

Isobar

Isobar is a digital agency that creates applications and digitally centered marketing campaigns for the web, mobile devices and social media. Isobar has led the user experience in the design and technical implementation of many award winning public and private sector portals including The State of California, Province of British Columbia, State of Minnesota and many Fortune 500 companies such as Enterprise and Lego. Isobar uses an approach called StartAhead™ which helps their clients reduce project time, risk and cost of projects. Isobar is headquartered in Chicago, with offices in Atlanta, London, New York, Orange County, San Francisco, and Washington DC. For more information visit www.isobar.com. Isobar now has 500 staff using Unanet.

As a professional services firm, Isobar requires service management processes in the areas of time reporting, expense reporting, project management, and resource management. Originally, Isobar used client server software for time and expense reporting. Due to the outdated client server technology, technical problems plagued the users and the system administrators. New employees initially had to wait up to thirty days to have the software fully operational to enter their time and expense charges. During that thirty-day period they entered time and expenses on paper. Project managers waited at least six to seven days after the close of the two-week reporting period to review client project results. This delay translated to approximately three weeks before any results were available for management. To compensate for the delay, the managers filled out excel time sheets, virtually creating a dual reporting system for the invoicing process. The necessary reconciliation and accruals caused additional delays in closing the books.

Recognizing the need for significant improvements in the services management processes, Isobar initiated a search for a web-based professional services automation tool. The search narrowed to Unanet and a few other vendors in this field. Isobar ultimately chose Unanet from a value and customer support perspective. "I was impressed with the fact that everyone I interacted with at Unanet understood the professional services business as well as the Unanet product. Every Unanet customer reference, without hesitation, gave very positive feedback regarding the Unanet product, the Unanet support and the Unanet people, in general," said Bruce Posner, CFO at Isobar. "Unanet is a product with deep functionality that many other vendors do not have. For example, no other vendor handled, let alone understood, the concept of labor cost dilution." Due to the Unanet track record of three to four releases a year, offering up significant enhancements and new modules, Isobar believed that Unanet would continue to upgrade the functionality to meet future needs.

Unanet's claim of the "easy" PSA solution quickly became evident. Implementation of the Unanet system met, and exceeded, the expectations of Isobar. Isobar chose the On Demand (software as a service) option to eliminate purchase of hardware, reduce the use of in-house technical people, and improve reliability of the infrastructure. After executing the agreement with Unanet, Isobar started entering time and expenses within two months. Not one single employee has had any technical problems with Unanet, a 100% web-based offering with over fifteen years of production experience. Everyone accesses Unanet from anywhere, which is critical to a distributed company. Even new employees are accessing the Unanet system in the first days of their employment. Posner says, "The largest expected gain is the real-time, on-line reporting. Project managers and managers now have real-time visibility into the work. They can view, at any time, Unanet reports on time, expenses, pro forma billings and many critical analysis reports to adjust and change direction when needed. Non-billable hours and expenses can be differentiated from billable hours. Unanet has essentially eliminated all off-system accounting." Unanet provided integration to the financial system, shortening the time to close the books. The closing of the books has improved by 60% and, soon, will improve by 90%.

Unanet also provided unexpected improvements. With the ability to review expenses on-line, managers are pleased that they can reject inappropriate charges before they appear in their projects. The Unanet database is the one source for all time, expense, project, and resource information. When allowed by the administrator, users can adjust their own timesheets initiating the downstream approval procedures.

"I continue to be impressed with everyone at Unanet. They are extremely responsive. We were losing productivity over many little things. Now, we are a more productive and efficient organization that serves our customers better," remarked Posner.