

DIARY OF A jBASE USER



Attracting Young Developers with jBASE



WE RECENTLY SAT DOWN
WITH JOSHUA WYCKOFF, CEO
FOR OPTO INTERNATIONAL,
TO LEARN HOW HE USES
jBASE TO DRIVE BETTER
BUSINESS OUTCOMES.



JOSHUA WYCKOFF
CEO, OPTO International

Who is Opto and what do you do?

JOSHUA: Opto is a manufacturer of modular, flexible retail store display fixtures. We serve a variety of industries, from sporting goods and apparel, to gift centers, convenience, and anything in between. Unlike many of our competitors, we help our customers through the entire process of designing compelling displays, from concept all the way through to completion.

How did Opto get involved with software development?

JOSHUA: As our business grew, we became very eager to understand where we could utilize data to increase our effectiveness. To do this, we decided to develop our own order-pulling system to pull parts for fixtures as efficiently as possible and make sure that everything was available to our manufacturers at the right time.

The first app we developed was an inventory management system using Pick. This program was perfect at understanding what was in our building, but that's about as far as Pick could take it. We knew that we needed to know more. We needed to know not only how many parts were in the building, but where each part was and where it was going, which drove us to develop our own warehouse management system using jBASE.

Tell us about your process in developing your custom Warehouse Management System?

JOSHUA: We decided that the best way to do a warehouse management system was to migrate our backend infrastructure to jBASE while writing a web-based front-end that would enable factory employees to be mobile and give them the ability to pull product on demand.

In about 90 days, we had a new system built on jBASE, called the OptoCloud file system. This system allows us to attach documents of any type to any sort of business object, which jBASE can retrieve at any time for any user. The backend of our warehouse management system is strictly jBASE, but in the business logic layer, we are using Microsoft.net to create a full suite of business products and software that can manage the order pulling. We also developed a web-based front end using ASP.net, which accesses the data through our business layer. To the end user, they are simply on our website, using an iPod, Chromebook or whatever device they have.

How were you able to integrate jBASE into your environment without losing your legacy data?

JOSHUA: Opto has a long history of data storage. We were storing data on orders since the early 1980s. We didn't want to lose that data when we continued to grow this company. One of the benefits of jBASE is that it allowed us to continue our development of the company and of our software without losing the data that we stored all those years ago.

The key for us to integrating historical data with jBASE was JRCS. JRCS allows us to access the jBASE data historically—all the way back to the beginning of our data—and connect it to Windows-based applications. We can look up an order in our current systems that took place in 1987, which is important for our business model. We need to understand the history of our customers, many of which have been with us for decades.

What were some of the challenges you faced in the implementation of jBASE?

JOSHUA: Many of our developers are young and come from outside the MultiValue market. By moving from a character-based system to jBASE, the young developers we've been able to recruit can still use the tools that they were trained to use in school. We are able to train developers to understand our business logic and they can hit the ground running with development. It doesn't take long for the developer to realize why it is that we use jBASE. There is no way that we could operate as fast as we do using a SQL-based system. MultiValue allows us to operate in a much more streamlined way than anything SQL could offer.

How does Opto use jBASE to drive business outcomes?

JOSHUA: Once we had all of our systems running in jBASE, we realized that the power of this system was actually leading us to make better business decisions. We found that the system itself was helping us understand how we could become a better business.

jBASE is really our central repository for information throughout the entire company. We utilize jBASE from the quoting process all the way through to the shipping process—even customer service is using jBASE. We do everything from simple data management to complex file storage, all inside the jBASE system that we've developed. jBASE takes in data from different types of input devices, from iPods and laptops to desktops and web-based interfaces.

What are some of the benefits of using jBASE over a standard, character-based system?

JOSHUA: Character-based programs are very limited when it comes to information retrieval—it's basically just text. When you integrate jBASE with Windows, you can leverage other features of Windows that users are used to. For example, we've taken file management and integrated it directly into jBASE, so our users can access PDFs of documents directly inside of our systems.

Another benefit is flexibility. We hold 3,000 SKUs inside this building and 80,000 SKUs in the system overall. Because we are flexible and modular in our manufacturing process, our system needs to be just as agile. Because we custom-designed our system, we've been able to keep up with the demands of our changing product offering inside of the system.

We depend on custom programming. We don't want to be stuck in the box of an ERP system. We don't want to be stuck calling people to help us run our business. With jBASE and its open architecture, we're able to develop exactly what we need to run our business.

Learn More at www.jBASE.com

