



# ARGUS SOFTWARE REDUCES EQUITY ONE'S BUDGETING CYCLE BY HALF

## ARGUS Enterprise Empowers Staff with Greater Sense of Accountability for Budgeting

### CUSTOMER PROFILE



#### **BUSINESS HEADQUARTERS:**

New York City and North Miami Beach, United States

#### **REGIONS OF OPERATION:**

United States

#### **CUSTOMER WEBSITE:**

[www.equityone.net](http://www.equityone.net)

#### **ARGUS SOLUTION USED:**

ARGUS Enterprise

Founded in 1992, Equity One is a NYSE listed Real Estate Investment Trust and leading developer, operator and owner of "A" quality retail properties in the most desirable and productive urban markets across the United States. Its shopping center portfolio comprises 135 properties with a market capitalization of \$4.6 billion. With over 150 employees, the company has acquired or developed since 2009 nearly \$2 billion of retail assets, concentrated in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and South Florida.

The company's stated mission is to improve retail real estate in urban communities to bring about better places to shop and gather, increase jobs and improve surrounding property values.

### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Previously, Equity One's centralized budget was set up in Dyna and Excel with access of only two users at one time. This yearly budgeting process was extremely long and vulnerable to human error. Lasting 10 months, the process was almost as long as the fiscal year. "The problem came to a head in 2011 when we had an issue with budget versus actual numbers," said Sandy Mechael, Chief Information Officer, Equity One Inc. "We were holding folks accountable against their budgets, but it's hard to do when they don't feel part of the process for creating the budget – they didn't believe in the accuracy of the numbers." The centralized process also produced issues in terms of creating asset-specific guidance and goals for property managers to strive towards, hindering the company in its efforts to move away from a centralized to regionalized operating model.

The business had a clear need for a software solution that was able to produce accurate and timely budgets as well as the ability to quickly reforecast. In addition, to help with the process of regionalization, a solution was required which is not only easy to use, but also open to multiple users across multiple locations.

# STANDARDIZED REPORTING NOW CREATED 'WITH JUST TWO CLICKS'

## ARGUS Enterprise Offers Seamless Two-Way Integration with Existing Accounting Package

 **THE SOLUTION –**  
ARGUS Enterprise allows for  
a more collaborative and  
efficient budgeting process

After looking at other software providers, Equity One took the decision to adopt Argus Enterprise for its budgeting and business planning process needs. "We chose the software based on the recognition of the ARGUS brand in the CRE space and our familiarity and comfort with ARGUS's products from using ARGUS DCF for valuation purposes," commented Mechael.

ARGUS Enterprise provided the company with the perfect tool to assist it in its overarching strategy of moving from a centralized operations and reporting platform to a regionalized system. ARGUS Enterprise allowed Equity One to create a standard reporting package that is "created in just two clicks," according to Mechael. Users were easily and efficiently trained on ARGUS Enterprise's intuitive interface, greatly improving the productivity of the budgeting and planning process. Implemented in early 2013, the system went live by mid-year with full two-way integration with the firm's existing accounting package.

 **BUSINESS VALUE ACHIEVED**

Almost at an instant, the 10-month yearly budgeting process was halved to five months saving the company significant time and resourcing. As an instrument to assist the company in becoming more regionalized, Mechael commented that the solution has created a far greater sense of accountability within regional offices as "staff who actually create the budgets are now able to see reported actuals at a regional level. ARGUS Enterprise provides greater visibility into the granularity of data, which you now no longer need to be an accountant to access or understand." As a result of this improved transparency, Mechael reports that staff members are now more "budget to actual conscious" especially in terms of tracking and reporting variances.

An unanticipated value-add has been the modelling capabilities of the software which has allowed portfolio managers to quickly and efficiently decide whether signing leases to certain terms provides the most value to the company and its shareholders.

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**Sandy Mechael** - Chief Information Officer,  
Equity One Inc.