

The Elders logo, featuring the word "Elders" in a white, cursive font on a red rectangular background.

ELDERS WEB PORTAL - DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SUCCESS WITH LANSA

SNAPSHOT



CUSTOMER

Elders is a leading agribusiness and an iconic brand in rural and regional Australia, having successfully supported farming businesses since 1839.



CHALLENGE

Provide clients with easy access to information, a large part of which is kept in an ERP system that was not designed for access by customers.



SOLUTION

Build a [self-service web portal](#) on the existing ERP platform with fast real-time access to data. Delivered with Visual LANSA.



KEY BENEFITS

Better customer experience and cost savings. The portal also forms a robust platform on which Elders own IT staff can launch additional services.



In pursuing business transformation outcomes, such as improved efficiency and a better customer experience, many organizations are under pressure to get more from their existing technology investments. A key challenge that many companies face is to reduce the barriers of access to their core LOB (Line of Business) systems and to extend them into easy accessible and productive systems of engagement for customers, partners and staff.

As part of its digital strategy, Elders Rural, a leading Australian agribusiness, has successfully extended its ERP system with a client web portal for mobile access to operational and transactional information. By extending its reliable systems of record with a system of engagement, Elders is well on its way to achieve new levels of productivity, effectiveness and business agility.

BUSINESS NEED

Elders, founded in 1839, is a leading agribusiness and an iconic brand throughout Australia. Elders combines its agribusiness knowledge, technical expertise and links to grain, wool and livestock markets to create specialised products and services that

are available to 40,000 farmers and other primary producers through a network of 400 local branch offices.

As part of its digital strategy, Elders wanted to give its clients easier access to both operational information, such as account balances and invoices, as well as to marketing information about its products and services. The main drivers were cost effectiveness and a better customer experience.

IT CHALLENGE

Elders' ERP system had grown to consist of a massive 17,000 custom built programs, as it needed to support Elders' multiple and very specialized activities, such as acting as a retailer of farm supplies; an agent in wool, grain and livestock; an insurance broker, as well as a real estate agent and provider of financial services.

A key challenge that Elders faced in delivering on its digital transformation initiatives, was to reduce the barriers of access to its ERP. Although accurate and reliable, it wasn't designed for customer access.

In a previous year, Elders had used LANSAs low-code platform to

modernize some of its internal ERP applications, but it wasn't till more recently that Elders became familiar with LANSAs responsive web design capabilities.

"After a demo and small proof-of-concept, we realized that with LANSAs we could very rapidly develop a self-service web portal on our existing platform with fast, real-time data access. The speed of development, the simplicity and cost savings of reusing our existing technology investment, were very appealing," says David Johnson, Group IT manager at Elders.

THE SOLUTION

The web portal was implemented in stages. What was delivered in phase one was simple: just balances, credit limits and account summary info. It also allowed farmers to authorize staff members for account access and for the various communications with Elders. The actual build was completed in four weeks, which included two weeks consultancy and mentoring by LANSAs Services.

Stage two included transactional information. It allows clients to view their financial position and browse through their accounts. They can drill

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Michael Hall
Head of Digital
Elders





in their transactions and download invoices, or download the continuous transaction listing for a selected period. Stage two was developed by two of Elders' developers in just over two months, while also performing their other day-to-day tasks. Their only previous LANSAs experience consisted of two weeks mentoring and development during stage one.

"The roll-out went smoothly without any support issues and without a need for training. Because the portal is intuitive there was no need for user training, we just posted a [demonstration video](#). The portal works well on the various mobile and desktop platforms that our farmers use. Performance is good as well. With users in the most remote areas, fast network access can be an issue. Application design was kept as lean as possible and that is paying off", said Joe La Vista, Solutions Architect.

BUSINESS IMPACT

Michael Hall, Head of Digital, explained, "The LANSAs portal is a crucial part of our digital strategy and plays an important role in remaining competitive. It offers a new way to add value to our services, above and beyond just selling a product."

"Farmers spend most of their time in the field. The last thing they need is having to do more work in the evening. The portal helps our clients to increase their productivity, as it allows them to do as many as possible of their tasks during the day via their mobile. That's a big convenience for them and an important step in improving the Elders client experience."

"Elders is well on its way to achieve new levels of efficiency and business agility," continues Hall. "We will soon be able to replace our expensive monthly mailout of 40,000 printed statements with electronic statements. The portal also provides us with reliable client data, which allows for targeted marketing and better equipped branch offices."

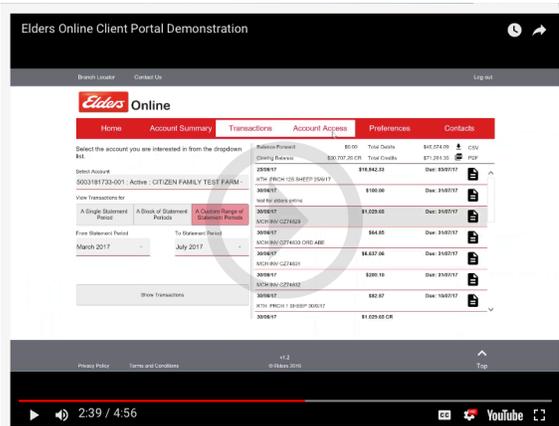
"The branch offices experience efficiencies as well. They were dealing with the kind of queries clients can now use the web portal for. With hundreds of branch offices, it will be hard to measure accurately, but we know the savings will be significant," explains Hall.

CONCLUSION

"The LANSAs portal provides a robust platform to launch additional services from in the future. Mentoring and collaboration, especially during in the initial project stages, helped to ensure an optimal outcome. By letting LANSAs services assist us with building the foundational web portal components, we didn't have to go through a trial and

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In under a month, this Elders training video was developed and deployed into production using Visual LANSA using no coding in HTML/JavaScript/CSS.

error process ourselves. It gave a much faster and better outcome. Our own two developers are now able to

quickly add new parts to the portal. We only occasionally still call on LANSA's expertise to confirm that

we are following best practice web development," said La Vista.

"Our ERP system, while providing the digital backbone of our business, was not designed for a distributed mobile workforce and neither for access by customers. By extending our ERP system with LANSA to a well-designed mobile web portal we could remove these limitations and transform our system of record by adding an attractive system of engagement," concludes Johnson.

Completed in 4 Weeks | 40,000 Printed Statements Eliminated



ABOUT ELDERS

Elders is a leading agribusiness and an iconic brand in rural and regional Australia, having successfully supported farming businesses since 1839. For over 175 years, Elders has expertly combined agribusiness knowledge and technical expertise to create specialised products and services.

Elders ERP systems are deployed on a hybrid mix of Windows, IBM and Cloud platforms.

The successful rollout of Elder's digital and online projects was a major factor in the Marketing & Communications winning the 2017 One Elders Team of the Year Award.

To view a demonstration of the Elders Online web portal visit [this link](#) and scroll down to the "Elders Online Walk through" video.

For more information visit <https://eldersrural.com.au/>

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