The Pantry streamlines reporting capabilities with help from Linoma Software and IBM.

Overview

- **The Challenge**
  Streamline the process for creating store performance reports using disparate, legacy point-of-sale data sources across convenience store chain

- **ServerProven Solution**
  IBM iSeries™ servers using Linoma Software’s RPG Toolbox

- **The Benefit**
  Legacy code is modernized into a more readable version, enabling programmers to provide management with more accurate reports based on more timely data

Changing times, trimming costs
Headquartered in Sanford, North Carolina, The Pantry, Inc. is the leading convenience store operator in the southeastern United States and one of the largest independently operated convenience store chains in the country. The company operates 1,399 stores in ten southeastern states under approximately two dozen banners including The Pantry, Handy Way, Lil’ Champ Food Store, Quick Stop, Zip Mart, Kangaroo, Fast Lane, Big K, Depot and Mini Mart. During the recent economic downturn, The Pantry has remained solid by focusing on controlling expenses and implementing store initiatives to optimize performance and position the company for growth.

The Pantry relies on point-of-sale (POS) store data to make decisions and run its stores effectively, but with time-consuming reporting processes and disparate data sources, the company was having trouble accessing accurate, timely data. As part of its efforts to boost performance, the company needed to standardize its source code so that its programmers could work more efficiently and provide more effective reports.

Standardizing source code for advanced reporting
In order to bring its report program generator (RPG) programs up to date, The Pantry turned to Linoma Software (linomasoftware.com). Linoma provided RPG Toolbox source modernizer and developer tools for the IBM iSeries servers, allowing The Pantry to write applications faster and maintain source code more effectively.
“It was a seamless installation. The RPG Toolbox allowed us to modernize to a more streamlined, readable source code in a fairly short amount of time,” says Ed Collupy, VP of Information Services at The Pantry. “RPG Toolbox converted our legacy programs seamlessly.”

Relying on a powerful platform

“IBM has always provided exceptional hardware reliability, and the iSeries leads the way in processing power and functionality,” says Collupy. The fact that Linoma’s RPG Toolbox is an IBM ServerProven® solution reinforces his confidence. IBM certifies a software application as ServerProven when it has been successfully implemented on an IBM @server in a real-world environment.

“We have been through numerous model and software upgrades and changes over the past several years with minimal downtime,” says Collupy. “The iSeries is a stable platform and has grown more powerful and reliable with each new release.”

Speeding delivery of accurate reports

With the ServerProven solution, the capabilities of the iSeries servers and Linoma’s RPG Toolbox have combined to help The Pantry meet its project goals of generating reports more efficiently. With its previous process, The Pantry spent hours coding and testing to integrate data into a report. Now the conversions can be done much more simply.

The solution has a minimal learning curve and has proved to be an exceptional teaching tool at The Pantry. Even skeptical programmers were convinced to move to an integrated language environment (ILE). In addition, using the RPG Toolbox has allowed the company to implement better standards of coding without stifling the creativity of its programming staff.

According to Collupy, “We would certainly recommend Linoma Software to any IBM iSeries shop that wants to keep up with the ever-changing world of RPG coding.”

“Linoma Software has provided a programming tool that has increased productivity with excellent technical support. And the reliability of the IBM iSeries has been without peer. It is a fast, powerful and reliable computer. Processor downtime is non-existent.”

—Ed Collupy, VP of Information Services, The Pantry

For more information

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