Effective and efficient management of your entire rental business with Annata Dynamics RENT

Introduction

In recent years the market has witnessed the steady increase in lease and rental activities as a greater number of consumers and businesses shift from the acquisition of expensive vehicles – vehicles, machines, equipment – to lease or rental. There are many benefits achievable with this approach, including:

- Fixed fees for the entire package – making budget planning easy
- Flexible terms – including; variable duration; usage and mileage terms etc.
- Equipment rented is likely to be more ‘state-of-the-art’ than owned equipment
- Certain agreements, such as Contract Hire, removes depreciating assets from the balance sheet
- Minimize the size of your equipment fleet – only have the equipment that you need at that time
- Flexible invoice arrangements – which help to considerably reduce administration

For a user, a key benefit is that you only pay for the equipment when you need it – with prices that are very low per day, week or month. Hiring equipment is more flexible and you have a vast range of equipment at your fingertips. When renting a piece of equipment, expert advice is provided and the user can be secure in the knowledge that the equipment complies with legal regulations and is well maintained. Safety checks are carried out before the rental takes place – helping to give greater user confidence in the equipment that they are renting.

The Challenge

The challenge for any organization within the rental marketplace - whether that is machinery, equipment or vehicles - is to maximize the utilization of their assets whilst maintaining market leading standards. Customers demanding better value for money means that rental organizations will continually have to look to controlling costs, so that savings can be reinvested or passed on to the customer in the form of more competitive rates.

The question then arises regarding the challenges of managing in an increasingly complex businesses environment. Should individual ‘best of breed’ software solutions be used to manage distinct areas of the business (e.g. having a rental solution plus a finance solution plus a CRM solution etc.) or should an organization ‘build their own’ solution to meet their current needs (but what about future needs?).

This white paper discusses how rental organizations can benefit from a market leading rental solution built inside a world class ERP system. In effect this means that an organization can manage their entire business: HR; Sales & marketing; Purchases; General ledger; Banking; Fixed Assets; etc. as well as all aspects of the rental operation – using a single software solution.

This doesn’t mean that your business is destined to ‘stand still’ from a systems point of view. Hundreds of thousands of hours are ‘spent’ on R&D every year to update the functionality to match the current and future business needs. This means that your business can learn from the ‘best practice’ of organizations from around the world – helping you to strive for continual improvement, stay ahead of the competition and delight your customers every day.

This is your introduction to Annata Dynamics RENT for Microsoft Dynamics AX2012.
Annata Dynamics RENT

Annata provides a range of products that supply the functionality needed by importers, wholesalers, dealers and service providers (including the rental sector) in the automotive, machinery and equipment industry. The solutions are built inside Microsoft's Dynamics AX Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software. They utilize all of the standard features of Microsoft Dynamics AX as well as extensive additional features specifically designed to support businesses like yours.

We believe that your business must have access to all of the great functionality of Microsoft Dynamics AX to ensure that you get the best return on investment. You may not use all of the functionality from ‘day 1’ but as your business grows, develops and adapts to an ever changing marketplace there will come a time when you will want to do things slightly differently, without having to buy more software. As a certified vertical solution for Dynamics AX, our mantra is: ‘standard must work’!

The Annata Dynamics RENT solution includes a ‘function rich’ rental management system with built in periodic invoicing processes. This functionality is tightly linked to the relevant business modules necessary to conduct a successful rental operation. This means that the module is built within the standard ERP framework and does not sit outside of the main system as an add-on. Somebody using our system will not know when they are in an AX form and when they are in a Dynamics RENT form!

Invoices are generated inside the system and therefore link directly to both the general ledger and the reporting system to ensure a ‘real-time’ view of the rental business as it happens. This will enable business decisions to be made quickly and using accurate information and thereby increasing the chances of success.

Rental and Fleet management

Any rental company will want to track their assets from the day of purchase right through until the end of its ‘lifetime’ in the fleet – during this period there will also be the need to know where the asset is located at any point in time. The lifetime cost of keeping the asset in the fleet, including maintenance, damage repairs or upgrades, is also important to monitor profitability of individual products or product groups. All of this is available as standard in Annata Dynamics RENT.

The Rent and Fleet Management module includes a series of features that enables a rental organization to better utilize individual vehicles, and therefore the fleet as a whole, to make better use of the investment capital.

The Fleet Management module includes comprehensive functionality for the acquisition of vehicles, whether single or multi-brand. These vehicles may need to include a range of attachments, where the core vehicle is fitted with other parts – e.g. different sized buckets, chains, weights, or even a crane attachment that fits onto the back of a truck.

Annata Dynamics RENT enables different types of vehicles to be held on the system and tracked: simple vehicle (e.g. itemized); parent and child relationships; composite vehicles (e.g. scaffold towers, kit items); bulk items (e.g. non-itemized); linked products where items are typically rented together (mandatory, optional or recommended), or as an aid to promote sales of extras or consumable items.
OUR CUSTOMER IS IN THE TOP 20 COMPANIES WORLDWIDE FOR THE PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO CONSTRUCTION, MANUFACTURING, INDUSTRIAL, RAIL AND RELATED INDUSTRIES. LIKE ALL RENTAL COMPANIES THEY ARE FACING MANY CHALLENGES AND ARE GETTING THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS (AND MORE) THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DYNAMICS RENT SOLUTION FROM ANNATA:

- INCREASED SYSTEM AVAILABILITY - REDUCE EXPOSURE TO OUTAGES ATTRIBUTED TO SYSTEM CUSTOMIZATIONS, UNSUPPORTED SOFTWARE OR CAPACITY ISSUES;
- IMPROVED QUALITY AND TIMING OF B.I., ENHANCING DECISION MAKING AT ALL LEVELS;
- IMPROVED SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS;
- ABILITY TO PROVIDE ‘REAL TIME’ ANSWERS TO CUSTOMER QUERIES AND ENABLING THE SALES/HIRE PROCESS TO BE TAILORED TO SPECIFIC CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS;
- REDUCED ERROR RATES AND IMPROVED AUDITABILITY BY LIMITING THE MANUAL INPUT, RE-KEYING AND MANIPULATION OF DATA IN MULTIPLE SYSTEMS AND SPREAD SHEETS;
- IMPROVED FINANCIAL CONTROL BY USING WORKFLOW-BASED APPROVALS;
- PROVIDING A SYSTEM PLATFORM THAT ALLOWS THE BUSINESS TO REDUCE WASTE, INCREASE EFFICIENCY, AND HENCE MAXIMISE PROFITABILITY;
- ABILITY TO READILY ACCOMMODATE FUTURE ORGANIZATIONAL/SYSTEM CHANGES AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS;
- PROVISION OF A FLEXIBLE AND ‘OPEN’ SYSTEMS PLATFORM, ENABLING FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS, FLEXIBLE PRICING MODELS; STRAIGHTFORWARD INTEGRATION WITH OTHER SYSTEMS; B2B INITIATIVES.

Pre-rental, and post-rental, inspection checklists can also be produced within the RENT module. Inspection checklists are important to maintain business standards – whether these are company measures or those associated with the safe operation of the vehicle. Inspection checklists can also be used to identify any damage to the vehicle that may have been caused by the customer. This action will help to ensure that there are fewer disagreements over when the damage was caused and therefore who is responsible. It is also possible to attach detailed notes, or even photographs, to the rental order so that all information is recorded accurately.

Any documentation relating to the rental agreement can also be attached to the Rental Order, so that it is available should any complaint arise after the vehicle has been returned. The rental order is automatically linked to the customer, so all of the information is available directly from the customer form.
**Vehicle Maintenance**

Vehicles need to be maintained in a good and safe condition. In addition to the manufacturers’ recommended routine maintenance schedule, arrangements should be made for vehicles to be inspected at appropriate legislative intervals to determine the condition of those parts that make significant contribution to their safe operation. The solution can handle maintenance intervals of any frequency.

The Workshop service module, directly linked to **Fleet Management**, enables all such tasks to be undertaken. Down time can be limited by managing scheduled maintenance and inspections – ensuring that regular maintenance is known about and can be planned for. The Service module can be used to create job lists that cover all of the manufacturers’ requirements as well as the safety requirements that were mentioned above. Job lists can also include standard hours against each task that needs to be carried out, so that analysis can be done to compare the actual performance of a mechanic against the standard time to carry out a task.

The **Service module** also includes functionality to effectively manage the workshop or workshops associated with the rental operation. This includes the ability to manage the workshop load, the people in the workshop, the skills of the team, the rates that should be charged dependent on these skills, track their availability, manage warehouses attached to the workshop for greater stock control on parts, automated parts ordering, etc.

*Fig 2: Interactive inspection screen shot*

**Leasing**

WORKING WITH LEADING MANUFACTURERS ENABLES ANNATA TO DRAW ON INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES AND INCORPORATE THEM INTO THE ANNATA DYNAMICS RENT SOLUTION WITH MODERN WORKSHOP SERVICE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONALITY

OUR SOLUTION IS BEING IMPLEMENTED ACROSS THE EUROPEAN NETWORK OF THIS LARGE MANUFACTURER OF CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT. WE ARE ALSO WORKING IN THE FAR EAST TO OFFER A SOLUTION TO THE DEALERS IN THEIR CHINESE NETWORK.
Recalls

Having a fleet of well-maintained assets is something that is essential for any equipment rental business. Equally important is an equipment fleet that meets all health and safety requirements – as this is crucial for the safety of customers and for the company to avoid legal action and bad press which can easily damage the organizations reputation. The recalls management functionality, provided as standard with Annata Dynamics RENT, gives the organization the tools that they need to effectively manage the process of making sure that all equipment has all of the latest “fixes” and adjustments requested by the OEM, or equipment modifications that have been identified as necessary by customers.

The functionality of Dynamics RENT enables a rental company to track the repairs that are needed on their equipment regardless of where the asset is located. For an emergency recall it may be necessary to carry out the repair immediately – even if it is located on a customer site. For lower levels of recall the repair can possibly wait until the piece of equipment comes back from hire. The workshop service functionality within Dynamics RENT is used to ensure that all repairs / alterations required are carried out.

As standard within the solution it is possible to:

- Control all transactions relating to the fixed asset
- Track the status and location of a vehicle at all times
- Transfer the vehicles between locations
- Handle exchange requests and equipment collections
- Raise leasing contracts’
How the solution fits together

The diagram below shows how the key elements of Annata Dynamics RENT fit together, it also shows one of the direct relationships between the Annata solution and the Microsoft Dynamics AX product. The example shows how 'standard' AX sales orders are used as the final stage of invoicing a rental order. Beyond this the standard AX payment procedures, banking, account reconciliation etc. are also used. This is a great example of where a rental company will benefit both from the industry specific functionality of Annata Dynamics RENT as well as the power of Microsoft Dynamics AX.

![Diagram showing the structure of the Rent and Fleet Management module functionality](image)

**Fig. 3: The structure of the Rent and Fleet Management module functionality**

**CAR HIRE**

THE DYNAMICS RENT SOLUTION FROM ANNATA HAS BEEN SUPPORTING THIS SEASONALLY BUSY CAR RENTAL OPERATION IN ICELAND SINCE 2009.
About Annata

Annata is an international management consulting and technology services company. With the combination of deep industry experience and comprehensive capabilities within chosen technology areas, Annata works closely with customers and partners around the world to help them become high-performance businesses.

Annata’s strategy builds on our expertise in consulting and technology. Adding that to our industry knowledge and the industry specific solutions offering, we help business around the world to undertake high-impact business improvement projects.

Through industry focus and relentless determination to deliver world class technology solutions we have gained trusted status with many of the world’s best known companies. Locally we have earned the trust of businesses of all sizes in many industries. Annata enjoys strategic partnerships with local, regional and global partners who have embraced our technology solutions and created new business opportunities, earning them a preferred status on their own.

Some of the strengths that define Annata and distinguish us from our competitors are:

- Our robust and tested partner organization, including the partner training services, certifications and support model
- Our ‘Certified for Microsoft Dynamics’ and ‘Tested for Microsoft Dynamics’ technology solutions
- Our extensive industry expertise
- Our customer focused service model
- Our business technology innovation and effective deployment of business technology advancements to the marketplace
- Our long-term commitment to the development of our employees

Annata works with many of the better known brands in the equipment and automotive sectors – either directly through our own operations or indirectly through our worldwide partner network. It may be that a customer in Brazil or another in Sweden are doing something in their business that could be beneficial to your business at some time in the future (whether that is next year or in 5 years’ time) – this is what we mean by ‘sharing best practice’ between organizations around the world. This is the sort of thing that you could miss out on if the decision is made to build an ‘in house’ solution.

Microsoft Dynamics AX & Annata Dynamics IDMS - Functional map

Find out more

If you want to find out more about Dynamics RENT for Microsoft Dynamics AX2012 please visit our website www.annata.co.uk.

We would also be happy to help with any specific questions that you may have relating to Annata or our solutions. Please feel free to contact us on info@annata.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.