



Eastern Metal Supply Migrates Mission-Critical Distribution System to jBASE

Eastern Metal Supply is a first-class supplier of aluminum products, providing common alloy aluminum standard and custom extrusions including sheet products. Founded in 1982 with a single Florida location and just five employees, the company now has seven nation-wide service centers and has grown to employ 350.

The Challenge

At the heart of the company's manufacturing and distribution network is a Multi-Value application developed in the 1980s by Dan Madden, General Manager and CIO of Eastern Metal Supply. In 2009 the company decided that moving the application from the D3 system it had been on for the past 15 years was necessary. Eastern Metal Supply selected jBASE, a subsidiary of Mpower1 International, to satisfy its evolving needs.

Prompting the move was the desire to integrate parts of the application with Microsoft SQL Server, explains Madden. "We saw many benefits to converting, one of which was jBASE's seamless integration with SQL Server. Some of our users wanted to be able to structure their own reports and we felt that SQL Server would give them a more robust environment to work in and allow them to use third party tools. This would give added value to our system and extend its useful life."

Benefits of jBASE

jBASE allows the most flexible overall computing environment possible by allowing multiple Operating Systems and multiple Databases to seamlessly interact together in one overall heterogeneous solution. jBASE can read and write to whatever database is required for storage through an open, published interface, jEDI. Off the shelf connectivity is available for Oracle, IBM's DB2 and Microsoft's SQL Server and an ODBC driver is available for other databases.

The fact that jBASE is tightly interwoven with the operating system is a key advan-

tage. Once an application has been moved to jBASE it then executes directly upon the base operating system. "It's closer to the native Window command structure than D3 so it allows us to be more mainstream," explains Madden. "We had tested others like Unidata or UniVerse back in earlier days so we were familiar with them and we knew that jBASE offered the best alternative for what we see happening in the next five to ten years. The skillsets required for jBASE also more closely resembled our own."

"I can't emphasize enough how helpful jBASE was in the conversion process."

Dan Madden, General Manager and CIO of Eastern Metal Supply

Planning the Migration

The migration was not considered lightly. "The software itself touches every single aspect of the operation—the accounting department, manufacturing, the warehouse, purchasing, sales, HR, credit, so every single department was affected by this," says Madden. "It was absolutely critical that we did not have any issues, as our business would be adversely affected."

After making the decision to migrate the mission-critical application, Madden assembled a team of people to map out the conversion. Planning began at the start of Q2 2009, with the goal of making the conversion at the end of hurricane season.

Making the Change

Throughout the process, jBASE provided direct access to technical support. "jBASE was great," says Madden. "We talked to them every day and anytime we brought up features that we saw that we needed, if it wasn't available, the jBASE engineers

would look at it and see if they could incorporate it. I don't remember there ever being a time where they said 'no we can't do it'. It was a team effort all the way around."

The team at Eastern Metal Supply accomplished all of its goals in a six-month period and was able to take an additional month for testing prior to going live with the new system. "We have a rather complex environment of virtual machines and networks and backup facilities that are located remotely," says Madden.

Going Live

The actual conversion started on a Saturday morning in early November 2009, and was completed by Sunday night. "By Monday, we were back in business and the system was operational." Madden had been prepared for the possibility that integrating the company's 50-plus printers of different sizes, capacities, and brands with the new system might be a hurdle, but it was not an issue at all. Following the planning and test period, it took 20 hours that weekend to accomplish the conversion.

Reflecting on the process, Madden says, "I can't emphasize enough how helpful jBASE was in the conversion process. My people were very pleased with the whole process. And, the fact that it was such a success speaks for itself!"

For More Information

jBASE offers significant discount options on migrations from other MultiValue platforms and flexible payment plans tailored to the needs of the business. For more information, visit www.jbase.com.

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