Maine Public Service
Putting the power back into ERP

The Company

A subsidiary of Maine & Maritimes Corporation, Maine Public Service provides regulated electric transmission and distribution services to 17 communities within the state of Maine. The company operates more than 380 miles of transmission lines and 1,700 circuit miles of distribution lines within a 3,600 square mile area. Major business activities in the service area center around agricultural and forest products. As an investor-owned energy company, Maine Public Service aims to transmit reliable and economical electric power to meet the expectations of their 35,000-plus residential, commercial and industrial customers.

"We were looking for a long-term, reliable partner that could support our complex application environment. OneNeck IT Solutions brought a unique blend of Oracle application and utility industry expertise to the table. Plus, their project management skills and rigorous support processes help us maintain peak system performance."

Michael Eaton
Vice President of IT
Maine Public Service Company

The Challenge

Utility and energy companies face considerable market volatility. Regulatory changes, customer demands and competitive pressures create constant hurdles. To address these market dynamics, utilities must continually evaluate business strategies, operating performance and technology effectiveness. Maine Public Service (MPS) contracted with OneNeck® IT Solutions, to provide ongoing support for its IT infrastructure, as well as deploy new applications to help overcome market challenges. OneNeck implemented Oracle's e-Business Suite Application version 11.5.9 to support strategic initiatives. MPS deployed modules for financials, inventory management and procurement.

Although the Oracle application improved business information for decision making, significant system performance issues surfaced during the following year. Overall, MPS experienced slow system operation and many non-working functions. For example, the system reports, self-service time templates and the recoverable tax functionality were not running properly.

OneNeck and MPS logged numerous service requests with Oracle to fix the ongoing problems. In response, OneNeck integrated several Oracle recommended "patches" to fix the issues. Unfortunately, these complicated and time-consuming patches did not always fix the problem. Or, after OneNeck fixed one function with a patch, another would break. These ongoing system problems created a rocky information environment within MPS. Both MPS and OneNeck knew they needed to stabilize the environment and eliminate the ongoing application performance issues permanently. After OneNeck provided a complete analysis of the situation, MPS had to decide whether to continue fixing problems with patches or undertake a tricky upgrade to a new application version.

The OneNeck IT Solutions Answer

MPS required top-notch system performance to survive constant regulatory scrutiny, meet customer demands efficiently and support the company's long range strategic plan. To meet these requirements, OneNeck presented MPS with a proposal to upgrade the current Oracle application to version 11.5.10. Widely known in the industry as a complex and daunting project, OneNeck was confident they could manage this upgrade smoothly and to a successful outcome, knowing this course of action would fix the current 11.5.9 application problems, enhance system performance and provide the best solution from a cost-benefit perspective.

During the development process, OneNeck tested the application multiple times over a two month period in off-line environments. The actual production upgrade was completed in just six days.

In addition to upgrading the Oracle e-Business Suite application to 11.5.10, OneNeck redesigned the underlying database to version 10g and upgraded the operating system. The project also required deploying more robust infrastructure to speed the upgrade process, improve system performance, and support MPS' growth plans. All facets of the 2,000-staff project were completed without a hitch.

Maine Public Service Summary	
Organization	Maine Public Service Company
Industry	Public utility
Business Challenges	Eliminate ongoing performance issues with Oracle 11.5.9 by upgrading to version 11.5.10
User Environment	105 users
Application	Oracle Applications version 11.5.10.2 10 Modules Oracle reporting and analysis tools include Discoverer and ADI (ADI also used to upload journal entries and budgets)
Technical Environment	Dell PowerEdge 2950 for Production and Disaster Recovery Oracle Enterprise Linux 5

The Benefits

When MPS first selected OneNeck, the two companies entered into a 10-year application management partnership. OneNeck was brought on board to improve operational efficiency, streamline internal procedures and create a solid foundation for implementing the company's long-term strategic projects.

"The OneNeck/Oracle solution was up against a tough competitive field during the selection process, but their collective reputation was unmatched," said Michael Eaton, vice president of IT for Maine Public Service. "Plus, we determined they were best suited to enter into a long-standing, trusting relationship with us. The quick and thorough Oracle 11.5.10 application and 10g database upgrade was no trivial task. The successful outcome of this project proves we made the right decision."

As a result of the Oracle upgrade, user satisfaction with system performance improved dramatically. Report processing, which used to take one-to-two hours to run, are now completed within 15-20 minutes. Project accounting processes take 20-30 minutes instead of more than one hour. Response time decreased from 10-15 seconds to 3 seconds. Data query time fell from five minutes to 30 seconds or less. Now users navigate the applications and retrieve data more easily. By combining multiple forms into one, data retrieval and reconciliation became a straightforward process.

Under its current 10-year agreement, OneNeck continues to manage the Oracle environment, systems and infrastructure for MPS. OneNeck provides one-to-one attention and leverages their Oracle Certified Partner status to escalate any issues and solve them quickly. In addition, MPS engages OneNeck for other enhancement projects as needed. As with all customers, OneNeck helps MPS align its vision, objectives and strategy with the right ERP solution to support business objectives. Most importantly, OneNeck has helped MPS put the power back into its Oracle ERP application.

About OneNeck IT Solutions

OneNeck IT Solutions LLC offers hybrid IT solutions including cloud and hosting solutions, managed services, enterprise application management, advanced IT services, IT hardware and top-tier data centers in Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon and Wisconsin. OneNeck's team of technology professionals manage secure, world-class, hybrid IT infrastructures and applications for businesses around the country.

OneNeck is a subsidiary of Telephone and Data Systems, Inc. [NYSE: TDS]. TDS provides wireless; cable and wireline broadband, TV and voice; and hosted and managed services to approximately six million customers nationwide through its businesses U.S. Cellular, TDS Telecom, OneNeck IT Solutions LLC, and TDS Broadband Service LLC. Visit tdsinc.com.

OneNeck.com
855.ONENECK