



Freight Investment Leader underwrites CRM solution success by choosing the right partner



Company Background

Freight Investor Services (FIS) is the Global leader in Dry Bulk Derivatives and a key player in the development of the Forward Freight Agreement (FFA) market. As well as brokerage services, FIS offers trade execution, in-depth market intelligence and physical ship and cargo services. It enables ship-owners, charterers and traders to protect themselves against the volatility of freight rates with effective risk management strategies.

Since its foundation in 2002, FIS' mission to create lifetime customer relationships through unparalleled service and value, has fuelled strong year-on-year growth. Today, it boasts a thriving network of trading associates and branch offices in the United Kingdom, UAE, China, Singapore, India and USA. To deliver against this core business mission, Andrew Voss, Chief Commercial Officer, has led the development of the company's global CRM strategy including the recent introduction of a new CRM platform.

Challenges

FIS was using a hybrid application mix of legacy systems, Instant Messenger, spreadsheets and individual instances of Microsoft Outlook to record, track and report on day-to-day business operations. The lack of centralised data, beyond executed trades, was impacting the team's ability to communicate between themselves, streamline business development activities, provide management insight and deliver effective client relationship management.

FIS were facing mounting challenges in a number of business critical areas:

- **Activity and KPI reporting**
To improve monitoring of business development KPI's to inform future decisions
- **Data duplication**
There was no physical link between databases and spreadsheets so effective data management was difficult
- **Business development and cross selling opportunities**
With no centralised information or defined processes, new business opportunities were being identified by word of mouth recommendation or manual data manipulation
- **Email and task management**
Day-to-day communications were made through individual instances of Outlook and LinkedIn meaning that there was no shareable content or insight between team members

Solution

Andrew's vision was for a holistic cloud-based CRM/Productivity/BI reporting suite which could underpin customer management processes and support accelerated growth. Concise CRM were appointed to create and implement a cutting-edge new CRM system that would solve the immediate challenges whilst providing a platform to meet objectives as the business scaled. Concise CRM recommended Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online which could integrate with FIS's current Office suite and Click Dimensions.

Company Profile

- Global leader in Dry Bulk Derivatives
- 55+ employees
- freightinvestorservices.com

“Implementing the new CRM system has been challenging and rewarding. Concise CRM really showed us that this is a ‘live system’ that needs to be nurtured and evolved in pragmatic stages. Implementing it at a pace that brings users along on the journey and manages everyone's expectations has been critical.”

Andrew Voss
Chief Commercial Officer,



Concise CRM created a prototype to illustrate solution concepts, and then delivered system customisation, managed data transferal and trained the users to ensure system adoption. Concise CRM supported the business with solution and process guidance at every stage including ongoing support and systems management following live launch.

The CRM solution provides FIS with a single environment to house client contact information, consolidate activity reporting, deliver trade data analytics through dashboards and monitor business development KPIs. Seamlessly integrating with Dynamics CRM, Click Dimensions provides FIS with advanced marketing capabilities for the delivery of highly targeted research and thought-leadership campaigns to the commodities market as a whole and customer audience clusters.

This new capability has given FIS the ability to more effectively target activity, streamline registrations and achieve greater insight into the quality of resulting leads.

The Value of the Right Partner

Andrew knew that the experience, approach and credentials of the implementation partner were a critical part of the overall success. As well as being able to understand the business position and objectives, he needed a partner with strong cultural awareness who would provide honest advice and practical solutions. Andrew chose to focus on pure-play CRM technology partners.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides a highly flexible development environment beyond standard functional areas, offering the potential to take different approaches to achieve any one outcome. A CRM solution is determined by the unique business context and requirements, which often requires business change. Andrew fully understood this impact and recognised that replacing disparate systems and data sources could be very disruptive for the users and the pace of business operations. So, a consultative partner with deep understanding of the CRM discipline, and not just technology, was a vital component to project success.

He explains *“CRM is different to other software or technology implementations. There is a high degree of subjectivity in design and the partner needs to be able to ‘translate’ the business objectives into the technology specification. That requires business process acumen and consulting experience within the deployment teams, as well as an appreciation that technology is one part of a CRM strategy. A ‘pure play’ CRM partner by definition has those skills whereas generic technology partners often don’t.”*

Why Concise CRM?

Andrew had worked with Concise CRM previously and had trust in their approach and commitment to deliver. He found their industry experience, understanding of the key issues, creativity in solution design and partnership approach was unparalleled.

Andrew enthuses *“They are totally focused on the business needs. They took the time to understand and cater for our immediate requirements but also helped us shape a clear vision for the future. That included recommending partners for complementary Microsoft technologies and working hand-in-hand with them for complete system integration. When needed, they kept bringing us back to the overall business objective and kept our focus on managing the expectations of the users and internal team, even advising us against using standard functionality where they knew it would prove counter-productive. They are true CRM specialists and passionate about achieving the results they promise.”*

“We knew that the implementation of a new system would be unsettling so having a partner with strong cultural understanding was absolutely key. Being skilled and experienced in the intricacies of CRM as a discipline was also crucial to ensure the CRM strategy and solution would scale beyond our initial objectives.”

“Concise CRM clearly stood out as the right partner for us. They are committed, knowledgeable, friendly and supportive. They helped us shape a vision for the future but also never lost sight of the immediate requirement.”