

CASE STUDY



CLIENT:	Synergy Audio Visual
INDUSTRY:	Import, Wholesale and Distribution
LOCATION:	Australia
PRODUCT SUITE:	EXO Business
MYOB ENTERPRISE PARTNER:	Exoserv

Audio visual importer Synergy finds peace in a system that tracks products from cradle to grave.

Overview

Synergy Audio Visual is a specialist importer of high performance audio and video equipment brands like Cambridge Audio, Quadraspire, ELAC loudspeakers and Rega turntables from countries in Europe and the US.

Founded in 1995, the company now has 15 staff and distributes to more than 300 retailers in Australia. With an ever-expanding warehouse, maintaining strict control over inventory is key to Synergy's success.

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Way back when...

Synergy had been using MYOB Premier for 11 years. Although ideal for a smaller business, Premier wasn't able to provide the sort of perpetual information Synergy needed. And that was hindering process.

"We didn't really have visibility on sales or purchasing data that was any more than a couple of years old," says Philip Sawyer, MD of Synergy.

"And if you can't look at data long term, you can't perform even relatively straightforward tasks like checking a customer's credit history quickly without burdening yourself with extra work."

To get round the problem, Synergy purged data. But it became clear this was not a long term solution.

Data wasn't the only issue. Because of the ongoing need for warranty and service support, Synergy were looking for additional functionality, notably around stricter inventory control, and a system that would allow them to track individual products by their serial numbers as they moved through the warehouse.

According to Sawyer, Synergy also wanted to be able to report in more detail than Premier – as a proprietary system – would allow.

Considering the options

Synergy looked in depth at a number of different products before settling on MYOB EXO (formally MYOB Exonet).

"We looked at eight or nine different solutions," says Sawyer, "and compared each of them against a strict set of criteria that consisted of maybe 40 separate points. EXO stood out as the right product for our size of business".

It was EXO's perpetual reporting that really swung it for Sawyer, but a variety of factors cemented Synergy's decision, including sophisticated inventory control, the ability to customise and configure the software to Synergy's operations and the speed and stability of a SQL-based system.

Choosing a provider with the right knowledge

When it came to choosing an implementing partner, Sawyer says Exoserv were the natural choice.

"Their knowledge of the product was obvious from the outset. We had a very clear idea of what we wanted to get out of EXO and that was met head on by Exoserv's commitment to translating our requirements into functionality," says Sawyer.

"Exoserv's approach was two-step. The first was to evaluate Synergy's needs – the second, to configure EXO to fulfill certain functions.

"During the evaluation process, Exoserv would take our requirements around stock, customers, suppliers, jobs and so forth," says Sawyer, "and present alternative ways of doing that, so that we had an opportunity to look at the best route for our business".

On more than one occasion, Exoserv mocked up scenarios in EXO to help Synergy to visualise the sort of functionality they could expect.

"Knowing a product's capability in theory is one thing. Seeing it in operation with your own data is something else entirely," says Sawyer.

The key deliverables

Synergy had two very specific requirements of EXO. One was serial number tracking. The other was service management, or functionality to manage the repair of equipment.

Also of key importance to Synergy was the ability to import data from various sources.

"So that we could get an accurate picture of costing, we needed to be able to import a wide range of data – not just unit prices, but freight costs and importing duties and so on."

According to Sawyer, Synergy also wanted specific additional reporting functionality from the outset. Aged receiveables for customers, in particular, were so regularly needed, that EXO customised a report to appear on the debtor summary screen, rather than further down in other report set ups.

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Visibility from cradle to grave

Sawyer says the biggest difference EXO has brought to the business is increased visibility.

Nowadays, as soon as a product comes in from an overseas supplier its serial number gets checked into EXO. The number is checked a second time once the product is sold, and again, if the product is returned to the warehouse by the customer for any reason.

“With accurate serial number tracking, we now know exactly how long a product has been on the shelf, when it was delivered to the customer and, if it comes back for a service, how long the warranty has left to run. In short, we’ve got complete visibility from cradle to grave,” says Sawyer.

Stricter inventory control is another of EXO’s key attributes and one that’s helped Synergy to streamline its warehouse operations. According to Sawyer, FIFO (first in first out) control just wasn’t really possible with their previous system.

“We now have the visibility to control the flow of stock through the warehouse in a logical manner.”

Access to all information, all the time

Synergy’s bug bear with Premier’s data retrieval has also been addressed with EXO. Rather than two years of data, Synergy now has access to perpetual data, giving them a much clearer picture of customer history.

“For us, it’s absolutely critical to be able to access this sort of information. Our products have long lifespans and we often need to look back several years. With all the data at our fingertips – not just some of it – we’re in a much better position to make informed decisions.”

When asked about EXO’s reports, Sawyer is quick to mention that they still have outstanding requirements of EXO. “There are some aspects of Job Costing that we’ve yet to get right and a couple of additional reports still to build,” he says.

On the whole however, he says the ability to drill down into invoices from aged receivables is superb.

“This was a key requirement for us early on and means we can very quickly identify our best and worst payers and make credit decisions based on clear information.”

Overall impressions...

When asked about the importance of preparing for a change like this, Sawyer says it’s imperative you know exactly what’s mission critical before you start. He also stresses the value of keeping an eye on where you’re going to be four or five months down the line.

“You need to have confidence that the system’s going to bring you benefits further down the line, not just in the immediate change over.”

All-in-all, “we’re very happy with EXO,” says Sawyer. “It’s fast, comprehensive, and seems to be very stable.”

Client and Enterprise partner details

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