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CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA REALIZES THE BENEFITS OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO PROPERTY VALUATION

The City of Cape Town, with a population of over three million, is the second-most populous city in South Africa, and the largest in land area — encompassing almost 1000 square miles.

Considered to be one of the most multicultural cities in the world, it is the provincial capital of the Western Cape—one of the Country's nine provinces—as well as the legislative capital of South Africa, where the National Parliament and many government offices are located.

During the past decade, Cape Town has embraced a new set of valuation statutes, updated its technology and processes, and continued to make improvements on an annual basis. From its general valuations in 2000, 2006 and 2009 to recent systems upgrades, Cape Town has realized quantifiable returns on its investments and added value to improve efficiency and provide better outcomes for its citizens.

THE LATEST CHALLENGE: A CITY WIDE RE-EVALUATION SYSTEM

The year 2009 was a critical and busy one for the 150 staff members of the City of Cape Town's Valuations Office. Under the leadership of its Director, Christopher Gavor, the staff conducted a general re-evaluation of all of the City's 780,000 taxable properties. While this was taking place, they also began the installation process of a Aumentum system to replace their legacy SIGMA system. "In 2007, we were advised that our SIGMA system was not going to be supported after a period of time," said Gavor. "So we received a presentation on a new system—Aumentum. Based on the system's functionality and flexibility we made the decision to upgrade our system to Aumentum."

This was an important step for Gavor who believes that a general evaluation is all about fairness, uniformity, equity and transparency. "We needed to ensure that all checks and balances were in place to make a fair general revaluation a reality and to give effect to the fair distribution of rates among taxpayers," said Gavor.

THE SOLUTION: ASSESSMENT & VALUATION OF EACH PROPERTY & USE OF Aumentum FEATURES

The staffs of the Valuations Office's four departmental sections—Data Collection and Quality Control; Valuation Data & Systems; Valuations Operations; and Business Environment Section

DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT

Addressing the future, Gavor said that the Aumentum system will be of great overall value to the Valuations Office of City of Cape Town because it will allow them to integrate the use of future technologies to maximize efficiency in the way do their business.

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worked together to assess and set a value for each individual property as of July 1, 2009. This value was used to determine the taxes the property owner will pay. "Although taxes depend on the property value," said Gavor, "we also used a general valuation technical process—which takes care of relative shifts in the market value of a neighborhood—as well as a 'Value Review' quality control process to attach a fair and uniform final value to each property." In addition, Aumentum provided the City with never before used features that helped the Valuations Office provide more accurate and faster service to its constituents.

THE BENEFITS: DEADLINES MET, PRODUCTIVITY INCREASE & REAL-TIME RESPONSES TO PROPERTY OWNERS

On January 29, 2010, after what Gavor refers to as an intense period of time where the Valuations Office's staff "put in the hard slog," the City received its sixth unqualified audit from the Auditor-General and achieved a new milestone by being the only municipality in the Western Cape of Africa to achieve a 'clean' audit. In addition, the global ratings agency Moody's International confirmed Cape Town's top rating of Aa2.za.

After the general valuation roll was certified it was made available to the general public for inspection. During this time of "Inspection," property owners can lodge formal objections with the Valuations Office regarding the value assessed on their properties. According to Gavor, Aumentum allowed the City to use some features of the system to ease the staff's burden during the "Public Objection" period of time. It also allowed the City to provide property owners with faster response. "In the past property owners who wanted to challenge the valuation placed on their properties would complete and turn in a form during the one month period of objection. All these forms would not be processed until they were all gathered and entered into the system," said Gavor. "Now, owners can review the details of their property on the Valuations Office's website and they can send us queries and objections by e-mail. Using Aumentum, we can capture objections in real-time and issue an immediate acknowledgment to the property owner. In addition," he continued, "with Aumentum's workflow-centric system all of our teams—data collection, valuers, modeling, business environment and customer interface can work together at the same time and from the same set of real-time data, helping us to become more efficient while reducing errors and increasing productivity."

Addressing the future, Gavor said that the Aumentum system will be of great overall value to the Valuations Office of City of Cape Town because it will allow them to integrate the use of future technologies to maximize efficiency in the way they do their business. "However," continued Gavor, "not only are the Aumentum systems very good, so are the people who support them." He explained: "Beyond technology and systems the staff has been very good. Anytime we had issues to deal with and we called on them their response has been excellent. When we went live, we requested that they send one official to come and deal with some of the minor problems we expected during this time—within a matter of days there were two of their people in South Africa."

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CHRISTOPHER GAVOR
Director
City of Cape Town Valuation Office

DID YOU KNOW?

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