INX Software Case Study

INX Software is a successful Australian software company with an increasingly international outlook. Headquartered in Perth, Western Australia, INX Software offers a suite of integrated products to a range of industries across the globe. Their flagship product, INX InFlight, is simplifying the logistics management process for resource sector companies to improve efficiency and deliver significant cost savings. NERA spoke to INX Software founder and Managing Director, Garry Back, about his company's expansion from hard rock mining into the energy sector and beyond.

How did INX Software get started?

INX Software grew out of parent company, Cube Consulting, which had put together a series of databases for predominantly mining sector operators and contractors. These evolved over time and were subsequently developed into an integrated workforce management system by INX. We have since grown to 65 employees, mainly in offices across Australia, but also in South Africa and Canada.

What is INX InFlight and why did you develop it?

INX has a history in the hard rock mining sector, developing software around databases, so it was no secret to us that there's a significant amount of administration required to get employees or contractors to and from a residential mine site, especially when ad hoc changes are thrown into the travel mix.

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When we started out, most companies in the mining industry were using spreadsheets to manage travel, rosters and accommodation. These were managed across numerous teams using various spreadsheets and systems, relying on intricate rules, links and manual processes. The result was inaccurate data, human error and very low visibility of what's going on at what cost.

INX InFlight is a workforce logistics software solution that eliminates manual booking processes by automating and centralising travel bookings, accommodation and site rosters that provides complete visibility to both the company and the traveller. It also encompasses INX InFlight Mobile (allows mobile/tablet viewing of itineraries, rosters, bookings), INX +TMX (automated bulk flight bookings using live flight inventory) and INX +BI (management dashboard).

As with all our products, INX InFlight operates from the same central database, ensuring one source of truth for improved data integrity, efficiency and visibility. Being integrated and web/mobile based, different departments within client companies can work together to manage shared tasks around workforce and business processes, improving productivity and reducing costs associated with managing a FIFO workforce and residential camps.

Over time, our business focus and capabilities have grown from INX InFlight to offer a complete workforce management solution to our customers, including safety, competence, compliance, health and environment, all from the one centralised database. We have leveraged INX InFlight to increase take-up of our other products. INX InFlight is now used to manage an estimated 55% of the fly-in-fly-out workforce in Australia, and our customers use on average three of our products to manage their broader business requirements.

INX has traditionally worked in hard rock mining - how did you break into the oil and gas industry?

When the hard rock mining industry became quieter after 'the boom', we looked to diversify our activities by spending more of our marketing and sales effort in the oil and gas sector. It wasn't easy for us to break in to that marketplace. It's a fairly parochial space, in that if you aren't in the oil and gas industry then you're not easily considered. Also, oil and gas majors are large-scale organisations with large systems, so we had to build our credibility by referencing our larger mining clients.

We were able to establish our credibility by accumulating a range of smaller clients servicing the oil and gas industry, and then built on that with our references from the mining sector and by just 'being around'. Over time we acquired more clients, serviced them well, and built up our customer base. After a while, we had enough experience with a full range of scenarios and issues to go directly to existing and potential customers, confident that we could solve their problems.

INX InFlight allows our customers to track their metrics, and they have been able to quantify the value of our solutions and communicate this internally and externally to others in the industry.

This was highlighted in our recent experience with a large-scale energy sector project in remote Western Australia with more than 6,000 employees and contractors, and 280 daily FIFO workers. After just 12 months, the Tier 1 contractor had saved over $1,000,000 and improved booking efficiencies, optimising 500 accommodation bookings and amending 25,000 flights over that time. This would not have been possible using traditional methods.

As an industry noted for its word of mouth advertising, results like these have reinforced our key message about improving efficiency and reducing costs, and we have achieved sales in oil and gas across Australia, Papua New Guinea and Canada on the back of these metrics.

What does the future hold for INX?

Our recent development efforts and company focus have been on our new Version 5 product update, and we believe that our research, development and implementation capabilities are established. We see the future for our product as being functionally rich and built around our customers, reflecting emerging trends in technology and industry. As a business, we will significantly increase our sales and marketing capability with the goal of taking the business to the next level, and look forward to expanding our capabilities as we service more customers in the oil and gas sector and across the globe.