



Organization Profile

A large aerospace company headquartered in Southern California with over 100,000 employees. They provide innovative systems, products, and solutions in aerospace, electronics, information systems, shipbuilding and technical services to government and commercial customers worldwide.

Situation

The company used a custom developed application that interfaced with SAP to manage their supply chain. However, the application had limitations that created unnecessary costs and no longer met their needs.

Solution

6th Street Consulting developed a web-based (thin client) application using the MOSS 2007 platform.

Benefits

- Reduced Supply Chain Management Costs
- Reduced Production Costs
- Utilized Existing Company Security Standards
- Cost Effective Future Expansion to Maintain Competitive Advantage

Technologies Used

- MOSS 2007 Enterprise Edition
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005
- SAP

SharePoint Reduces Supply Chain Costs

A large aerospace company, located in Southern California, was having difficulty finding a solution to reduce the cost of managing suppliers' delivery schedules. The company provided solutions in aerospace, electronics, information systems, shipbuilding and technical services to government and commercial customers worldwide. As one of the largest defense contractors in the world, the company employed over 100,000 people with revenues exceeding \$30 billion. The company needed an application to interface with SAP to help manage supplier delivery schedules. Their existing mission-critical application was cumbersome, provided outdated information, and was over a decade old. After years of development with other vendors and technologies that did not meet their needs, the company selected 6th Street Consulting, a recognized Microsoft Partner for their Portal Competency, and the Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS 2007) platform for a solution. Working closely with the company's internal team, 6th Street Consulting developed a ground-breaking web-based Inventory Forecasting System (IFS) that provided up-to-date information and helped ensure the on-time delivery of parts. The IMS application reduced costs and allowed the company to remain a leader in the aerospace industry.

Situation

The company's supply chain management system consisted of a SAP deployment as an inventory back-end to store all supply chain related data such as purchase orders and inventory levels. The SAP system tracked inventory levels on over 200,000 unique parts supplied by over 8,000 vendors. The company needed a front-end application to interface with SAP, in order to manage changes to supplier delivery commitments. Production departments relied on this process to ensure they had the necessary parts to meet production timelines and stay in budget.

To manage this process, the company developed a custom client/server front-end application a decade ago. The legacy application was cumbersome to use and no longer met the company's needs. Many tasks were tedious to accomplish with minimal automation. Over 300 full-time employees were allocated to manage this process. Updates using the legacy application were only synchronized with the SAP system once per week, resulting in data constantly being out of date. Because of this, employees found it difficult to maintain sufficient inventory levels for production. Supplier delivery delays were not immediately apparent and replacement parts were ordered with shorter delivery windows and in smaller quantities which increased overall costs.

A new application was necessary to maintain the company's competitive advantage and their status as a leader in the aerospace industry. The company spent approximately five years with different vendors and technologies with little success before selecting 6th Street Consulting to design and develop a solution based on the MOSS 2007 platform. The company chose 6th Street Consulting, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, due to their successful track record of working closely with clients and developing cost-effective solutions.

Solution

Over the course of four months, 6th Street Consulting worked closely with the company's management, business stakeholders and internal IT teams to develop a solution using the MOSS 2007 platform. MOSS 2007 was chosen due to its robust and extensive out-of-the-box functions. Due to the complexity of the company's business requirements, several documented limitations in MOSS 2007 might have led to performance bottlenecks. However, 6th Street Consulting's depth of expertise enabled them to break through these limitations and fully take advantage of the MOSS 2007 framework. 6th Street Consulting delivered a ground-breaking application that allowed the company to dramatically streamline its supplier delivery status process. The application, IFS, provided additional functionality over its predecessor that allowed the company to reduce costs and remain a leader in the aerospace industry.

Benefits

Reduced Supply Chain Management Costs

Utilizing the IFS, the company's employees were able to make adjustments to supplier delivery dates through a light-weight intuitive web interface. Updates to supplier delivery dates were possible through the company's intranet and VPN connection, allowing employees to make updates while offsite with vendors. Additionally, updates could be conducted via offline Microsoft Office Excel files that were later uploaded to the SAP system. All of these added functions over the legacy system empowered employees to do more in less time and allowed the company to allocate fewer resources to manage and support the process.

Reduced Production Costs

The IFS eliminated the weekly update schedules and replaced it with hourly synchronizations. Employees were empowered with up to date information and could adjust to supplier delivery changes accordingly. Replacement parts could be ordered ahead of time, in larger quantities, and at lower costs. Sufficient inventory levels were constantly maintained ensuring less production delays.

Utilized Existing Company Security Standards

The IFS conformed to the company's existing stringent security standards. Due to the sensitive and proprietary nature of projects the company was involved in, data security was very important. 6th Street Consulting developed the IFS to integrate with the company's existing internet security standards allowing seamless integration into the company's workflow and supply chain system. Access to the application used employees' existing credentials that were centrally managed.

Cost Effective Future Expansion to Maintain Competitive Advantage

The legacy application was custom developed using the company's internal resources over a decade ago. While the legacy application met the company's minimum needs in the past, development of additional functions was hampered due to the fact only a single person had the necessary knowledge to develop and support it further. Since the MOSS 2007 platform is based on the commonly used and extensively supported .NET platform, additional functionality can more easily be developed using a larger and less expensive pool of resources.

Conclusion

With the help of 6th Street Consulting, the company is on track to reduce the costs of managing suppliers by approximately 66 percent. Additional functionality such as a supplier accessible portal is being developed to allow suppliers to directly adjust their delivery schedules. These additional functions will allow the company to leverage the IMS further and remain a leader in the aerospace industry.

About 6th Street Consulting

6th Street Consulting is a leading strategy and technology consulting company providing expert SharePoint solutions. Our expertise ranges from the setup of the most basic SharePoint sites to custom sites that match the brand of your business. We also provide strategic assessments/ planning, proof of concepts and implementation of value-added portals (Intranets, Extranets and Corporate). With our SharePoint Deployment Planning Services (SDPS), we can work with you to assess your business goals, identify and mitigate project risk, and develop an effective roadmap for implementing a SharePoint solution that meets the needs of your end users. More than 50,000 users have effectively adopted SharePoint solutions that we have deployed.

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