

## Complex Kenyan conglomerate chooses Enterprise by HansaWorld

**NAIROBI, KENYA, December 23, 2009 - Enterprise – HansaWorld's Integrated Business Platform is becoming the choice of more African companies seeking an integrated, rapidly deployable and highly functional enterprise resource planning solution capable of meeting the needs of complex and distributed businesses. After an extensive evaluation of available options, Kenya's Ramco Group has selected Enterprise by HansaWorld to improve the performance management and control of its many subsidiaries.**

The Ramco Group is a conglomerate of over 20 companies, founded in 1948, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya and with operations around the East Africa built on entrepreneurial spirit, the organization is active in verticals including publishing, printing, stainless steel, hardware, packaging, travel, information technology and office automation.

According to the CEO Hasit Patel, the growing company sought an improved means of visibility, control and reporting from a group level, while still allowing the CEO of each division to run their business in their own style. "Each company within the Ramco Group has its own CEO and functions independently. It's a model which has worked for the Group for a long time, with individual responsibility and flair allowing each unit room for innovation and flexibility," he says.

However, with the sustained growth of the company, the need for a more capable business management solution became increasingly obvious. "A flexible integrated business solution, we believed, would preserve the individual characters of each Group entity, but would also provide for the standardisation of certain processes and controls across the business," Patel states. "Specifically, we wanted something that would specifically standardise our financial processes, but would leave flexibility in other business processes."

When The Ramco Group examined the market, the apparently obvious choices were SAP or Oracle; remarkably, their eventual first choice came to the drawing board by accident. "A solution provider overheard our discussions and said there was a better option available – Enterprise by HansaWorld."

### A customer and partner

That solution provider was Matrix Business Systems. Managing director Pam Chandi explained that her business interests were similar to those of Ramco. She operates a number of business units in various vertical markets. "We ourselves identified and implemented Enterprise years ago to take control of these business interests. Being impressed with the capability of the solution, Matrix became a HansaWorld partner in March 2009," remembers Chandi.

Using the solution successfully in its business, provided Chandi with an ideal opportunity to demonstrate how Enterprise could add value to Ramco. "We could relate to their requirements and speak the same language. We knew that an essential requirement was to be able to delegate tasks and responsibilities without losing control – and we could show that this is what HansaWorld Integrated Business Platform has enabled within Matrix."



More than that, Chandi and her team could demonstrate that they had the experience to deploy and support the solution. "Depth of experience is very assuring to any new ERP customer – and we could answer any questions accurately, with insight and without delay."

### Making the decision

Ramco and Patel were under no illusions what concerns ERP. "It has a bad reputation in Kenya; as a software engineer myself, I know this is typically because solutions are not implemented correctly," he says.

The challenge which laid ahead for Ramco's particular circumstance was perhaps even more substantial. "In our case, we have 22 companies with 22 CEOs and financial officers and we needed something that would satisfy them all. Let alone deciding on a vendor, the first step was to get some consensus among our own people on the need for ERP in the first place," clarifies Patel.

The answer laid in getting each of three shortlisted ERP vendors to demonstrate what they could do for the Group. Patel explains, "Even though each demonstration showed that each vendor has strong points, there were also obvious deficiencies. Our CEOs then sat down to work out what is most important at a group level, with the primary understanding that we needed to standardise operations."

It came down to two vendors, which Ramco invited to a 'face to face' shootout, where each solution would be demonstrated to the entire board. "We actually wanted both vendors in the room so they could rebut any claims or arguments right there," Patel says.

HansaWorld and its competitor SAP were up to the challenge.

## Enterprise by HansaWorld wins on modules, flexibility, features

While price is always a consideration, Patel is quick to point out that buying anything because it is cheap is bound to be a mistake – especially where critical business software is concerned. “Enterprise is priced well, but that was far from what informed our decision,” he confirms. “What made it the preferred package was the substantial breadth of modules available to suit many of our lines of business; there was very little we had to look for outside of what HansaWorld provided. The bottom line is that it could satisfy the needs of larger percentage of our CEOs off the shelf than anything else could.”

Again calling on his own experience as a software engineer, Patel says a further substantial advantage with Enterprise is that it offers quick deployment. “From an IT point of view, getting this system configured and implemented was straightforward,” he says. “Look, any IT team should be able to handle an implementation; it is more important to get the right product. But when the right product can be put to work quickly, it’s an obvious bonus.”

Mitigating the risk of introducing a company-wide business management system, Patel explains that a 6-phased approach is being adopted. “Initially, a standardised methodology is being established, as far as possible, particularly for ‘common’ business processes such as a Chart of Accounts. This means getting the basics done in a repeatable fashion, while the balance of the configuration is determined by the head of each company,” he says.

## Anticipated benefits

With a single-vendor company-wide solution, which is nevertheless customised to the individual requirements of independently operating Group businesses, Patel says Ramco expects greater visibility across operations. “Many of our companies work together collaboratively; supply chain visibility means better planning. Since we have common clients, we can also manage exposure better, providing for improved risk mitigation should any client order goods beyond its approval ceiling,” he says.

Activities which are repeated, such as import orders or delivery consignments, can also be consolidated for improved efficiency and reduced costs; from a financial perspective, consolidated, up-to-date reporting is also enabled. “With the Enterprise system, we can also standardise key processes such as credit control, debtors and credit management and more – while still leaving each Group company with the flexibility to run their business in the way that’s best for it. We can manage by exception, too, rather than looking through everything and taking action only after the fact,” Patel concludes.

## About HansaWorld

HansaWorld provides award-winning integrated business systems together with a wide selection of industry-specific solutions, to more than 74,000 clients in 110 countries around the world. The solutions are available in 29 languages, run on all major platforms and support mobile use via laptops, PDAs, Nokia business phones and iPhone. HansaWorld is represented in many of the countries in Europe, Latin America, North America, Africa, Australia, Asia and the Middle East.

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