



Fast Facts

Company

The Sunset Gower and Sunset Bronson studios comprise about 880,000 square feet of sound stages, post-production, and office space used by independent producers, movie studios and television network customers to create a wide range of original programming that is distributed all over the world.

Challenges

The two facilities were using separate and incompatible systems to manage their business operations. Manual and spreadsheet-based processes were inefficient, making financial analysis and reporting difficult and tedious. The company needed a single system that would support its expanding operations and also be compliant with Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) regulations.

Solution

The company selected Xytech MediaPulse as the preferred system to replace its legacy software. The project team built a test platform using data from one of the operations and worked with Xytech consultants to configure the implementation to meet the specific requirements of each of the two main facilities. The team used a single instance of MediaPulse with the system's Divisions feature enabled in order to provide each facility with independent sets of business logic and operational preferences and also enable combined reporting.

Results

The company is now operating with a fully SOX-compliant system with reporting on combined operations for multiple divisions. Facility, personnel and equipment utilization is optimized. People are spending significantly less time on paperwork and more time doing things that help the company succeed.

Client

Sunset Gower Studios is a 15.6 acre media and entertainment property located in the heart of Hollywood. The property encompasses almost an entire city block and has been fixture in the entertainment industry since it was built in the 1920s. It served as Columbia Pictures' headquarters through 1972 and is now one of the largest independent media and entertainment properties in the United States. The property is comprised of almost 400,000 square feet of office and support space, along with 12 sound stage facilities totaling over 175,000 square feet. Sunset Gower Studios is primarily used to produce single camera ("film style") prime time television programs, feature films, and commercials.

Sunset Bronson Studios is a 10.6 acre media and entertainment campus immediately adjacent to the Sunset Gower Studios. The property served as the original Warner Brothers Studios and was the site of the first talking film, *The Jazz Singer*. Sunset Bronson consists of over 300,000 square feet, of which about half is dedicated to sound stage facilities. The property also serves as the home of KTLA, one of the largest independent television stations in the US and has been the network's only home for over 50 years. Sunset Bronson Studios offers a full complement of production, post-production and support facilities and is primarily used to produce multi-camera (live or live-to-tape) television programs, including talk shows, reality shows, comedies, and game shows.

Independent production companies, movie studios and television network customers rent facilities on both lots to create a wide range of original programming that is distributed worldwide.

The Sunset Gower Studios was acquired by the predecessor to Hudson Pacific Properties, a real estate investment trust, in 2007, followed by the acquisition of Sunset Bronson Studios in 2008.

Xytech Case Study

Sunset Gower + Sunset Bronson Studios

Challenges

All purchase orders were executed manually using multi-part forms. This was a labor-intensive way to manage purchasing for such an active facility operation. Generation of reports on outside costs was particularly challenging. For example, in order to create a report on all purchases made from a specific vendor for a particular set of items or services required hours of work. Accounting personnel had to go through all the forms, find the ones that were relevant to the question, and then compile a report in Excel.



Sunset Gower and Sunset Bronson Studios are two of the largest independent production facilities in the world. They implemented MediaPulse to help them manage all purchasing, billing, inventory, and scheduling functions in compliance with SOX.

“MediaPulse has vastly improved the reliability and accountability of our operations.”

- Jeremy Jacobs, Director of Operations, Sunset Bronson Studios

The two studio facilities were using completely separate billing systems. Sunset Gower was using Excel in conjunction with a third party accounting system to handle all billing. The use of spreadsheets in the billing process was laborious and could result in missed revenue opportunities. Ancillary revenue derived from rentals of lighting equipment, dressing rooms, stage personnel, and so forth is a massive part of the production facilities business and the company needed a way to ensure that it captured all ancillary rentals and services in its billing. The Sunset Bronson operation was using an inadequate legacy system unable to scale to support both the Gower and Bronson studios.

Scheduling of facilities and personnel was accomplished using a combination of Outlook calendars and database-driven scheduling system not up to the task of supporting such a large and rapidly expanding operation. Since there were two completely separate scheduling

systems, it was extremely difficult to coordinate activities between the two studios. Outlook is designed for relatively simple scheduling tasks for individuals and shared facilities like conference rooms but it was cumbersome and difficult to use as a facility scheduling system in a production studio. The legacy database-driven scheduling system was out of date and suffered from a number of deficiencies. Management determined that a single scheduling system covering both facilities would reduce scheduling conflicts, optimize utilization, and allow them to produce more timely reports and make a significant contribution to the overall success of the business.

Solution

The company put together a two person team to identify objectives and vendors for replacing their existing billing, purchasing

Xytech Case Study *Sunset Gower + Sunset Bronson Studios*



Sunset Gower Studios is a 15.6 acre media and entertainment property located in the heart of Hollywood. Clients use its facilities to produce single camera (“film style”) prime time television programs, feature films, and commercials.

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I know we’ve captured more revenue – I absolutely know that – since we went live with MediaPulse. Fewer things can fall through the cracks and we’ve developed an improved system of checks and balances using the system so everything shows up on the invoice. ”

Jeremy Jacobs
Director of Operations
Sunset Bronson Studios

and scheduling systems. They considered several alternative systems, including expansion of the existing database-driven scheduling and billing system in use in the Sunset Bronson operation. However, they determined very quickly that the legacy system was not suitably scalable to support the current company structure. Additionally, the company is expanding its operations and needed a system capable of continued expansion in terms of operating groups, employees, facility types, and equipment inventory over the long term.

Xytech MediaPulse rose to the top very quickly and became the preferred choice. The team recognized the value of using a system preferred by the world’s premier movie studios, television networks, and post houses. They also felt they needed a system designed specifically around the requirements of media and entertainment companies.

Xytech Case Study *Sunset Gower + Sunset Bronson Studios*



Sunset Bronson Studios is a 10.6 acre media and entertainment campus immediately adjacent to the Sunset Gower Studios. Sunset Bronson offers a full complement of production, post-production and support facilities and is primarily used to produce multi-camera (live or live-to-tape) television programs, including talk shows, reality shows, comedies, and game shows.

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Generating reports used to be a more complex and time consuming task. Now it takes about 20 seconds to generate a report that is complete and accurate. MediaPulse's reporting capabilities are a huge benefit for us.

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Jeremy Jacobs
Director of Operations
Sunset Bronson Studios

The ability to customize MediaPulse to meet their specific requirement was another major factor in their decision. Sunset Gower and Sunset Bronson are two of the largest independent production facilities in the world and they each had long histories. Each facility specialized in very different types of productions and worked with different types of customers. Therefore, the team knew that no system would work for them “out of the box” and that they must be able to adapt the software to match their established business processes, as well as support existing SOX-compliant processes in the purchasing and billing departments.

The team worked with Xytech consultants to build a test database encapsulating a large amount of inventory, space accounting, and scheduling data. They used this test platform to run through all key business processes and made comparisons with the existing procedures in terms of time required to complete a process, ease of use, and accuracy. The team also worked with Xytech Professional Services Staff to create a series of user guides on best practices for the most common business processes. This proved very helpful as they introduced the system to additional personnel.

All testing was completed at the Sunset Gower facility and then they added the Sunset Bronson facility just before the complete system went live. The team utilized MediaPulse's Divisions function to provide each facility with an independent set of business logic and operational preferences while still allowing combined reporting. The team went live with the MediaPulse Purchase Order module which was then followed by MediaPulse Job Management, Scheduling and Billing. The implementation was completed in about 90 days.

Xytech Case Study

Sunset Gower + Sunset Bronson Studios

Results

The implementation of MediaPulse enables the Sunset Gower and Sunset Bronson Studios to operate much more efficiently and produce improved and more detailed reports on utilization, inventory, costs, and revenue.

Scheduling of equipment, personnel, office space, and soundstages is highly optimized as a result of using the MediaPulse Scheduling module. Managers combine schedule data based on the amount of time actually used for a production and this information then flows directly into the billing system.

The company can now generate accurate and complete invoices on a daily or weekly basis as needed. The ability to generate historical information has proven to be more valuable than expected; managers can examine trends and make decisions on adding new equipment and personnel based on projected demand.

The company can say with confidence that MediaPulse has been an extremely wise investment based solely on improved utilization of its resources and inventory control. Company management reports that with Media Pulse the studios operate more efficiently, that more detailed reports are readily available, and that turn-around time for billing has been reduced. Today, Sunset Gower and Sunset Bronson operate using a fully integrated, robust system that management is confident can be scaled up as needed to support expanding operations while maintaining SOX compliance.

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We certainly accomplished everything we set out to do with the system – and it’s done much more for us.

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Jeremy Jacobs
Director of Operations
Sunset Bronson Studios

About Xytech

For over 25 years, the world’s best media companies have depended on Xytech to run their businesses. MediaPulse is the only end to end solution for the complete content lifecycle. It provides scheduling, automation, asset management, billing, and cost recovery for broadcasters, media services companies, and transmission facilities in a scalable platform-independent solution.

www.XytechSystems.com