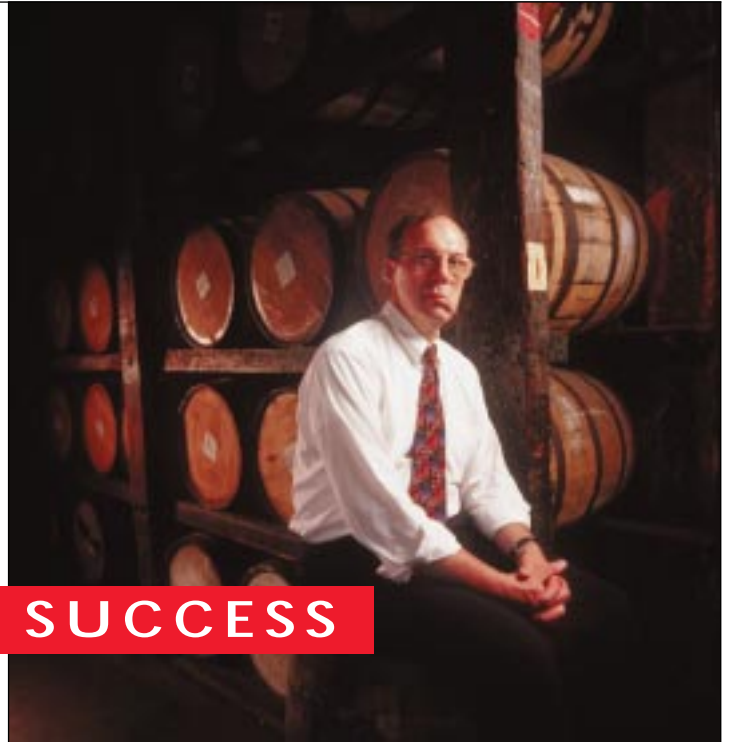


Spirits of Success Seagram Goes GUI on Client/Server

Industry: Distilled Beverages
Current Environment: Windows/HP/UX
Application: Manufacturing System
Acucorp Products: ACUCOBOL™-GT
Previous Environment: IBM ES9000 VSE/ESA
Previous COBOL: IBM Mainframe COBOL



PARTNERS IN SUCCESS

Joe Horlander, North American Manufacturing Systems Manager, led Seagram Americas' smooth legacy extension project.

Joseph E. Seagram and Sons is an international organization producing and marketing some of the world's premier wines and spirits. Seagram Americas is based in New York and is responsible for the company's entire operations throughout North and Latin Americas, including the annual shipment of more than 25 million cases of distilled spirits.

Distilling the Issues

Joe Horlander, North American Manufacturing Systems Manager for Seagram Americas, is based at the company's Lawrenceburg, Indiana, facility. He comments about critical issues facing the company. "A manufacturing organization of Seagram's size and reputation demands an extremely efficient and reliable business system. The Seagram Americas Manufacturing System

(SAMS) has been nurtured specifically to be just that." SAMS is a customized software application that provides Seagram specific and regulatory controls for the manufacturing sites. The application was originally written with IBM mainframe COBOL, residing on an IBM ES9000 VSE/ESA running CICS. The SAMS data initially resided in a hierarchical DL/I database, but was converted to a relational database in 1994. The system is accessed by up to 200 users throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

"We knew that our system would best serve our plants by being out of the mainframe environment," says Horlander. "The costs incurred supporting the IBM hardware and software were greater than those

in a UNIX environment, and we knew that the mainframe operating system needed major revisions to become Y2K compliant. We decided to move to the more cost-effective UNIX platform. We also knew that a decentralized client/server system would improve reliability and response times

and easily support our manufacturing data-warehouse."

Horlander evaluated off-the-shelf software packages to provide an Open System replacement for the SAMS software. After performing

extensive research, he was discouraged with the alternatives. "The bottom line was that SAMS worked for the business," he says. Seagram Americas decided to search for a

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***Joe Horlander,
Seagram Americas***

solution that would allow the successful migration to a client/server environment and continue to run the existing system, and more importantly, avert the unnecessary expense and disruption of implementing a new MRPII/ERP system.

Blending the Right Ingredients

The list of possibilities for the new database was short. "The database had to run in VSE, MVS, and multiple flavors of UNIX, and it had to be fully ANSI standard," explains Horlander. "SUPRA from Cincom was the only product able to meet those requirements." With the database conversion successfully completed, Horlander now had the daunting responsibility of migrating the 1.8 million lines of COBOL and the 350 character screens that made up the SAMS system from the old VSE/CICS environment to the new Windows environment.

Cincom suggested that Seagram Americas contact Unicon Conversion Technologies, a leading provider of automated migration solutions from legacy systems to open systems COBOL, using Unicon's own conversion tools. Horlander was already aware of Acucorp's capabilities and delighted to learn of the company's long association with Unicon. He explains why. "We attended a one-day seminar organized by Acucorp, primarily to gain an understanding of the ACUCOBOL-GT technology. We were pleasantly surprised to find they could guarantee the features and functionality we were looking for." One key feature was Unicon's conversion of SAMS' existing character screens to a graphical user interface (GUI), which is more user-friendly and easier to access and navigate.

To ensure the quality of the solution, Unicon first converted a sample portion of the SAMS legacy COBOL to pure ACUCOBOL-GT. Horlander was impressed with the results. "I was

amazed to see how clean the converted source code was," he says. "I was also extremely pleased to discover that Unicon's migration tools and methodologies would convert the source code to a pure native open systems environment without changing any of the business application logic."

A Toast to Success

Unicon began the migration of the entire legacy COBOL system to pure ACUCOBOL-GT in April 1998 and had completed the task by September. The target server was a Hewlett Packard HP9000 with HP/UX and Windows 95/NT at the front-end, running the SAMS on-line applications. The conversion of the SAMS screens to pure ACUCOBOL-GT Screen Sections enabled the operation of the new GUI functionality in a native Windows environment without proprietary inclusion or the dependency on one hardware vendor.

The first Seagram Americas site went live in February 1999. In just two months, four other sites followed. Horlander says, "I couldn't believe how swiftly the changeover occurred." Users logged off the old system on Friday and logged on to the new one Monday morning. "This smooth transition is a result of several factors, most notably of Unicon's expertise in the conversion to pure ACUCOBOL-GT, and the effectiveness of the ACUCOBOL-GT product," he adds.

Seagram users are already fully productive and working much more efficiently with the easy-to-use ACUCOBOL-GT GUI. The company no longer has any disconnection issues or problems with scale, and performance levels have increased dramatically. "The old system would take four or five seconds to respond to a transaction," he explains; "now the same transaction is completed in a quarter of the time." The new environment, which includes the new

hardware and ACUCOBOL-GT, is so efficient that the batch-processing schedule also completes in a quarter of the time previously required. This allows new customer orders to be reviewed by MRP on the day of entry. Previously, the review would be delayed until the next batch schedule.

"Acucorp, Unicon, and Cincom revitalized our manufacturing management system, and they did so at a fraction of the cost of alternative solutions," concludes Horlander. "We feel they have successfully positioned us to take on the challenges of our expanding business, as well as those of the 21st Century – what these guys are doing should be shouted from the rooftops!"

For more information about Acucorp, Inc., and our products, please visit www.acucorp.com

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