online without the need for time consuming paperwork.”
* **Budgets are managed more effectively.** Museums can see the status of their budget allocations at all times, which makes it easier to plan how they use them. “It’s impossible to complete any transactions that put a museum over budget, and if we need to redirect resources from one place to another, it’s easy to work out what money is available,” says Benna.
* **The organisation is prepared for future growth.** Benna says: “We are particularly pleased with Office SharePoint Server. It was easy to integrate with existing applications, such as Microsoft Dynamics Retail Management System, and gives us the foundations we need to build a business intelligence platform in the near future.”