

Marine Resources Group

Creating an single version of information across operating companies

Customer Success Story

Industry

- Marine transportation services

Business Issues

- Inability to get a clear picture of operations across a group of companies.
- Lack of timely access to integrated financial information from multiple operating companies
- An outdated IT environment — a series of legacy applications running on older hardware, resulting in multiple data islands

Solution

Company established an "Enterprise Transformation" management team to set strategy and manage tactical implementation of new business process and information technology.

- Software — SAP All-in-One
- Certified SAP hosting — iStreet Solutions
- Hardware — Sun
- System integrators — ACS/Systech, Axon

The most critical aspect of the project was to find a scalable hosted solution that allowed the company to implement the system in a phased approach.

Business Results

- Global view of information
- Integrated system
- Standardized processes
- Secure system with 100 percent up time

Products/Services/Solutions

- SAP All-in-One and Business Intelligence (BI) reporting engine, Advanced Planning and Optimization (APO) worker tool, and Solution Manager 4.0 environment
- Sun Fire™ X4100, X4500, and X4600 servers, Sun StorageTek™ 5320 array
- Solaris™ 10 and Windows OS

URL Reference

- sun.com/customers



Marine Resources Group includes a number of operating companies that provide marine transportation services worldwide. The company needed to update its information technology to provide access to accurate and timely information within and across their operations.

Creating a single version of company data

Marine Resources Group (MRG) provides a wide range of marine transportation services to customers around the globe. MRG has the largest and most capable coastal tug and barge fleet in the United States offering the broadest range of services, operating over 100 tugs and 100 barges.

To manage aggressive growth, MRG management requires faster access to more complex information, integrated and standardized across all business units. Legacy IT systems were a series of customized applications and stand-alone packages that were not inter-operable. Company management realized that they were struggling with inconsistencies and a lack of

business process and IT standards. Islands of data networks existed. Systems were outdated. Critical data were often inaccessible or hard to produce in a timely fashion.

Craig Wheeler, Director Systems Development and Information Services at MRG, was chosen to initiate the search for and plan the implementation of a new ERP system. "The goal of this initiative was to deploy a consolidated, scalable ERP system for our company. We needed to reduce complexity and increase efficiencies. Our most important goal was for management to have timely access to actionable information," says Wheeler. "Choosing the right partners to help us was critical to our success."

Among the criteria MRG used in selecting software and implementation partners was the ability to use off-the-shelf software, without customization, and to have the ability to roll out the new system at their own pace—a “big bang” deployment was not in the cards. The project implementation included four critical components: software, integration, hosting and hardware.

A hosted SAP All in One solution

After reviewing proposals from four different software vendors, MRG chose SAP's All-in-One (SAP ERP ECC 6.0) a set of separate but connected modules. One of the reasons MRG selected SAP was the ability to implement it through a hosted solution provided by iStreet Solutions.

The SAP All-in-One software was chosen because:

- It was built on a mature technical architecture within a stable product.
- In combination with the hosting solution from iStreet Solutions it offered a cost effective, scalable solution that could be implemented via a phased approach, and would continue to grow with the organization.
- It also offered robust functionality that included Business Intelligence (BI) reporting and Job Costing.

A hosted solution enabled MRG to focus their internal resources on specifying requirements for the enterprise transformation initiative and working with the system integrators to define the software implementation approach. Furthermore, flexible contract periods enabled them to pay for the hosting resources as they were brought on line.

A secure, high availability hosted solution

To host SAP for MRG, iStreet Solutions needed a high availability solution with a high level of security and backup. They chose a Sun architecture, based on AMD Opteron™ processors. "Sun's technology is extraordinary. It provides the latest in Opteron technology for multiprocessing, yet offers energy efficient, high density servers that cost less to operate," says Mark Richter of iStreet Solutions. "In addition to offering state of the art technology, Sun's support as a partner is first rate. Our ability to work closely with the hardware vendor enables us to provide extraordinary service to mid-sized companies. We have direct access to the hardware experts."

The hardware solution

The MRG hosting solution includes many Sun Fire™ X4100 servers, Sun Fire X4600 servers, Sun StorageTek™ 5320 arrays supporting SAP All-in-One, MS SQLServer database, and the Windows Server operating system. The Sun Fire X4500 server running the Solaris™ 10 Operating System (Solaris OS) is utilized to provide secondary storage, archiving, backup, cloning, and replication services. "These are critical support activities that require a more robust operating environment," says Richter. "Both iStreet Solutions and Sun understand that protecting the availability and integrity of a customer's data is the most important aspect of a hosting service."

Integration teams

Two firms, both system integrators with expertise in SAP solutions, were chosen to participate in the SAP solutions implementation. ACS/Systemech led the integration team for implementation of the ERP system. Axon led the Business Intelligence deployment.

"When we chose SAP All-in-One as our software solution, we wanted to work with an SAP certified hosting partner. We chose iStreet Solutions because they had a passion for providing high quality service at a fair market value. And, their hosting solution, built on Sun hardware, delivers a secure, reliable and a high availability environment."

Craig Wheeler

Director Systems Development and Information Services
Marine Resources Group

Business benefits

iStreet Solutions and Sun rapidly deployed the hosting infrastructure so that the development of SAP's All-in-One application could commence on schedule. MRG now has begun the roll out of a secure, integrated, high availability system.

"The scalable architecture of the iStreet Solutions hosted SAP solution built on a stable, reliable, and secure infrastructure from Sun, has enabled us to bring our operating companies on to the new system according to our own schedule. And as we integrate the solution across our operating companies it gives us one version of our company information. Now we can leverage our buying power, efficiently plan and deploy our assets, and respond to changing business conditions."