

Flexible planning in the Cloud with Unit4 FP&A

Hirschvogel Holding GmbH

The Hirschvogel Group started using Unit4 FP&A in 2016 and switched to the SaaS solution shortly after. Hirschvogel is a leading innovation partner and component manufacturer, particularly for the automotive industry. With eight plants in five countries and 6,200 employees, the company generates group sales of €1.5 billion.

The key benefits:

- Flexible, scalable, intuitive to use
- Self-service: make changes yourself at any time
- Simple implementation in the globally active group of companies
- Time savings, accelerated processes, rapid response times
- Single Source of Truth

“Independent, lightning-fast, worldwide: 24/7 user access to the system.”

The automotive industry is in a period of significant upheaval, and it is therefore all the more important for supply companies to be prepared for everything. Only companies that are agile in adapting to new framework conditions, have powerful tools, and can gain insights in real time will prevail in the future. The Hirschvogel Group started using Unit4 FP&A in 2016 and switched to the Unit4 FP&A Cloud solution shortly after.

Ralf Bergmann, Head of Controlling at the Hirschvogel Group holding company, tells us why: “In Controlling, we were always very self-sufficient in our use of the software. Switching to the Cloud was the next logical step. We benefit from this directly, as it makes the

department less dependent on IT. We are able to further reduce the strain on our own IT by transferring responsibilities, such as infrastructure measures and development tasks, to the Cloud or to Unit4. In addition, cost savings are achieved both in the department and in terms of IT. And importantly, even though it might sound normal: our users have 24/7 worldwide access to the systems.”

In market-leading, internationally active, and expanding companies, such as Hirschvogel, perfectly functioning financial planning, and

Challenge

In 2016, the company switched to Unit4 FP&A from legacy systems that included spreadsheet-based processes and self-programmed software. The switch to the Cloud took place shortly after. Hirschvogel uses Unit4 to manage global finance, analysis, planning, budgeting, and investment in an extremely challenging industry.

Key figures



High user satisfaction



Increased performance



Time saving of 2 days per month: reporting effort significantly reduced



Hirschvogel Group

Industry

Automotive

Locations

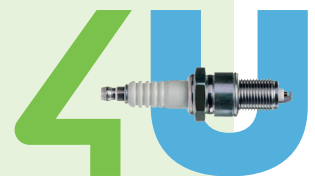
German headquarters in Denklingen;
Eight production sites in five countries; Germany, China, Poland, India, Mexico

Size

€1.5 billion in group sales;
6,200 employees

Product

Unit4 Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A)



“What impressed us most about Unit4 was how intuitive and flexible the tool is to use. And we barely noticed the switch to the Cloud – it all happened quite naturally.”

Ralf Bergmann

Head of Controlling

the associated software are the driving forces behind success – especially in the face of disruptive competitors and changing conditions.

“Everything is done entirely in Unit4 FP&A.”

Ralf Bergmann outlines what Unit4 FP&A does for Hirschvogel: “We use Unit4 for the entire Hirschvogel GROUP’s monthly reporting, building on this for internal and external reporting. We handle the entire global forecasting and planning process in Unit4, i.e. calculation of P&L, balance sheet, cash flow, and key performance indicators. And we also map the global investment process in Unit4 FP&A. We currently have around 150 active users worldwide. All segment plans are summarized in a profit and loss statement plus reporting.”

Major changes, such as the switch to the Cloud, are viewed with concern in many companies – but not at Hirschvogel. Ralf Bergmann: “We barely noticed the switch to the Cloud – it all happened quite naturally.”

Hirschvogel has been using Unit4 FP&A since 2016. Crucial factors in the decision in favor of Unit4 included the growing internal requirements, the desire for flexibility, functionality, and the increasing number of employees in Controlling. Initially, the focus was on financial planning, because product, personnel, and sales planning were still carried out in other systems or, depending on the department, were carried out manually and laboriously with spreadsheets.

“Smooth switch from legacy systems to Unit4 FP&A.”

When switching to Unit4 FP&A from the disjointed landscape of software solutions, data silos, and manual processes, it was important to reliably transfer all relevant information, model and define the business logic, and merge data from the legacy software systems. The requirement was that the controllers in the plants in Germany, North and Central America, India, China, and Poland, as well as in the holding company, would be able to work with the planning tool directly and independently.

Ralf Bergmann: “As a first step, we drew up a catalog of requirements and defined what our new software should be able to do and how we wanted to use it. This plan became increasingly detailed, depending on the level at which we were talking.” Topics such as financial planning including the profit and loss account, the balance sheet, cash flow, currency conversions, forecasting, what-if scenarios with simulations, and reporting were included, and the balanced scorecard and complete reporting were also added.

“Intuitive, flexible – as if from scratch.”

Bergmann: “What impressed us most about Unit4 was the intuitive operation of the tool and the flexibility of the software. You can model everything exactly as you need and want it because you are working from scratch.”

“Time saving of two days per month in reporting.”

According to Bergmann, the project ran smoothly and the respective topics were addressed one by one and discussed internally and, to begin with, also with the Unit4 consultants.

The results are impressive. “We were able to work much faster and much more efficiently,” Bergmann continues: “For us, reporting also includes a target/actual comparison, with the actual result being compared against the planned result as well as the forecast. Right from the beginning, we made a time saving of two days per month for this – days that employees were able to spend on more meaningful tasks than comparing figures.”

“Performance in the Cloud: results in seconds.”

A new challenge was added in 2022 when Ralf Bergmann also became responsible for investments. Before his time, these had still been handled by a self-programmed tool. It was time for another performance boost by implementing this additional area in the Unit4 FP&A SaaS solution. This was done with limited effort: one investment manager worked with two Unit4 consultants to implement the move to the Cloud. The initial 30 users quickly grew to 150 users worldwide. Right from the outset, all of the new users were also extremely satisfied with the Unit4 FP&A SaaS solution.

Previously, only controllers had used the system, but now plant managers, engineers, technicians, and investment managers worldwide benefit from the system. All newly activated assets worldwide now run via Unit4. Both the recording process and the decision whether to invest, the consequences of the investment, and the plan are mapped in Unit4. In the hot phase of the investment process, the project managers access the system daily, while the regional plant managers usually access it weekly.

All users are highly satisfied because they can now feel the benefits of the Cloud solution in the area of investments: intuitive operation and fast results. Ralf Bergmann states: "That was one of our requirements: we wanted to see results in seconds. And that's exactly what we get from Unit4."

Hirschvogel further expands Unit4 FP&A

In view of the changing conditions across the industry, Hirschvogel is also planning its next steps with Unit4. The reporting system is to be further optimized and automated. Ralf Bergmann: "We want to visualize even more and see everything at a glance. We have always worked with several scenarios anyway: an actual scenario, a scenario for more negative circumstances, and a crisis scenario. So if we change any key figures, the consequences are automatically displayed."

Summary

Customer benefits

- Fast implementation
- High employee satisfaction
- Intuitive solution
- Results in seconds and at a glance
- Worldwide increase in performance

