

Win Release

AssetCo

Assetco switches to best-of-breed applications and reduces its costs - systems go live in just 4 months

Finance/Leasing

The finance and leasing marketplace is very competitive and one of the key success criteria is the efficient operation of integrated business systems. Advanced Business Solutions' OpenLogistix offers "best of breed" systems, providing specialists in each area of operation, be it financials, supply chain, supplier management or fleet management. The OpenLogistix solution is not only a leader in these core systems, but also provides sophisticated supplier build schedule management and cost control, together with remote access for customers.

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AssetCo, the leading provider of lifetime asset management services to public sector and utilities companies in the UK has standardised on business systems, supplied by Progress OpenEdge application partners. The Progress-based applications - Tranman from RAC Software Solutions, for fleet and asset management, OpenAccounts for group-wide financials and OpenLogistix for procurement and build management have replaced the incumbent Oracle fleet management and financial system. The three new core systems were selected and implemented in a rapid four months and are already reducing IT running costs through savings on database administration and software licences.

The £600,000 investment in IT, which has also involved moving from a Unix platform to Windows 2000 servers and rolling out new hardware, is a result of the formation

of AssetCo in October 2002 from the Asset Investment Group and its various and on-going acquisitions, including Jack Allen and the Leasing Group.

Part of the aim was to introduce a standalone financial package for AssetCo's eight specialist divisions. Together these manage assets for 500 clients valued at £750 million including, frontline emergency vehicles and associated equipment for fire and other blue light emergency services, medical equipment for the NHS and vehicle fleets for utilities such as Transco and the AA.

The preparation for a bid to renew the contract on 6000 vehicles for Transco was, however, AssetCo's acute business driver to implement new systems quickly. The incumbent system did not meet Transco's contractual requirements in terms of service scheduling. AssetCo needed to source and install a system that did, in as rapid a time as possible.

Although the in-house skills were Oracle-based, AssetCo selected the Tranman application for the fleet and lease management side of the business. Helen Penford head of IT and systems at AssetCo explains: "Tranman is a market



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leading product which enables us to control the whole life cost and risk on specialist assets. It met our functional requirements, but as importantly was a standalone, best of breed application which fit with our IT strategy - the alternatives had bundled financials."

At the same time OpenAccounts Financials - winner of the Accountancy Age best enterprise financial software package award - was selected as the groupwide financial software solution. With its e-business modules, OpenAccounts is one of few financial applications which is designed to extend beyond the accounts department and reach out across the enterprise as well as to business partners. OpenAccounts led to OpenLogistix, - an application chosen for the procurement and build management.

As well as managing and maintaining assets throughout their lives, AssetCo also procures parts and undertakes the work to kit out specialist vehicles for clients like the AA and Transco. OpenLogistix again shared the common Progress platform, easy integration with OpenAccounts and offered the kind of lighter MRP solution allied to assembly production, which met AssetCo's build needs. The three applications were installed, integrated seamlessly and live within 18 weeks. There are 75 Tranman users, 18 on OpenAccounts and up to 32 on OpenLogistix.

IT manager Jason Barber doubts whether AssetCo could have achieved such a speedy implementation with Oracle applications and is also pleased with the performance of the underlying Progress RDBMS (relational database management system): "Progress just runs and runs and one of the major savings comes from not needing a database administrator. In addition we have reduced the software licence and support costs by moving to Progress. The packages were installed in crazy timescales but as part of phase two we will look at some customisation and

giving major clients access to our systems."

In addition AssetCo also was successful in its bid to retain the Transco contract.

About Progress OpenEdge technology platform

OpenEdge includes a high-performance embedded database, application servers, data servers, a fully integrated application development environment and framework, Internet-ready messaging, and enterprise-class application management. OpenEdge supports all major J2EE, JMS, Web services, and XML industry standards. It also supports Web browser, ActiveX, Java?, graphical and character-based user interfaces.

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Advanced Business Solutions, an Advanced Computer Software Group plc company, provides leading integrated business applications and services that enable public, private and third sector organisations to retain control, improve visibility and gain efficiencies whilst continually improving corporate performance. It's award-winning software systems comprise core financial management, procurement, human resource and payroll systems, integrated with a range of collaborative, document management and business intelligence solutions . It also provides managed and bureau service options.

Advanced Computer Software Group plc is the UK's leading supplier of software and IT services to the health, care and commercial sectors. It comprises 3 main divisions and has 7000 customers and 800 staff worldwide.

For more information

Advanced Business Solutions is a brand name of Advanced Business Software and Solutions Limited, registered in England, company number 03214465. Registered office: Munro House | Portsmouth Road | Cobham | Surrey | KT11 1TF.

t: +44 (0) 08451 606 162 f: +44 (0) 1932 584 001 e: marketing@advancedcomputersoftware.com www.advancedcomputersoftware.com/abs

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