

Case study

Unit Hire



Unit Hire buys, sells and hires out shipping containers from its bases in Essex and Darlington, while also converting units into offices, canteens and garden workrooms. The business operates alongside a sister company providing self-storage services and continues to expand rapidly across the UK.

The challenge

Move on from an old-fashioned, on-premises system

Unit Hire was growing fast and its finance system was no longer meeting its needs. The pandemic prompted a move to home working, which was a challenge with an on-premises system.

The company has two bases as well as a sister company that rents out self-storage space in shipping containers. "We have a separate billing system to deal with the hiring of the containers," says Ian Petherick, Management Accountant. "Then we have to monitor which units are out on hire and which have been sold – so it's all about stock in and out and the profit made."

The business decided before Ian joined that it couldn't continue under the restrictions of the old system.

Previous system: Legacy on-premises system

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The solution

User-friendly system makes reporting easier

Ian joined Unit Hire on the same day the iplicit system went live, having had dispensation from his previous employer to join training sessions. "There was some trepidation because obviously when you're moving jobs, you want to hit the ground running and I had never seen this software package before. But iplicit's ease of use is amazing," he says.



Unit Hire has reported a series of benefits from the change:

1

Smooth migration of data.

Nobody was impressed by the quote from the previous software vendor for keeping access to past data. "The price was something like seven years of our existing software bills. I think we were quoted something in the region of £7,500. It was ridiculous," says Ian. But with iplicit there was no need for this "right to use" licence. "We were delighted we could migrate our old data into iplicit so we didn't have to pay for a licence just to access that data," says Ian.

2

Constant customer support.

Unit Hire has been well looked after by iplicit's customer support team. "I can't fault the staff. If there ever are any issues, the iplicit support team is always on it and I never have to wait for something to be resolved," says Ian.

3

Work from anywhere.

The inconvenience of working at home with an on-premises system was one driver of the change. "With iplicit, as long as you have a broadband connection at home, it's nice and easy, so you don't have to worry about it," says Ian.

4

Ease of use.

"It feels modern, as though it's a Microsoft Office product. You almost feel you've used it before, even if you've never seen it before," Ian says of iplicit. "It's been designed right from the bottom up to be user-friendly. It's as if someone has said 'How do I do bank rec? What's the easiest way?' and that's how a lot of the tools have been built. It feels like a newly made system, but as though you've weeded out all the bad stuff you get with finance systems."

5

Live Excel integration.

The ability to work with live data in Excel is Ian's favourite feature of the system. "I have my own set of reporting portfolios and I use the Excel functionality where it does the calculations with data from iplicit. I just hit 'control' and F9 and it automatically refreshes what's in the system," he says. "I have to report to the directors and at month-end, when it gets busy, there are a lot of last-minute journal entries. I would hate to be in the position where I'm constantly having to update reports. However, with iplicit, you can just click on a button, the data refreshes and the reports are up to date. That is a massive time saver for me."

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- Month-end reports refreshed instantly at the click of a button
- User-friendly, modern interface makes finance tasks effortless
- Scalable cloud system ready for continued expansion

The outcome

System has helped set up the company for growth

IPLICIT has been a big part of the growth story at Unit Hire, a business where turnover is six times what it was three years ago. "I think iplicit has definitely helped growth," says Ian. "I know the mountain of time-consuming processes that go into putting the reports out on time so that the directors can make those important decisions about where you're going next. It's very smooth and easy to use iplicit for that.

"Three years ago, turnover was £1.5m and this year it's expected to be £9m, so the work of the finance team is going to get much bigger, but iplicit will scale with us. The future here definitely looks rosy."

