

TECHNOLOGY AUDIT

Infor10 Financials Business (SunSystems)

Infor

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SUMMARY

Catalyst

The financial management applications category is one of the most mature enterprise software sectors and the accounting application is one of the first tools that a growing company rolls out. In spite of its maturity and because of its indispensable nature, financial management tools need to continue evolving to meet the requirements of the business. It is essential, therefore, that the financial management tools of choice be supported by a successful vendor and a strong product management team. There are a number of well established niches within the financial management category - such as solutions geared more towards corporate offices of large companies, solutions aimed at transnational businesses, and tools with industry-sector specific capabilities, among others. Ovum believes these two important considerations- the vendor's scale (and continued commitment to the product) and the vendor's focus area within the financial management sector, should guide the selection decision.

Key findings

- The ability to easily support a multi-currency and multi-location global business is Infor10 Financials Business' (SunSystems) most important differentiator.
- In Ovum's opinion (shaped through conversations with Infor's customers) Infor10 Financials Business' implementation and usage is relatively straight forward, and the tool's simplicity is an important differentiator.
- Infor10 Financials Business' scope, while ranging from mid-sized to fairly large companies, does not include enterprise-wide deployment scenarios for really large

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enterprises. The solution is aimed primarily at companies and subsidiaries with between US\$30 and US\$500 million in revenues. Oftentimes subsidiaries of global giants deploy Infor10 Financials Business, and it is not unusual for the financial management solution to coexist with accounting applications from SAP, Oracle and Lawson at large enterprise sites.

- Infor10 Financials Business was previously known as Infor SunSystems, and the rebranding is part of Infor's recent transition to the Infor10 umbrella branding. In addition to bringing most of Infor's products under a single brand, the initiative also introduces a few industry suites. Strategically, the move represents an important change in direction from Infor - it is the company's first ever enterprise-wide release.
- Infor has frequently been in the news in recent times due to some large scale, portfolio-wide changes. For example, they evolved their earlier OpenSOA strategy to develop their own lighter weight middleware platform known as Infor ION and released a new unified user experience called Workspace that operates across multiple Infor applications. Infor10 Financials Business has adopted the new technologies but users are not forced to deploy them – they can continue using the solution just as it is. Ovum believes that this is good news for existing and new customers alike.
- In the years to come, Infor10 Financials Business current and future customers would benefit if Infor stabilizes on Infor ION as the integration platform of choice.
- Infor10 Financials Business has been particularly successful in industry sectors where challenges associated with a global footprint and multi-currency operations are common. Hospitality and non-profit are examples of such sectors.
- Infor10 Financials Business is an important product for Infor, generating the next to highest licensing revenue for the company in financial year 2010.
- Infor10 Financials Business has been particularly successful in Europe, with the region accounting for 50% of business. The Asia-Pacific region accounts for over 25% of revenues. The company has significant presence in the US as well.
- Infor10 Financials Business is a widely deployed financial management application with 9,000 customer sites under direct maintenance.
- Infor10 Financials Business is a successor to the also available Version 4.X edition, aimed primarily at companies and subsidiaries with less complex financial management requirements. The Version 4.X series lacks the customization features and extended functionality of Infor10 Financials Business. This Technology Audit deals exclusively with the Infor10 Financials Business (SunSystems) edition.

Ovum recommends

- For those migrating from a financial management solution built for an earlier era, the flexibility of Infor10 Financials Business, with its ability to model multi-unit and multi-location businesses (and many other enablers of rapid change) would be appealing. For this segment, the embedded reporting capabilities and the real time inter-modular integration and reporting would be important features as well. Emerging out of the batch reconciliation and the hard-to-upgrade paradigm is typically a quantum leap for those making the transition. Infor10 Financials Business is certainly among the (somewhat long) list of solutions that make the grade for companies in the aforementioned situation.
- For those with more contemporary financial management technology, such as mid-sized companies deciding between upgrading a five year old existing product and competitive offerings from new suppliers, Infor10 Financials Business should certainly be a part of the evaluation exercise. This is particularly true if the company is headquartered in Europe. This is even truer if the company conducts business in multiple currencies and has a distributed foot print. Multi-currency and multi-location are well recognized differentiators for Infor10 Financials Business and many a proof point attests to the tool's capabilities in these areas.

Value proposition

Ovum believes that Infor10 Financials Business adds value in primarily three different ways - easier foot print expansion, alignment with contemporary technologies, and very modern notions of usability and technology management. The ability to accommodate multiple locations, organizational structures, currencies, and accounting regimes has been the solution's design goal. Infor10 Financials Business is based on Microsoft's technologies, the integration across the modules is real time, the solution works on a unified repository, and the user experience is very contemporary as well. Overall, the solution is in close alignment with the requirements of the target market - enterprises with between US\$30 million and US\$500 million in revenues. Infor10 Financials Business has well defined target industry sectors including, hospitality, oil and gas, non-profits, and financial services, and these sectors will remain the primary growth engines in the future. The history of Infor10 Financials Business, Infor's scale, and plenty of proof points regarding the 'enabler of globalization' positioning collectively make a strong case for evaluation for companies in the solution's target market. Decades in the four industries cited above (of course spanning numerous sub-sectors, such as hedge funds) have also led to deep sectoral capabilities that will not be easy for a competitor to replicate.

While Infor10 Financials Business is not fundamentally unsuitable for industry sectors beyond the list above, the solution's presence is particularly limited in scenarios involving very high volume

retail transactions. The above two statements have not been cited as weaknesses but as an attempt to define the limits of Infor10 Financials Business' applicability.

SOLUTION ANALYSIS

Functionality

Standard set of core and peripheral financial management applications: *Infor10 Financials Business* comprises the standard set of core and adjacent-to-core financial management applications, such as General Ledger, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, fixed asset management, budget management, and distribution of costs to business units, as well as project accounting among core areas and related applications such as order management and expense management (please refer to **Figure 1**). Many aspects of *Infor10 Financials Business*' functional capabilities reveal the depth that thousands of installations and 20 years in the business have made possible. The solution enables comprehensive data capture for every account and transaction through numerous fields and validations, which also has the effect of enabling richer reporting.

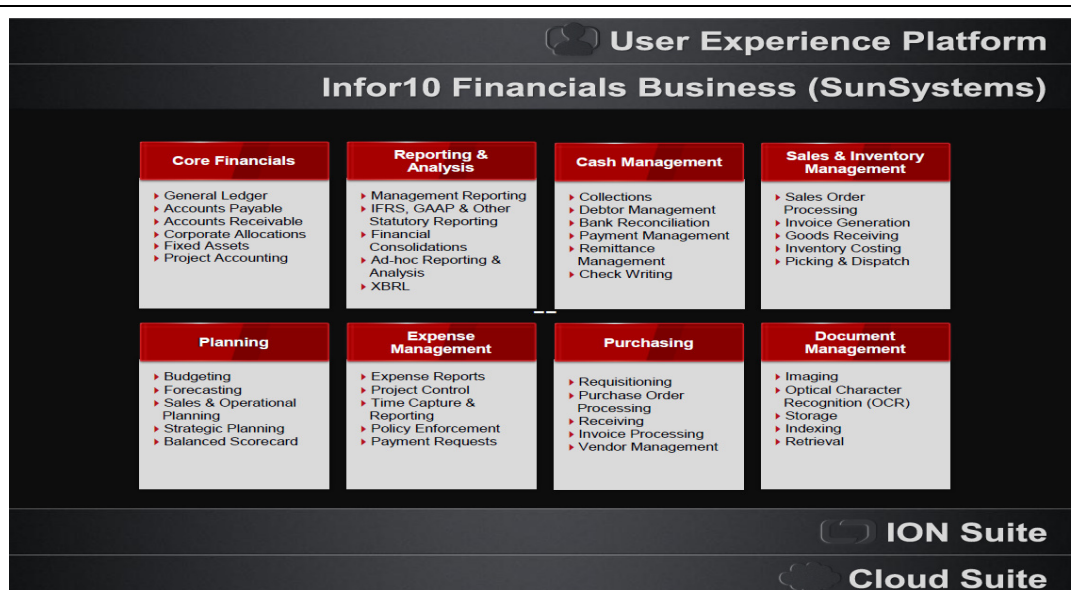
Microsoft technologies-based: *Infor10 Financials Business* is primarily a Microsoft technologies-based application. *Infor10 Financials Business* makes use of Microsoft Reporting Services and integration with SharePoint is common among its customers. The end user portal, the 'Unified User' experience, is built on SharePoint and would be a part of all solutions from Infor in the future. As a note, SunSystems can also leverage an Oracle database.

Embedded analytics: The solution has comprehensive reporting capabilities built in and most of an organization's reporting requirements can be met without help from IT. Numerous planning, budgeting, forecasting, and dashboard-based reporting features are built in. It would be important to mention in this context that organizations transitioning from an earlier era of accounting applications would benefit from *Infor10 Financials Business*' unified data repositories and real time updates. All modules draw from this unified repository (there need not be separate ledgers); there are no periodic reconciliations; and what is more relevant in the reporting context - the analytics functions work on the same data set and can draw from all individual applications. In Ovum's experience such capabilities are common in the current crop of enterprise applications, but represent a major step forward for those migrating from a solution procured in the early 2000s. *Infor10 Financials Business*' Web-based nature is another example of such a major step forward.

The impact of Infor's portfolio-wide plans to Infor10 Financials Business: *Infor* has made a number of important announcements in recent times, including a move to a common layer of integration technologies across its large portfolio of applications, called Infor ION. ION comprises workflow technology, an event management system for alerts and exceptions, sharing of data

across Infor's solutions, and management tools for the Infor environment. Ovum believes that the impact on Infor10 Financials Business will be minimal, and it is hard to see how the change would be anything but positive. About integration, Infor10 Financials Business footprint does not overlap significantly with other solutions from the Infor stable. For those with only the Infor10 Financials Business solution from Infor, the ION initiative will change nothing (except that ION is a perfectly good integration platform for those without heavy investments in middleware technology) and for those with ERP applications from Infor, ION would add to the number of integration patterns that are possible, but would not force any change on the Infor10 Financials Business installation. The other important move (announced in April 2011) was the introduction of Workspace, Infor's UI layer built on SharePoint. Workspace is the UI layer for Infor10 Financials Business, and also for other prominent solutions such as SyteLine and Infor EAM. Workspace offers embedded analytics and Single Sign On (SSO) across multiple Infor applications. Much more importantly, the UI offers a level of usability and a design aesthetic that users have come to expect from software but is still rare in the world of enterprise IT. To summarize the impact of the two recent moves on Infor10 Financials Business, the impact of ION is at worst neutral and the impact of Workspace is certainly a major positive. Ovum believes that the importance of Infor10 Financials Business to Infor (second highest license revenue contributor in financial year 2010) would provide a strong disincentive against any move that could be disruptive to the Infor10 Financials Business install base. Also, disruption has never been part of Infor's strategy.

Figure 1: The Infor10 Financials Business modules



Source: Ovum

Go to market strategy

Infor's growth plan for Infor10 Financials Business involves the same themes that have been working for the product line for sometime - ease of change and ease of supporting a globally expanding business. The importance of easy reporting and high configurability of the solution would remain important differentiators. The industry sectors in focus will remain the same.

The route to market is both direct and through partnerships. Infor is working on expanding the partner network globally, and expanding the network for North America (Central, East Coast, and South West) is an area of focus. Currently 200 partners distribute and implement Infor10 Financials Business globally, including Sapphire for the UK and Touchstone for the UK, PAS for North America, Professional Advantage for Australia, and Deloitte for India and Bermuda.

Deployment

As would be expected of a solution of this nature, implementation can be resource intensive. The following list provides a few representative deployment scenarios with resource requirements for each:

- 5 users, financial only: such a project would typically require one to four FTEs and 15 to 30 working days.
- 30 users, financial only: such a project would typically require one to four FTEs and 30 to 120 days of consulting.
- 250 users, enterprise-wide: such a deployment site would typically require two plus FTEs and 60 to 300+ days of consulting.

It has been Ovum's experience that categories central to the enterprise's business frequently require many months and even quarters of planning and execution. The resource requirements are not unusual in this category. Licensing is perpetual. The applications under Extended Business Solutions and Performance (please refer to Figure 1) are licensed separately.

The following list provides two brief cases of Infor10 Financials Business deployment and usage:

Deployment example 1: A 10-user manufacturing company was using a legacy accounting system that had functional deficiencies and inadequate reporting capabilities. Integration with payroll systems and recording of accruals were also not adequate. After migrating to Infor10 Financials Business, the client reported better user experience overall and better reporting and analytics, including dashboards that incorporated forecasts and budgets.

Deployment example 2: A 30-user financial services company was using a legacy financial management system with multiple limitations, such as constraints on storing historical data, inability to store non-financial data, a difficult end-of-quarter reporting process, and lack of support for contemporary OS and database platforms. All of the aforementioned issues were addressed by Infor10 Financials Business.

DATA SHEET

Key facts about the solution

Table 1: Data sheet			
Product name	Infor10 Financials Business (formerly known as SunSystems)	Product classification	Financial Management system, enterprise applications
Version number	6.1	Release date	August 2011
Industries covered	All	Geographies covered	All
Relevant company sizes	Small to medium-sized	Platforms supported	Windows, Web browsers, Microsoft SharePoint
Languages supported	Multilingual	Licensing options	Perpetual, user-based
Deployment options	On-premise	Route(s) to market	Direct, indirect
URL	http://www.infor.com/product_summary/fms/sunsystems-enterprise/	Company headquarters	Alpharetta, GA, US
European headquarters	Multiple European offices exist	North America headquarters	Alpharetta, GA
Asia/Pacific headquarters	Multiple Asia-Pacific offices exist		
Source: Ovum			OVUM



APPENDIX

Methodology

Ovum Technology Audits are independent product reviews carried out using Ovum's evaluation model for the relevant technology area, supported by conversations with vendors, users, and service providers of the solution concerned, and in-depth secondary research.

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We hope that the analysis in this brief will help you make informed and imaginative business decisions. If you have further requirements, Ovum's consulting team may be able to help you. For more information about Ovum's consulting capabilities, please contact us directly at consulting@ovum.com.

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