

Case Study: Bimanusa

Background

Bimanusa Rajawali is a large national distribution warehouse for an international manufacturer. They distribute a large range of products - over 400 - to retailers varying in size from street shop outlets to large supermarket chains. They have a mobile sales force of over 100 and non-mobile sales force of 40 operators performing data entry. They have 4 warehouse locations spread over 200 mile area and a fleet of over 200 trucks for deliveries. All in all a very complex operation.

Furthermore, Bimanusa have sales staff that are mobile for all but a few days a month, creating a paper trail nightmare for accounts and inventory as orders arriving from them may have already been modified or cancelled by call center operators communicating directly with the end customer. Bimanusa were looking for a solution that was far more cost effective than SAP but more comprehensive than the custom built suite of DOS applications they were currently using. Bimanusa needed a solution that was:

- cost effective especially considering the relatively inexpensive local labour;
- extremely stable and reliable as local technical support is scarce (and prohibitively expensive when available);
- fully logged and audited data as data validation and integrity were major issues;
- highly automated as margins are very thin and mistakes at any level are very costly;
- very secure as competition is fierce;
- able to reduce paperwork between departments;
- very easy to learn as language and education level are barriers;
- high performance to minimise hardware requirements (due to high cost of servers and other hardware);
- integration to parent company and supplier's SAP systems;
- easily customisable as business rules change frequently.

Solution

Bimanusa's workflow was mapped out as follows:

- a new sales order is created (or an existing one modified);
 - from mobile field sales staff using their PDA with the client's approved signature;
 - issues with client credit or inventory is resolved immediately and the results pushed back to the waiting PDA;
 - sales territories automatically taken into account using a combination of pre-defined and dynamic allocations;
 - if cash payments are made for previous orders, they are instantly relayed to accounts ready for reconciliation;
- orders instantly processed with inventory updated and an electronic delivery order created (or updated);
- delivery orders automatically assigned by weight and volume to appropriate transport by optimised rules and groupings;
- invoices for each customer are automatically generated ready to accompany each delivery;
- orders are despatched and checked for correctness whilst being loaded onto trucks by warehouse personnel with PDAs;
- results of delivery/receipt of goods compared automatically to original orders for any discrepancies;
- stock outages in one warehouse will flag a transfer request from another warehouse if required/possible;
- stock minimum level thresholds that are met cause an automatic purchase order to be raised;
- any incoming manifests, consignments and purchase order fulfilments are automatically synchronised for discrepancies;
- complete sales order, history and budgets for each sales staff are available at any time from the PDA;

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For performance and scalability reasons, WRAMP was separated to two physical servers, one for transaction processing and one for the data storage (database). The transaction server connects to the Internet via a single 256K ADSL line - the fastest available in the area.

The main warehouse facility connects to WRAMP on the LAN via mgConsole. Outlying buildings connect via WIFI. Remote warehouses connect through the ADSL.

Using a standard 2048 bit digital certificate, WRAMP ensures end to end encryption at the session level between itself and all connected devices. With data accuracy and potential eaves dropping by competitors, data integrity and security were of paramount importance to Bimanusa and WRAMP.

Complex rules such as customer discounting and credit management were easily implemented using WRAMP's scripting engine to ensure rapid implementation and ease of modification in the future.

Benefits

Bimanusa's accountants listed the following as benefits to their organisation:

- reduce data entry staff from 40 down to 12 initially, with a view to further reduction down to 7 when ready;
- remove all paperwork between departments using the workflow process and thus reduce expenditure on stationery;
- remove unnecessary wordprocessor licenses using the in-built wordprocessor;
- remove manual processing of promotional and gift items in orders and inventory;
- automatic reconciling of purchase orders with inventory;
- ability for mobile (field) sales staff to check inventory and customer credit history on real-time basis;
- remove all errors in transferring stock from fixed and mobile warehouses;
- massive cost savings in license and implementation compared to more traditional solutions like SAP;
- real-time reports allow more accurate and timely updates to pricing and stock availability;
- increase efficiency by automating repetitive and error prone tasks and calculations.

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