IT Holding You Back?

Problem Presented
A well-known tourist attraction required new accounting software to help them control a range of different business operations.

Action
During the first meeting it became apparent that the organisation had a range of problems. Rather than just looking at accounting software, I interviewed the senior management to understand the organisation's overall business aims, and also to identify areas where new software might improve their operations. I then met many of the staff in order to examine their current way of operating.

It was apparent that the organisation had several older systems which did not meet the needs of a modern business, and the departmental heads had no vision of how new systems might help them.

Actual Problem
A series of issues was holding the organisation back:
- Accounting reports were produced late, and were not split by area. As a result, no-one knew where the organisation was making its profits.
- Responsibility for IT expenditure was spread across the organisation with little overall control so the IT budget was always being exceeded.
- Because of the poor accounting reports, managers tended to keep track of vital information in spreadsheets or even manual systems. This led to inaccuracies and a significant amount of time being wasted.

Outcome
It was agreed that in view of the range of problems I would develop an IT strategy document with a list of areas where action was required, as well as the priority of these actions.

Following this it was agreed to purchase three new systems addressing five separate areas, which it was felt would allow the organisation to meet the challenges of the next decade.

Part of my remit involved helping to develop the new procedures which were required to fit with the new systems.

As a result, accounting reporting has been improved so that a summary is available for each area. Managers now know where profits and losses are coming from.

IT budgets are clarified well in advance, and decisions are fully informed instead of being made on an ad hoc basis.

Improved management information is available in each business area with managers having access to the information they require.