

RPM leverages feature-rich DataMirror solutions for competitive advantage

Commentary by Troy Gerton,
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RPM, Inc. is a world leader in specialty coatings, serving both industry and consumers in more than 130 countries. Headquartered in Medina, Ohio, RPM has more than 50 manufacturing plants worldwide, 8,000 employees and thousands of independent sales and technical representatives. RPM is known for the strong brands that many consumers recognize, including Rust-Oleum, DayGlo, Zinsser, DAP, Flecto, Bondo, Testors, Woolsey, Petit and Z-Spar. Listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: RPM), RPM, Inc. boasts 95,000 shareholders and total fiscal 2000 sales of \$1.95 billion.

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The Problem

RPM's e-Business environment includes redundant firewalls and workload balancers, an array of

Microsoft Windows NT/2000 based web servers and back-end database and application servers. The Company's wholly-owned data center is co-located with AT&T in one of its major Internet data centers. Meanwhile, RPM's back-end systems, ranging from UNIX boxes running SAP and Oracle to iSeries (AS/400) servers running MAPICS, are managed and maintained by each RPM-owned company. All RPM operating companies are connected via an internal frame relay network.

Early in 2000, RPM began the search for a data solution that could replicate customer information in real-time to support an integrated business-to-business e-commerce order management system. RPM had originally implemented Microsoft SQL Server Replication to replicate SQL Server 6.5 and SQL Server 7.0 customer data bi-directionally and in real-time to support the e-commerce system but, despite the help of Microsoft support engineers, had difficult configuring replication.

“RPM supports numerous operating companies running every type of hardware, operating system and software, so a simple ‘like-to-like’ system for replication such as SQL Server Replication would not have provided the required flexibility for growth,” says Troy Gerton, Business Systems Developer for RPM, Inc.

"Our initial needs were for SQL Server to SQL Server replication, but we knew we would also eventually replicate our SQL Server data to our iSeries based operational systems."

The Solution

In April 2000, RPM selected DataMirror Transformation Server as its best choice. The fact that Transformation Server integrates data bi-directionally and in real-time among heterogeneous as well as homogeneous databases and platforms simplified the selection process. "There was no need to look further at other less mature or capable products because we quickly became familiar with the DataMirror business and product line," says Gerton. "Transformation Server was proven and mature. All this made it a best-in-class solution to us."

The Benefits

RPM has enjoyed several benefits resulting from the implementation of Transformation Server. Since going live, Transformation Server has enabled the near instantaneous replication of several thousand business transactions per day from publisher to subscriber. More significantly, Transformation Server has reduced order cycle time by an average of two days, providing a continuous, up-to-the-minute flow of order status information to field sales personnel and customers, and ensuring error-free order creation.

"Transformation Server has allowed us to take a technical approach and

make it extremely elegant in terms of simplicity and power, thereby saving us from the complexity, pitfalls and assorted nightmares of immature, half-baked middleware solutions," says Gerton. "And because Transformation Server requires no programming changes to existing systems, DataMirror has allowed us to succeed quickly where other solutions would require extensive investments of money and time."

RPM has also experienced positive results from Enterprise Administrator for Transformation Server, a web-enabled graphical user interface (GUI) to manage and monitor the Company's replication network from a single location.

"Enterprise Administrator is feature rich and definitely empowers us to fully and easily leverage the strength of Transformation Server," says Gerton. "Once you grasp the basic publish and subscribe model, the convenience and richness of the interface are apparent."

The Future

After seven months in use, approximately 50 field sales representatives and 1,000 customers benefit from Transformation Server's real-time capture, transform and flow technology. In the near future, Gerton predicts the RPM customer base using the on-line order management system will exceed 30,000 users. RPM is also currently testing DataMirror iDeliver, a breakthrough business-to-business software solution that complements Transformation Server by allowing business associates to select,

transform and integrate corporate data into business or desktop applications or databases on their own systems.

Gerton has high expectations for the combined DataMirror solution.

"Transformation Server with Enterprise Administrator and iDeliver enables cost-effective, reliable, anything-to-anything integration at the database level," he says. "Choosing any other product to achieve the same success that DataMirror has brought us would have been cost-prohibitive, and in some cases unfeasible.

"A primary goal for RPM is to deliver quality solutions in Internet time, and DataMirror helps enable that," Gerton adds. "Today DataMirror is a key technology component for a \$40 million operating unit that until now had major barriers to rapid future growth. We expect that DataMirror's advanced solutions will continue to expand throughout the RPM enterprise to other operating units beyond this one."



DataMirror software is available
on-line at datamirror.com or call
1-800-362-5955

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