

Embotelladora Centroamericana, S.A.

With the millennium approaching, Embotelladora Centroamericana, S.A., Pepsi's bottling franchise in Costa Rica, needed to do something about a financial system that was not Y2K-compliant. Instead of acquiring the new version of the software it was using on an AS/400 system, ECSA wanted to do business with a vendor that had stronger local resources, so it chose Microsoft Certified Solution Provider J.D. Edwards. J.D. Edwards works with The Premier Group in Costa Rica, which got ECSA up and running on the Idea to Action OneWorld Financial and Distribution Suites with ActivEra on Microsoft Windows NT Server in only 45 days.

Solution Overview

Company Profile

Embotelladora Centroamericana, S.A. (ECSA) bottles beverages for Pepsi in Costa Rica. It produces more than 300 thousand cases of 8 oz. bottles each month.

Situation

ECSA's existing financial and procurement system was not year 2000-compliant. Its choice was to purchase, configure, and deploy a completely new version of its existing system—a package for which there was virtually no technical support in Central America—or to purchase an entirely new financial system that did have better local support.

Business Solution

ECSA chose to deploy the Idea to Action OneWorld Financial Suite with ActivEra on Microsoft Windows NT Server, from Microsoft Certified Solution Provider J.D. Edwards. It also chose to deploy that solution through The Premier Group's OneWorld Express program, which combines all of the requisite elements of a complete solution—hardware, software, and services—in one package and for one defined price.

Benefits

Through The Premier Group's OneWorld Express Program, ECSA was using OneWorld on Windows NT Server in only 45 days. The firm has been able to move off of its non-Y2K-compatible system and has gained a powerful, integrated solution that it can manage easily and cost-effectively. It has also gained a solution that has plenty of local support in Central America. Should ECSA need unexpected support, technical support is available locally, and highly skilled personnel can be on site shortly.

When the thirst descends on you, you want satisfaction immediately—and few companies know this better than Pepsi. Pepsi bottles its products throughout the world to ensure that there is always a soda nearby when you need one.

But satisfaction resides on a two-way street, and when managers at Pepsi's Costa Rican bottling operation, Embotelladora Centroamericana, S.A. (ECSA), realized that the firm's financial systems were not year 2000-compliant, they began to look for a solution that would satisfy their need for an easily managed, well-supported, integrated enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. Their choice? The Idea to Action™ OneWorld™ Financial and Distribution Suites with ActivEra™ from Microsoft Certified Solution Provider J.D. Edwards®, running on the Microsoft® Windows NT® Server network operating system and Microsoft SQL Server™.

Starting Fresh

Prior to its move to OneWorld on Windows NT Server and SQL Server, ECSA had been running BPCS from System Software Associates Inc. on an AS/400 system, which it had deployed when it belonged to the BAESA Corporation. The BAESA Corporation bottled beverages for Pepsi throughout South America. When BAESA spun off its Costa Rican operations, ECSA continued to run BPCS—but without the level of support it had had as a part of the larger corporation. By 1998, MIS managers at ECSA were aware of a Y2K problem in BPCS version 4 and began to look into solutions.

Unfortunately for ECSA, there were no easy roads leading to Y2K compatibility. Though company managers tried to negotiate a solution with System Software Associates, the only arrangement they could make was to repurchase, reconfigure, and redeploy a new version of BPCS from scratch. Given the amount of time and energy such an effort would take, and given that System Software Associates had neither support organizations nor strategic

partners near Costa Rica, ECSA managers decided to consider other solutions.

"We looked at a range of solutions built for companies of our size and requirements," says Rubén Venegas, director of MIS for ECSA. "We looked at a solution from SCALA, a Swedish company, from Datasul in Brazil, and at J.D. Edwards, which has a presence in Costa Rica through The Premier Group."

After a process of testing and evaluation, Venegas and the management of ECSA chose to go with J.D. Edwards, running the OneWorld Financial and Distribution suites on Windows NT Server and SQL Server.

"J.D. Edwards provides a very strong suite of integrated applications that cover all our requirements," says Venegas. "We could have picked from a wide range of platforms to run on—from AS/400 to UNIX and Windows NT—but because so many companies in Costa Rica are moving to Windows NT, we decided to standardize on Windows NT ourselves."

Live in Forty-Five

A major factor in the decision to deploy OneWorld on Windows NT Server and SQL Server was the proximity of The Premier Group as well as its OneWorld Express package. The Premier Group has offices right in Costa Rica, which ensured a responsive support organization during the deployment of the solution at ECSA.

"The Premier Group has very good consultants who know J.D. Edwards and Windows NT and who use them every day," says Venegas. "System Software Associates promised to support BPCS through its offices in Mexico, but that was just not close enough to provide us with the level of service we wanted."

And ECSA has not been disappointed with the service The Premier Group has been able to provide. ECSA chose Premier's OneWorld Express package, which provides all the hardware, software, and services—from consulting to installation and training—required to go live with OneWorld. Moreover, OneWorld

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Director of MIS
Embotelladora Centroamericana

express promises that a customer can go live in 60 days and for a price that is fixed in advance. Not only did Premier deliver on its promise, deploying OneWorld Financial Suite on IBM Netfinity Servers running Microsoft Windows NT Server and Microsoft SQL Server, but it even had ECSA running on OneWorld in only 45 days. Sixty days later, ECSA went live with the OneWorld Distribution suite to address its inventory and procurement needs.

Increasing Efficiency with Windows NT Server

Embotelladora Centroamericana does not have a large information system (IS) department, so adding a new operating system was no small decision. The two-person group continues to support legacy applications on the AS/400, but the company is deploying new applications on Windows NT Server because of the availability of mission-critical applications and the ease with which a small team can manage these applications.

“Windows NT is so easy to learn and to administer,” says Venegas. “If I compare Windows NT to our character-based version of AIX or OS/400, there’s a big difference—Windows NT is *much* easier to use.”

System and application integration is easier, too, now that ECSA has moved off its old Novell network and standardized on Windows NT

Server. “Now, we have a network that’s easier to maintain on which we can use the same protocol and GUI for all the equipment.”

Users, too, are pleased with OneWorld on Windows NT Server and SQL Server. “If a user wanted to get information from a table or from the database under BPCS on the AS/400, they had to call someone from our MIS group to make queries against the database and export the information to a file—and then convert the information into Excel. That could take an hour or two. Today, they can do the same thing themselves in less than five minutes under OneWorld on Windows NT and SQL Server. Our users are *much* happier.”

A Complete Solution

“J.D. Edwards and Microsoft provide a very complete ERP solution for a company like ours,” says Venegas. “OneWorld on Windows NT gives us more flexibility than we had under the old application, more ways to do all the things we need to do. A lot of other companies in Costa Rica are selecting OneWorld as their ERP application, and I expect that in a year or so, we’ll have a lot of people in Costa Rica that know this application. There will be a good base of consultants, users, and technical people. There will be a lot of knowledge that companies can share. We’ll all benefit from that.”

J.D. Edwards’ Idea to Action OneWorld Financial and Distribution Suites with ActivEra on Windows NT Server makes it easy to access the information you need.

For more information

About Microsoft

Call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Sales Information Centre at (800) 563-9048. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft office.

For more information about Microsoft BackOffice®-based enterprise resource planning solutions (ERP), visit the Microsoft ERP home page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.microsoft.com/industry/erp/>.

About J.D. Edwards & Company

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J.D. Edwards provides Idea to Action software for managing the enterprise and supply chain. The company’s integrated applications give customers control over their front office, manufacturing, logistics/distribution, human resources, and finance processes for the consumer products, industrial, and services industries.

About The Premier Group

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Premier provides enterprise business solutions in the United States, Caribbean, and Central America. Leveraging J.D. Edwards software with Idea to Action and Microsoft technology, Premier enables its customers to gain better control of their business with comprehensive process and technology solutions.

Microsoft Software Used

Microsoft SQL Server
Microsoft Windows NT Server

J.D. Edwards Software Used

OneWorld Financials with ActivEra

Hardware Used

IBM Netfinity 5500 M10 servers

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