

A half-day course and you're all set

With more than 80 hotels, Hampshire Hospitality is one of the biggest hotel chains in the Benelux countries. Of those 80, 25 are owned by Hampshire Hospitality itself, with the others affiliated to the hotel group through a licensing scheme. Hampshire hotels can be found in a wide variety of locations: from city centres to the heart of the countryside. Among its famous establishments are the Design-hotel in Maastricht, the Oranje Hotel in Leeuwarden and the stately and legendary Hotel American in Amsterdam.

Change of name

The hotel group also has its origins in the Dutch capital, having started out more than thirty years ago with the Eden Hotel beside the River Amstel. More and more hotels were bought under that name, most of them in medium-sized Dutch towns and cities. As its next move, in 2011 Eden Hotels took over the Hampshire hotel group, and a change of name was the logical outcome. A total of 1,100 staff work at the 25 hotels. Going forward, Hampshire Hospitality plans to further develop hotel businesses in Benelux and western Germany, either through licensing or by operating the hotels itself.

Second generation

Joost Peeperkorn has been Finance Director at the group since 2007, so has been very much a part of the happy story of the hotel group's growth and the takeover of Hampshire Hospitality. The group had switched to LucaNet software a year before his arrival, making Peeperkorn a second-generation user. Although he was not involved in the implementation, he had no difficulty familiarising himself with the software.

„When I started working here, I booked a half-day consultancy with LucaNet to learn it. That turned out to be enough to master the basics.“

Gradual roll-out

The hotel group's growth went hand in hand with growth in the use of the LucaNet software. Says Peeperkorn: „When Hampshire Hospitality first started using LucaNet, we had twelve hotels in total. We began at the logical starting point: with our P&L and our balance sheet. From there, we rolled out the use of LucaNet, initially with automatic consolidation. Before LucaNet, we used to do this manually using Excel. With twelve hotels, that was still feasible. But we are now dealing with 60 different companies.“

World of difference

That is a world of difference, says Peeperkorn. For a long time, Excel seems perfectly fine – until you get used to something else. „Because if you have items on two three different accounts for 60 different companies, a mix of debit and credit transactions, eliminating contra entries becomes a real puzzle. Besides the increasing likelihood of errors it is, of course, hugely time-consuming. Some companies literally spend days doing this. And yet you can get it all done simply at the push of a button.“

Self-sufficient

Designing and adapting that puzzle yourself is, in Peeperkorn's view, straightforward. The so-called wizards that make it pos-



sible within the software package can be understood quickly and are easy to apply. At Hampshire Hospitality, they have been self-sufficient for several generations already. „Users who joined after me don't take long to get to grips with LucaNet either," Peeperkorn says. „Every now and then a new user goes on a half-day course to learn more about LucaNet quickly, but that's all. If we want a new configuration, someone from LucaNet pays us a visit. If we're dealing with something completely new, they put us on track. A month later, we check in with each other to make sure we're still on the right track." In Peeperkorn's view, this „DIY" ability is a huge bonus across the board. „LucaNet's whole business model is designed with that DIY approach in mind. So it isn't geared towards ongoing support or consultancy."

Keeping it in-house

Peeperkorn cites an example of how that self-sufficiency works in practice: „We now use LucaNet for reporting as well. When I want a new report, I can handle it all myself: from the compilation to the end report. I don't have to involve any external parties. I know of plenty of places that say: „Do you need a new report? Great, we'll sort it out for you." It's a way for them to carry on charging for their time. LucaNet is very different. There's a helpdesk, of course, and you can get someone in if you're struggling with a technical issue. But in practice, that's rarely necessary.

Forward-looking

Hampshire Hospitality is also now using LucaNet's software for looking ahead – for forecasting (planning six months in advance) and budgeting (twelve months). According to Peeperkorn, this was as straightforward as integrating past tasks. Taking a broader look ahead: what challenges await

Joost Peeperkorn, Finance Director

Hampshire Hotels

„Because LucaNet is so easy to use, it's a very practical tool. Once you're familiar with the navigation buttons, it's easy to locate the right data. My colleague has only been working here for a couple of months but she can already retrieve the information she wants from LucaNet herself."

the hotel industry in the near future? Says Peeperkorn: „Increased transparency in particular is a massive change in the hotel sector. In light of this, it's important to be able to react swiftly and gain an insight into the information. LucaNet helps us do this."

In the driving seat

Judging by its success in recent years, Hampshire Hospitality looks set for further growth. Peeperkorn's vision is for finance to be able to evolve effortlessly with the group. „Finance has to be able to keep pace with the company's development. If you can do that independently, you're in the driving seat. We want to be able to adapt the structure like for like following events such as a takeover or other changes within the organisation. LucaNet fits the bill perfectly."

CASE STUDY HAMPSHIRE HOTELS

Industry:	Hospitality
Headquarters:	Amsterdam (Netherlands)
Employees:	approx. 1,100
Project:	Corporate Performance Management
Modules:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LucaNet. Financial Consolidation• LucaNet. Planner