



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

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NetSuite providing enterprise-class ERP exposure to accounting graduates





TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

Indiana University Kelley School of Business

www.kelley.iu.edu



At A Glance:

- **Company:** The Kelley School offers undergraduate, MBA, master's, and doctoral degrees at Indiana University's Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses.
- **Location:** Bloomington, IN
- **Industry:** Education, Nonprofit
- **Challenges:**
 - Accounting Information Systems (AIS) class needed more hands-on experience for graduating seniors
 - On-premise AIS alternatives imposed untenable IT requirements on students and campus IT labs
- **Software switched from:**
 - MS Office Accounting Professional
- **Other software considered:**
 - Salesforce.com, Sugar CRM, Plexus
- **Results with NetSuite:**
 - NetSuite providing enterprise-class ERP exposure to accounting graduates
 - On-demand availability means students can access coursework from any computer, at home or on campus

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— Dr. Joyce K. Byrer, Senior Lecturer
The Kelley School of Business

Results

The Kelley School of Business at Indiana University adopted NetSuite for the practical component of its accounting information systems (AIS) class, improving the quality of hands-on experience and exposure to real-world systems for its graduating seniors.

“The students like NetSuite as they feel they are working with a real, enterprise-class accounting information system, and not just some off-the-shelf bookkeeping program,” says senior lecturer Dr. Joyce K. Byrer. “NetSuite is similar to the software many of our graduates will see in the corporate world.”

Because NetSuite is deployed using a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) delivery model, it imposes no special burden or requirements on students and campus IT resources. “All the students have to do is know their logins and passwords,” she says. “We don’t have to host anything here on site, so students can access it from home or here on campus.”

Dr. Byrer believes that adding NetSuite to her course has helped students better understand enterprise business processes. “We believe an ERP SaaS product like this helps make our students more knowledgeable and marketable, having had hands-on experience with a cutting-edge ERP solution.”

Challenges

The Kelley School of Business wants its accounting students to be well-prepared for careers in the business world. A key part of that effort is the senior-level Accounting Information Systems course. When Dr. Byrer took over responsibility for the course, she wanted to expand the practical component of the course. “We had been using Microsoft Office Accounting Professional, but it was a little awkward because it couldn’t be installed in the student computer labs due to database constraints,” she says. “QuickBooks couldn’t be used, for similar reasons.”





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Hundreds of seniors take the AIS course every year, so changing the courseware was not a decision to be made lightly. The time had clearly come to elevate the sophistication of the class. “It seemed to me that a systems class should be more focused on giving students the opportunity to do more hands-on work with a real technology-based AIS.”

Solution

“After I modified the course with a new book and course topics, I had discussions with some of the accounting professors about the inclusion of potential technologies. One of them suggested NetSuite,” she says. “It proved to be an easy product to incorporate in the classroom.”

Students in the AIS course use the software to establish businesses which sell both products and services, linked to a fictitious database of vendors and customers provided in the training software. Each student has his/her own account and creates a company, customizes the appearance of the screen, and determines what to buy and sell. The two-week practical portion of the course then takes students through the business processes associated with the expenditure and revenue cycles. “The functionality in the software is a good fit for our curriculum. When students sit down and work through these processes, there is surprisingly little confusion or questions,” she says. “They already have a good grounding in the information processing operations, and this particular product shows them how to implement them.”

After several successful sections using NetSuite as part of her course, Dr. Byrer is adding course material inspired by Sarbanes-Oxley requirements. “We are going to have students address situations such as receiving products never ordered and paying a vendor an amount that exceeds the accounts payable due to the vendor,” she says. “I believe NetSuite will help us demonstrate the kinds of controls and compliance issues students must be aware of in the real world.”

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