

FORGENT NETWORKS

Solution Overview

Industry

Electronic Parts & Equipment

Microsoft Business Solutions

Partner

ePartners
Dallas, Texas, USA

Scenario

When Forgent migrated from Oracle to Microsoft Business Solutions, they hoped to reduce operational expenses as well as simplify business processes.

Company Profile

Forgent Networks provides enterprise video network software and services.

Benefits

Improved reporting and a more intuitive product are helping Forgent improve business practices.

Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains
Financials
Inventory and Order Processing
Field Service
Customization Tools
Microsoft SQL Server™
Windows® NT®

Demographic Information

Annual Revenue: \$75-100 million USD
Number of Employees: 250
Number of Sites: 2
Number of Users: 25

Migrated from Oracle

When Forgent Networks was created from a larger company, focus and simplification were the name of the game. Forgent found that Microsoft Business Solution fit their needs better than Oracle.

Forgent Networks provides enterprise video network software and services, as well as the industry's only network management software. In the late 90s, Forgent, then known as VTEL Corporation, was on a fast growth trajectory with more than 800 employees in locations around the world. In 2001, the company pulled in the reins and refocused on services and software rather than the manufacturing of videoconference products.

The Journey from Oracle to Microsoft Business Solutions

Simplifying the business required a close examination of Forgent's business solutions. As Forgent embarked on a revised and more focused business path, it quickly became clear that their Oracle setup was not appropriate for the new business structure. Oracle was set up for the larger company Forgent had initially intended to become. The company's restructuring meant fewer IS staff, which meant that not enough people were available to provide the upkeep necessary to keep Oracle running smoothly. Oracle was unwieldy, overly complex and difficult to manage. Senior Director of Financial Operations Mike Rondini compared the Oracle setup to "having a battleship on a lake."

The cost of Oracle was an issue for Forgent as well. The company couldn't afford the upgrade necessary to make Oracle work for the revamped company and, even without the upgrade, service and contracts were costing Forgent more than half a million dollars per quarter.

Forgent needed something friendlier, smaller (yet scalable), and definitely something more affordable. It was at this point that the company turned to Microsoft Business Solutions.

Intuitive and Straightforward

The intuitive nature and flexibility of Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® helped to convince Forgent that they had found the solution to fulfill their requirements. For instance, getting an order into the system is much easier with the Sales Order Processing module and the other modules have proven to be easily learned and easily taught. Forgent employees appreciate the level of detail in the financial modules and the ability to drill down. "Our biggest need was to have a system that could get the job done with little effort. The [Microsoft Business Solutions] system is much easier to trouble shoot and get our closes done," Forgent Business System Analyst Rhonda Johnson says.

After the implementation, Forgent immediately saw a vast difference in usability between Oracle and Microsoft Business Solutions. The straightforwardness of the new solution became apparent within two months of implementation when the accounting team was

"Several of the Oracle functions never got us anywhere near where we needed to be. [Microsoft Business Solutions] is years ahead, right out of the box."

Mike Rondini
Senior Director of Financial Operations
Forgent Networks

up and running with confidence. Two months after Oracle was implemented, the accounting staff still didn't know what they were doing.

Migration Simplifies Processes

One of the major adjustments Forgent made in moving from Oracle to Microsoft Business Solutions was changing business processes. As with any business solution decision, when Forgent first implemented Oracle, the intent at the time was to simplify business processes and use the software to enhance efficiencies and improve business. What happened instead is that Oracle allowed a very complicated company to continue in complicated business practices.

In contrast, due to the intuitive nature of Microsoft Business Solutions, its implementation has triggered the simplification of processes that had always been overly complex. For example, Forgent simplified projects by not attaching a bill of materials. Instead, all of the items that once were handled in the project module are now entered as lines in Sales Order Processing, eliminating several steps.

Report Writer and Explorer get High Marks

Another of the many areas where processes have been simplified is in reporting. Johnson has been impressed with the new solution in this area. "In the short time I've been on [Microsoft Business Solutions], I've seen great improvements. You just can't compare the reporting functions in the two systems," she says.

Johnson is able to use Report Writer to create customized reports, modify existing reports and create entirely new reports. She also uses it to pull information from multiple data tables and sort the information in unique ways.

Explorer is another function that makes Microsoft Business Solutions an exceptional business product. Useful and strong, Explorer provides Forgent with instant access to data and allows staff to manipulate the views and data in ways that were impossible before the new solution.

Return on Investment

The move from Oracle to Microsoft Business Solutions has resulted in a number of benefits for Forgent:

- **Lower total cost of ownership**—Oracle cost Forgent nearly half a million dollars per quarter for depreciation, support and maintenance. Microsoft Business Solutions has reduced such expenditures between 85 and 90 percent.
- **Decreased learning curve**—Employees are quickly adapting to the new solution due to the intuitive and straightforward structure of the software.
- **Real-time reporting**—With the previous system, reports ran behind the scenes and not in real-time. Now reports are reflecting accurate and up-to-date information.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions

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- **Increased speed**—Forgent has been very pleased with the speed and agility of the modules. Period-end closings are quicker than ever.