The Power of One:

Shiji Group Achieves Significant Economies of Scale with Zoho One

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Introduction

Shiji Group is a leading supplier of information systems for the hospitality industry. Their software solutions span payment systems, online distribution tools, point of sale (POS) systems in restaurants and retail stores, and software for hotels to manage check-ins, check-outs, and general operations.

It owns more than 60% of the market share of China's hotel information systems across the luxury hospitality industry in the region. The company operates in 23 countries, with its customers accounting for more than 91,000 hotels, 200,000 restaurants, and 600,000 retail stores.

Founded in 1998, Shiji initially operated as somewhat autonomous regional units. Therefore, many regions were performing their own technology evaluations and deployments, leading to a proliferation of applications and tools.

"When you're using Salesforce to run your operations, you have to hire Salesforce consultants to make changes to your deployment. This alongside the sheer amount of software being licensed resulted in money and time lost to system management," said Sergio Teixeira, the Global CRM Manager at Shiji Group. "Our locations were running as separate businesses. We needed a system that would give us better adoption and standardization to gain visibility."

Because of so many disparate applications, performing data analysis was inefficient at best and ineffective at worst. And simple procedures like email campaigns were being performed by multiple applications, leading to poor visibility into response rates and a lack of analysis of campaign performance. And of course, managing disparate silos of applications increased IT complexity and drove up costs.

The company knew it wanted to standardize and centralize its IT to both reduce complexity and enjoy economy of scale. So, the first move was to adopt a new human capital management platform for all employees. After looking for the right tool that was cost-effective and could cover its needs for its entire global employee base, the firm selected Zoho People. Soon, 100% of employees were onboarded to the platform.

Beyond HR

Once the company standardized core HR tasks and processes on Zoho People, the platform quickly proved its scalability and performance capabilities. Shiji then started evaluating how Zoho could help automate and optimize other processes across the company. The company replaced disparate CRM tools with Zoho CRM, streamlining not only systems, but also gaining the ability to consolidate nearly a decade's worth of customer and transactional data. This gave Shiji Group not only strong economy of scale, but improved business process automation and outcomes due to much greater visibility into historical and ongoing business operations.

"We have made full use of Zoho's (CRM) capabilities and we are seeing its results range beyond everyday operations and make a positive impact on the big picture," Texeira adds. As the company was making a global expansion outside of China, standardizing on Zoho CRM enabled it to better align business processes and goals across all regions. And because of its ease of use and clear value provided to customer-facing employees, adoption has remained high at 95%.

In addition to core sales automation functionality, the company quickly expanded to more Zoho CRM functions. These include shifting off of HubSpot and on to Zoho Campaigns: as a growing global business Shiji sends massive amounts of email and other digital engagements that are now managed and optimized inside Zoho Campaigns. Zoho Campaigns and its survey capabilities also powers voice of the customer efforts for Shiji. In addition, Zoho Analytics provides more in-depth dashboards and analytics, enabling Shiji to always stay on top of key performance indicators across the business.

Supporting a Global Business

Once the company had successfully deployed the core Zoho CRM components, it looked to standardize the entire customer support experience for its growing global customer base. Shiji moved away from some expensive and inefficient disparate, disjointed tools like Zendesk and prepared to implement Zoho Desk to integrate with its existing Zoho CRM implementation. The move was part of an overarching move to Zoho One, which provided even greater flexibility and cost effectiveness for Shiji's IT strategy.

The company tasked Zoho Desk with managing a broad swath of its customer support functions, including: acting as a self-service portal for customers seeking answers on their own; managing a large volume of email-based support tickets; IVR and other voice-based support requirements; and using the tool to manage support escalations. This was in addition to core automations such as case routing and assignment, managing service level agreements, and other key support workflows.

Like Shiji experienced with its core Zoho CRM deployment, ease of configuration and customization made the deployment a smooth process. "The ease of configuration sold us on selecting Zoho Desk," said Kyle Kurdle, Vice President, Global Service Delivery, Shiji Group. "The fact that we could do most of it ourselves impressed our team, as we wanted to be able to maintain control and we were not subject to having ongoing consulting fees and other expenses. So, keeping our costs controllable became achievable."

Due to the ease of configuration, Shiji was able to get Zoho Desk up and running in just eight weeks. And Zoho Desk quickly became the customer support platform for a number of Shiji's operational departments. In fact, today more than 600 of Shiji's employees in support roles rely on Zoho Desk every day to provide a standout support experience for Shiji's employees, partners and customers alike.

A Strategy for Broad Adoption

Achieving CRM success is next to impossible if the users reject the solution put before them. But the Shiji team worked hard to anticipate any pushback by first analyzing key business processes, and simply how things were getting done. The deployment team interviewed employees, and analyzed their common tasks to see what could be not only standardized, but optimized by the Zoho implementation. Zoho proved flexible and configurable enough to not only support the way individuals worked, but also make their day-to-day tasks much easier.

"Any challenge that was put forward had a solution," said Teixeira, "If you take a UI and make it your own, you can simplify a lot from the user point of view. It brings a lot of efficiency to the business."

For support employees, using Zoho Desk thoroughly can result in stronger performance reviews, making adoption an even greater incentive.

Zoho Desk tracks important employee tasks and analytics can review customer sentiment and more metrics to drive employee scorecards that factor into reviews – leading to exceptional adoption of Zoho Desk.

"I've liked the fact that the majority of our users start without even knowing what Zoho was, but always become convinced of its effectiveness as they use the product. We've built it around user experience and the training that we give so they're finding it as an opportunity instead of an obstacle," said Teixeira

All in all, Shiji Group has established a solid culture of CRM adoption. From its success onboarding 100% of employees across all of its divisions on to Zoho People, the company now touts 95% CRM adoption. This includes more than 1,600 users of Zoho One. Thanks to a flexible, user-friendly platform coupled with a well-devised rollout, Shiji has leaped over the adoption hurdles that hamper many firm's CRM success.

The Power of One

Today, Shiji Group is leveraging a significant amount of applications underneath the Zoho One umbrella. These include the full gamut of the People, CRM and Desk tools, but also Analytics; Campaigns; Creator, for advanced data management and data quality; building strong process automations between Zoho and non-Zoho tools with Flow; Notebook; PageSense; Sign for eSignature; and also SalesIQ to better track and engage with visitors on Shiji's digital properties.

"It has essentially become the brain of our operations," Teixeira notes. He also notes that the ease of management of Zoho One has enabled the company to dedicate only a single headcount to managing the global Zoho deployment. "Managing Zoho is a walk in the park compared to how we managed such a disparate set of applications before," Teixeira adds.

And apart from an exceptional adoption rate, Shiji is already reaping multiple benefits by making the decision to standardize on Zoho. By selecting Zoho One, the company has already achieved significant economies of scale. By managing one software agreement and a unified application ecosystem versus thousands of software licenses across multiple vendors – the company has significantly reduced IT costs and complexity.

In addition, having a centralized hub of applications on a centralized underlying platform makes data capture – and subsequent analysis far easier. And this is a far less expensive endeavor, as the company was able to migrate off legacy analytics applications that were less flexible and far more costly, adding to the ROI of Zoho One. "Whether its for an executive wanting access to an analytics dashboard, or just anyone needing access to information, I don't have to be stingy or think about the cost of a license, with Zoho One, I can simply get them access immediately," Teixeira notes.

The company can now access dashboards and other analytics that provide more accurate, and close to real-time insights across multiple departments and regions. This was an incredibly complex, if not impossible undertaking previously when each region was running disparate applications stacks with a proliferation of databases and data models.

"We have made full use of Zoho's capabilities and we are seeing its results range beyond everyday operations and make a positive impact on the big picture," Teixeira adds. He also notes that the flexibility of the Zoho platform means that the tools are adaptable to Shiji's processes, not the other way around. "This is a system essentially built for us," he notes, adding: "it's very adaptable to whatever process that we put in place, it's thought through and built into Zoho and quickly deployed; previously it took about ten times as long to make changes or deploy new features in our last systems."

The Future

The Shiji team is excited about the future and is laser-focused on enhancing their internal CRM systems and data integration. The company has come a long way from being a disparate set of businesses all using their own different technologies - and Zoho has been a huge part of the centralization and streamlining efforts at Shiji.

Zoho One gives Shiji Group the ability to more seamlessly add application functionality, without lengthy evaluation and negotiation processes. In addition, standardizing on a flexible platform like Zoho means they can also create custom fields, and even applications far more easily - driving fast time to value.

"We are now able to bring in the sales part of the organization and start looking at areas we can target to improve by using and blending analytics and comparing current data with past data. We'll just see more and more benefits," said Teixeira.

Shiji is also beginning to explore [Canvas](#), Zoho's CRM record customization tool, to further improve user experience, and client scripts to further automate their processes. Longer term, Teixeira notes that Shiji Group is monitoring Zoho's advancements in billing and sales quoting tools, as that will help build an even more frictionless go-to-market operation for Shiji.

"Development is so fast with Zoho," explained Teixeira. "Over the few years we have worked with them, it has been incredible how quickly Zoho develops and improves upon everything. And the benefit of Zoho One means we can take advantage of new applications and features whenever we're ready."