

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

iplicit meant big time savings and better reporting for Landlink Estates.



Sector
**Farming & land
development**



Previous Finance System
**Twinfield and SAP
Business One**



Number of iplicit users
21



Go Live Date
May 2024

About.

Landlink Estates is part of a family group of companies that manages significant farmland in West Sussex and Suffolk. The two companies moving to iplicit are the farming operation and a property business which specialises in getting residential planning permissions, building commercial retail and, more recently, renewable energy, as well as managing leased investment assets.

The Challenge.

The finance team at Landlink Estates faced two problems at once.

One business in the group had a small finance system, which was bogging down the team in manual work. Another had a big finance system, designed for large enterprises, that was overly complex and inflexible.

"The group is owned by a very entrepreneurial farmer, with farming very much at its core, however it only flourishes due to its diversification. With a wide range of different businesses, a 'one size fits all' ERP system was never going to succeed for us – so we looked for a dynamic system to align with the group's activities" says Peter O'Brien-Ward, Finance Director for Langmead Group and Landlink Estates Ltd.



LANDLINK

"Previously, the team and I spent a lot of time building reports for other people because they didn't know how to code and get the information out of the system. Now, they can do it in a few clicks."

Tom Marriott
Senior Finance Manager at
Landlink Estates

Key Results.

- Centralised finance systems across the business, to better align with strategy.
- Great support during onboarding, ensuring the system is tailored to the teams needs.
- Reporting and 'self-serve' functionality have resulted in huge time savings.

Tom Marriott, Senior Finance Manager with Landlink Estates, says: "On my side of the business, the property side, we've got a run of billing which happens at the start of each month for all our tenant rental invoices, and then we probably process more than 100 accounts payable invoices every month across various entities. Our AP process was archaic. Then you've got the monthly management reporting to do on top of this."

iplicit — an accounting software designed to offer the power of big ERP systems without the disruption and high price tag — turned out to be the solution to both challenges.

The Solution.

"The system we had on the farming side of the business was very much a small system, whereas on the property side had a big system," says Rob Searle, who heads the farming operation's finances as Director of Cloud Finance Department.

"Functionality-wise, the small system wasn't powerful enough to do what we wanted to do, or with the number of users we had. The SAP Business One system was powerful and functionality-rich, but proved to be too big and not very flexible for the kind of dynamic, diverse business we are today."

Tom led an 18-month search for alternative systems before Rob mentioned that he'd heard about iplicit. Peter adds: "We had some demonstrations and were impressed. iplicit ticked all the boxes."



"With iplicit, we have everything in one place and it's such a slick process. Our onboarding team helped us ensure that we have a robust system, and things go where they're supposed to. That's a big time saving."

Tom Marriott

Senior Finance Manager at Landlink Estates



'People have embraced the system'

"Ian Ross, our Implementation Consultant, was outstanding, and our implementation went very well," says Tom.

"The thing that stood out was how patient and thorough he was — and how well he explained things while training the team. He spent a lot of time ensuring everyone was clear on all the benefits that a particular module could deliver and as a result, I think we're using things very effectively."

The Landlink Estates team is full of praise for the iplicit user experience.

"It's so intuitive and quick," says Tom. "The rest of the team are finding it very easy to use. SAP is fine when you're used to it, but when you're new, there are a lot of draws you can open, only to find you don't need what was in there. With iplicit, we've had nothing but positive feedback from the team."

Peter adds: "It's so easy to use. Staff can use the mobile app to approve invoices and raise POs, which is a seismic shift from emailing finance. Approvals can also be done on a mobile. Previously, the only way to do it on the move was to type out an email in Outlook, so that's a big benefit."

"I suppose the biggest accolade is that we've had very little pushback."

"I implemented Oracle once, in a previous life, and that was an absolute beast. The biggest challenge was getting the non-finance users to accept it, but we've had very little resistance to iplicit. They have really embraced the change, which is down to Tom's good rollout but also the system itself."

"Our AP process now flows far better with greater visibility of bottlenecks and our data entry controls ensure only the correct codes are selected, reducing the time we'd previously spend recoding", says Tom.

"Then you've got the monthly management reporting, which is far more easily achieved with iplicit both at entity and consolidation levels."

'We've got the analysis we wanted'

Landlink Estates has seen huge improvements in its ability to report and analyse. It uses iplicit's Excel integration to generate the management information it needs.

"Starting afresh has enabled us to really build the analysis that we wanted and needed but couldn't quite achieve because we'd set up these codes and dimensions that were sort of set in stone under SAP," says Tom.

With iplicit, non-finance users get to serve themselves to the data they need.

"That visibility is another key improvement because previously anyone without a SAP Business One licence couldn't see anything, and if they wanted to know how much we'd spent in a certain area, they had to ask us," says Tom.

"Now, they can query it themselves. Having them all set up in the system and having the controls in place so their access is limited to what they need has been really helpful."

Peter adds: "It's early days but this will certainly give them the tools so they no longer have to keep asking Tom's team for information. Either we'll build a report, to be emailed to them at the appropriate time, or they can go in and refresh their view of the data in the system. I see lots of future benefits for efficiency."

The system has also brought substantial time savings.

"I think the biggest time saver is approval workflows," Tom says.

"Previously, we didn't really have a document management system or anything like that set up, so it was all down to the accounts team knowing where to route the invoices and sending an email with an invoice attached. It took so long and trying to gather approvals also took time – and people probably didn't enjoy searching their emails to find outstanding approvals to do.

"Now, it's all in one place and it's such a slick process. Because of the work we did with Ian to troubleshoot the workflows, it's all quite robust and things go where they're supposed to. That's a big time saving."

The feature that's 'worth its weight in gold'

Each of the team has a favourite feature. For Peter, it's the iplicit app, which allows users to approve spending, see data and submit expenses wherever they are.

"We do a lot of our banking on apps and now, with the iplicit app, we can do things at the touch of a button. It brings us into the 21st century, whereas SAP was a bit of an archaic monster," he says.



"My advice for onboarding with iplicit is to spend the time figuring out where you want to get to – because iplicit can take you there."

Peter O'Brien-Ward
Finance Director for Langmead
Group and Landlink Estates
Ltd.

Tom says: "My favourite feature is the Excel add-in. With SAP, you could achieve a similar result, but you'd have to know SQL code to extract the information and link tables. iplicit has an enquiry feature, with a series of drop-down filters, so anyone can load them up, select what they want and export the data to Excel to manipulate. It's worth its weight in gold.

"Previously, the team and I spent a lot of time building reports for other people because they didn't know how to code and get the information out of the system. Now, they can do it at the click of a few buttons."

Rob is confident that his favourite feature is going to be the reporting. "We spent a long time ensuring we would be experts at using it. We're now focusing on how we extract information from it and I think we're going to get some big value adds. Everything points to that being a real bonus," he says.

The key to changing finance systems successfully is to really know what you want from the change, according to the Landlink Estates team.

"I think the best piece of advice is to spend a good amount of time thinking about what best practice looks like," says Tom.

"The second piece of advice is not to rush it. Spend that time up front on planning."

Peter agrees. "What you don't want to do is set off on one path and realise you should have taken another one 10 steps back," he says.

"You need to spend time figuring out where you want to get to – because iplicit can take you there."

Rob sums up: "The experience generally has been a real positive with iplicit. We've got something that's really user friendly, with great UX. With Tom's expertise and the skills he's learning, we're able to dive in and control the destiny of the system we're using. We're confident with it and with making changes, which makes us far more agile."



iplicit enables multi-company businesses to make data-driven decisions by providing a single platform that showcases real-time information from all the entities within the group in one view.

Scan the QR code below to find out how we're helping transform finance work for multi-company businesses.

