LANSA®
Advanced Software Made Simple

ISSUE 36: 2008

Review

www.LANSA.com

Reinvigorating System i Applications with LANSA

Honda Australia MPE brings its dealer systems in-house

PGI Nonwovens automates production with LANSA

Francis Marion University modernizes with RAMP

Save the Children extends Synon system with LANSA

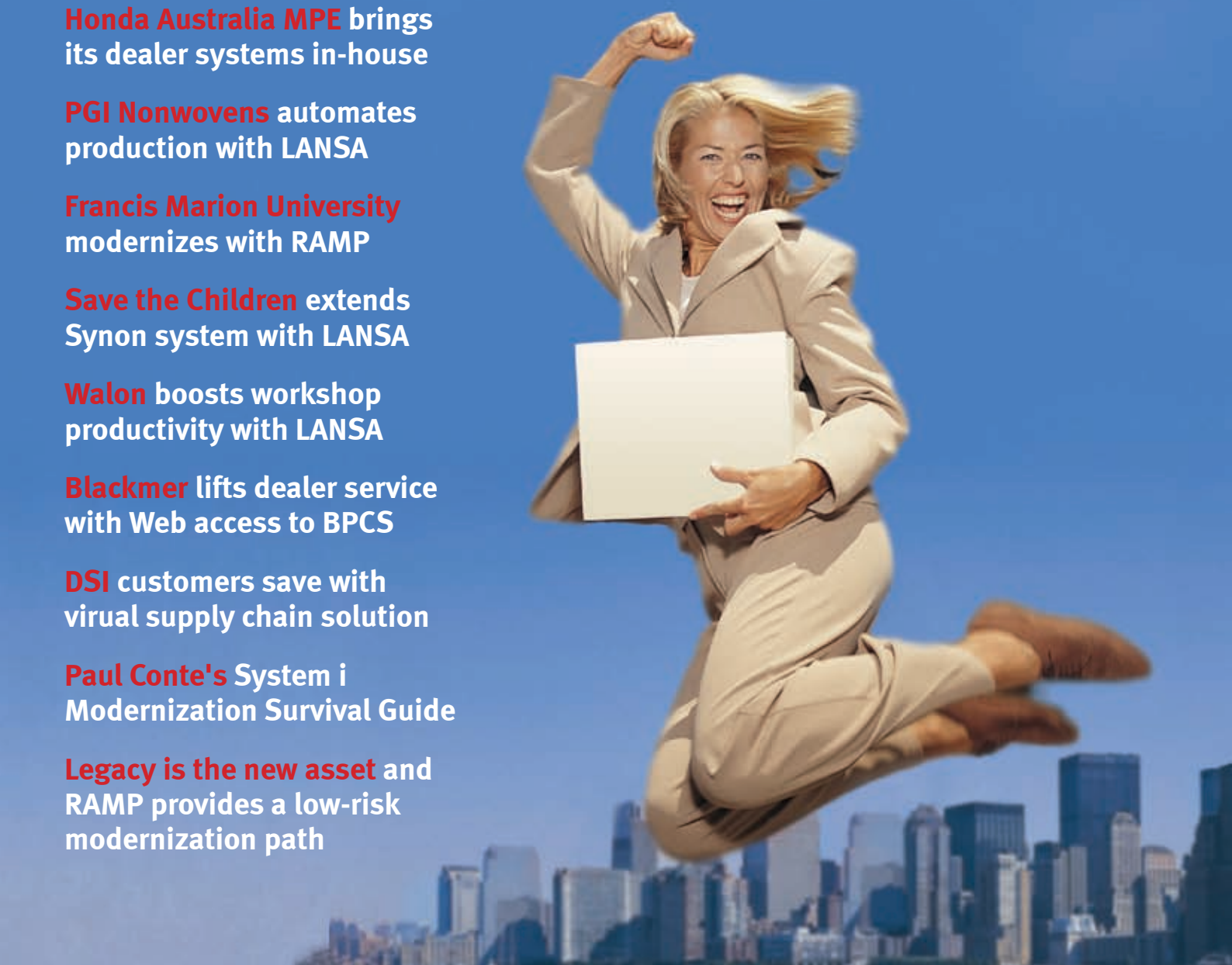
Walon boosts workshop productivity with LANSA

Blackmer lifts dealer service with Web access to BPCS

DSI customers save with virual supply chain solution

Paul Conte's System i Modernization Survival Guide

Legacy is the new asset and RAMP provides a low-risk modernization path



CONTENTS

THE LANSA REVIEW
Issue 36: August 2008

EDITOR
David Mills

CASE STUDIES BY
Marjanna Frank

DESIGNED BY
Echelon Design Communications

PUBLISHER
LANSA Pty Ltd
122 Arthur St, Nth Sydney
NSW 2060 Australia

LANSA®
ADVANCED SOFTWARE MADE SIMPLE

Announcing: LANSA Tech Exchange community Web site

What is the LANSA Tech Exchange?

LANSA has launched a Beta version of its Community Web site called the LANSA Tech Exchange.

Any member of the LANSA community can swap, sell and share LANSA Components (Weblets, Code Snippets, Templates or other LANSA technical components) and information.

How Will it Work?

Any member of the LANSA Community can use the site to offer items that are free-of-charge or for sale. If you want to offer a technical item to others in the LANSA community you can submit the details at the site and after checking, it will be added to the Available Items list on the Exchange.

If you are looking for a particular component, you can post a request and it will be added to the Wanted Items list. If another community member is able to assist you, we'll put you in contact.

Share With Your Peers

Over the past twenty years, thousands of LANSA customers and partners worldwide have successfully met their business needs and deployed leading-edge applications and packaged solutions using LANSA.

The LANSA Tech Exchange site will give the LANSA community an opportunity to share items that match other's needs at a component level rather than a packaged solution level. Check out the Beta site at **www.lansa.com/exchange**

Paul Conte explains the importance of agility, reliability and productivity in a successful modernization plan

System i Modernization Survival Guide White Paper

A recent survey conducted by System iNetwork reported that 76 percent of IBM System i shops are looking to begin a modernization project within the next 12 months. The survey also showed that only 25 percent of those planning a modernization project have a plan in place or have chosen the tools they will be using for the project.

To help companies determine how a modernization project can be a part of their business plans, which tools to use and whether a third-party vendor should play a role, LANSA is making available the white paper, "SYSTEM i MODERNIZATION SURVIVAL GUIDE: Future-proofing your Applications and Development Strategies."

Written by well-known author, speaker and consultant Paul Conte, this white paper explores the pressures an enterprise faces in today's business environment, outlines the reasons an enterprise might consider a modernization project and provides a strategy to get such a project underway.

LANSA also invited Conte to present on this topic in an Executive Level Round Table at the 2008 LANSA International User Conference.

Embrace Change and Minimise Risk

According to Conte, "A sound approach to modernization should embrace change, but minimize risk to the enterprise. The result must enable the IT organization to efficiently deliver the right information and capabilities to the right people at the right time, and to quickly adapt what's delivered to support the enterprise's evolving strategies and initiatives."

Such an approach will reduce significant risks brought on by mergers and acquisitions, a move to a new platform, unanticipated technological initiatives and more.

The white paper explains the significance of modernization within the enterprise and examines the steps to implement a modernization project.

According to Conte, the ideal modernized environment will comprise existing applications (whole or in part) alongside new applications with new navigation and interoperability frameworks. This combination provides an integrated view of the full range of application capabilities that are available through flexible user interfaces on a variety of platforms, yet also prepares the enterprise to incorporate SOA and Web services.

Download the White Paper and View a Video Presentation

Modernization requirements are becoming more common as companies look for a strategy to harness their current applications and enable them to meet modern-day technology and business challenges. Modernization typically presents a faster and lower risk approach when compared to a system replacement project.

LANSA offers this white paper to the IBM i community to provide best practice advice on approaching these projects from a recognized and leading expert on the topic.

To download the white paper or preview a video of the presentation by Paul Conte at the 2008 LANSA International User Conference, please visit: **www.lansa.com/conteexplains**

Later in this issue of the LANSA Review, you can read an Industry Showcase that focuses on businesses that are using RAMP from LANSA to achieve their System i application modernization goals. ■

LANSA recognizes customer and partner excellence

At the 2008 LANSA International User Conference in Orlando, Florida, LANSA honored Save the Children, Royal Bank of Canada and Fidelity National Information Systems with Customer of the Year, Lifetime Achievement and Partner of the Year awards respectively.

Save the Children, the internationally recognized children's charity operating in more than 40 countries around the world, was distinguished by its long-term commitment to LANSA technology with the Customer of the Year award.

Initially, Save the Children used LANSA to provide integration and extensions to its core Synon-based donor system and recently to rebuild its Sponsorship Web site to add content management, donor self-service and PDF generation.

The Lifetime Achievement award went to Royal Bank of Canada who originally implemented LANSA to develop a heavily customized insurance policy and administration system. The most recent development is the Wireless Road Advisor application that allows insurance claims adjustors the ability to service clients on site. Built with Visual LANSA, this application lets adjustors immediately access policies, key in data and initiate claims services. The application was ranked fourth in North America by Bank Technology News in its Innovators 2007 listing.

The Solution Partner of the Year award recognized the Fidelity National Information Systems ACBS division. Based in Del Mar, California, Fidelity ACBS has been a LANSA partner for 16 years and markets a LANSA-based commercial lending package, used by 35 of the top 50 banks in the world confirming its position as the market leader in the banking and financial industries.

Honda Australia MPE brings its dealer systems in-house

HONDA
The Power of Dreams

Honda Australia MPE distributes motorcycles, marine power equipment and personal watercraft through over 1,000 dealers and is part of the global Honda company, the world's largest engine manufacturer. Dealers use a LANSA Web solution for sales registration and warranty claims and can upload parts orders directly from their dealer management systems to Honda's core System i Movex and HiPack ERP applications. Honda has also started a project to integrate the Salesforce CRM with its systems via LANSA Integrator.

Craig Bassett, IT manager at Honda Australia MPE, says, "The new LANSA Sales solution handled over 30,000 registrations in its first four months, over double the volume of the previous hosted Web solution. We view LANSA as a key component in our ongoing strategy of building better communications with our dealer network."

An Unreliable Hosted Solution

"We aim to provide the best possible services to our dealers to make it easier for them to find out about product features, pricing, availability, warranties and financing. The Web plays an increasingly important role in delivering these services," says Bassett.

"But the hosted Web service we were using was not meeting our standards. There were too many steps to register a sale and the system wasn't perceived as user friendly by the dealers."

Honda MPE has over one million Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) in the field in Australia at any point in time and has to keep track of which VINs are with which dealer and which have been sold. A structural shortcoming was that the hosted system's database was synchronized by batch data uploads from Honda's system. If the hosted system got out of sync, Honda had to send it a file with all unregistered VINs.

The delivery of orders was not reliable either, as **Tony Aisbett**, business analyst at Honda MPE explains. "Orders were uploaded to the hosted site and the service provider would FTP them to the IFS on our server. We would poll the IFS and pick up the orders when they appeared."

"Sometimes orders went missing. The dealer was sure they had uploaded their orders to the hosted site and the service provider would say they had forwarded them to us. But we didn't get them. It was a finger-pointing exercise."

"Fixing problems and making modifications was difficult and expensive. It was hard trying to explain a business issue to someone with only graphical HTML skills. The service provider wasn't always that responsive either," continues Aisbett.

There were functional shortcomings as well. For example, the old system didn't handle 'cash backs'. Dealers had to send in a paper form, someone had to check that it met the conditions, key in the details and send it to accounts, who would mail a payment to the customer or dealer.

When Honda decided it was time to replace paper-based warranty claims, Basset wanted to use the opportunity to implement an integrated Web solution for registration, warranties and orders that resided on the same System i server as their core systems.

Honda uses the Movex ERP for its Completely Built Units (CBU) business that sells fully assembled motorcycles, power equipment and marine engines. Parts and warranties are managed with HiPack, a customized RPG solution built by Honda's head office in Japan.

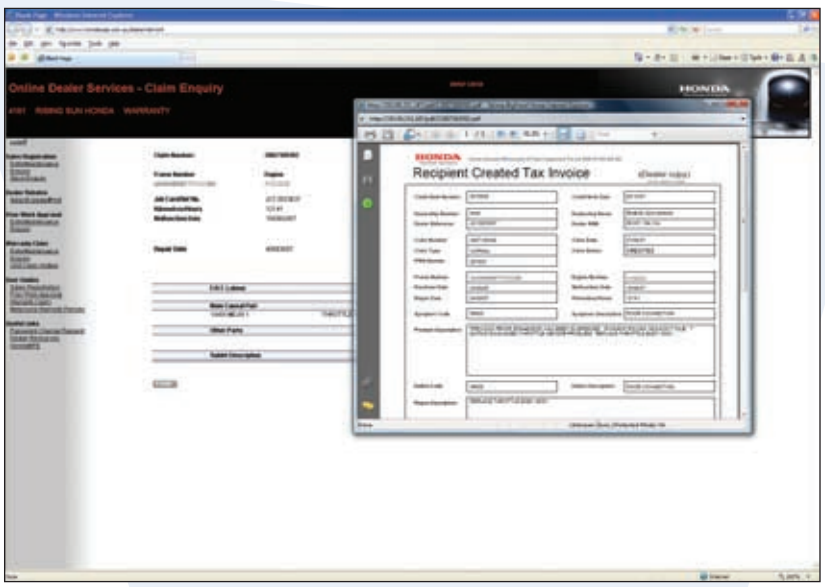
"We looked into Web facing the green screen RPG applications. But you still have to develop those programs in RPG and don't get the full value of a real Web application. We evaluated several options and found LANSA was the best tool for us," says Bassett.

"The Web-based cash back system has given massive administrative savings."

An Integrated Web Solution

Honda used Visual LANSA to build online sales registration, cash back management, order uploading and warranty claims solutions for its dealers. LANSA Integrator is used to securely upload orders and to make sale/warranty registration, warranty claim and rebate documents available as PDFs.

When registering a sale, the dealer can now enter a VIN or search by model number in his own stock. Once selected, the dealer keys in the customer details. This instantly updates the HiPack ERP with the sales registration. LANSA Integrator then creates a PDF confirmation with sales and warranty details, which the dealer can print and give to the customer. ➔



Honda used Visual LANSA to build online sales registration, cash back management, order uploading and warranty claims solutions for its dealers.

If the conditions of a cash back campaign are met, they are now automatically applied and the details printed on the sales registration.

When a customer comes to a dealer with an equipment problem, the dealer can now determine whether a product is still under warranty by searching online for the VIN.

"So, even if the customer has lost his warranty papers, the dealer can still help," explains Aisbett.

The dealer then enters claim details, including the claim amount based on parts and labor and submits the claim for approval. The dealer can also request and print a claim summary PDF.

When Honda approves the claim, a credit is raised against the dealer and the dealer can then request a recipient-created tax invoice PDF. Again, LANSA Integrator is used to create and send documents as PDFs via FTP. Honda's internal staff also use the same Web interface to process direct warranty claims.

"The LANSA site also lets dealers export and upload parts orders in real time from their management system to our System i," adds Aisbett.

"We have agreed on a predefined format for exporting orders with the three major dealer management systems in Australia, Revolution, Biscount and C8, so once an order has been exported, the dealer goes to our Web site, browses for the order file and presses the send button. The system sends the order file via the LANSA Integrator FTP service and it goes straight into our system."

"We inform the dealer instantly on his screen of the order number created in our ERP system and send a confirmation fax within minutes," says Bassett.

Massive Administrative Savings

"The site provides an easy experience for our dealers," says Bassett.

"Their feedback is "That was easy, I'll order something again from Honda." To bring a dealer back to our site, rather than a competitor's, you have to make the site simple and easy to use."

"Unless you offer better service you fall behind. You don't necessarily implement new systems because you expect a payback. You do it to keep business and stay ahead of your competitors."

"Running our own fully integrated LANSA Web solution is far more reliable than the hosted environment. There is no risk of orders getting lost as the orders go straight to our server and the dealer gets an instant confirmation," says Bassett.

"The new Web-based cash back system has provided a massive administrative saving," adds Aisbett. "The old system didn't support this at all. Cash back applications come in electronically having already been validated against campaign rules. The system then either credits the dealer's account or kicks off an automated procedure to send the customer a check."

"We find LANSA the cleanest and most efficient way to deliver an application. The LANSA site runs on the same server as our core HiPack and Movex ERP applications, uses the same databases and calls some of their logic."

"There is nothing to install or maintain on the dealer's side and no special equipment is required. Any authorized dealer with a PC and browser can securely access the application."

"Visual LANSA was easy to learn and highly intuitive with extensive online help. I have been using RPG for 30 years and the Web is a whole new paradigm. So it was still a hurdle to get familiar with the Web and the way it, event driven development and JavaScript behave."

"Considering we started less then a year ago, we are now incredibly advanced in the way we utilize the Web and the business process integration between our applications."

Honda Australia MPE distributes motorcycles, marine power equipment and personal watercraft through over 1,000 dealers.

"Developing our dealer solution in-house with LANSA delivers huge benefits."

Honda's Strategic Direction

"Flawless communication with our dealers is top priority," says Bassett.

"LANSA lets us build and support our dealer communication solutions in-house, delivering huge cost savings and benefits and it also allows us to be more responsive to enhancement requests and problems."

"We control our own applications and don't rely on a vendor prioritizing our change requests. We could not develop Web applications on the System i before, but now we can. That is the major advantage."

"The LANSA solutions are very successful and well accepted. When an opportunity comes up to provide more systems we will always consider LANSA as a first option."

"LANSA's Web development and direct B2B integration tools are our strategic direction. We see the LANSA applications as a core part of the business," concludes Bassett. ■

Company and System Information

- Honda Australia MPE started operations in 1991 and has its headquarters in Melbourne, Victoria. Part of the global Honda company that is the world's largest engine manufacturer, Honda Australia MPE manufactures and distributes motorcycles, marine power equipment and personal watercraft. Sales for Honda MPE in the 2007 financial year exceeded $350 million, representing approximately 210,000 units.
  For more information visit: **www.hondampe.com.au**
- The LANSA-based solutions at Honda integrate with HiPack, Movex and WebSphere Portal Express. Honda uses an IBM System i model 520.

Blackmer lifts dealer service with Web access to BPCS

Blackmer, a Dover Company, incorporated in 1903 and located in Michigan, North America, is the world's leading manufacturer of positive displacement pumps, centrifugal pumps and compressors for the transfer of liquid and gas products. Blackmer serves a wide variety of industries via its global network of distributors and OEMs and used LANSA to give distributors online access to orders and account information in its BPCS ERP.

Christopher A. Kanous, IT director at Blackmer, says, "We reduced costs by eliminating manual keying of orders and increased customer satisfaction with real-time account and order access. LANSA provided rapid delivery of standard eCommerce functionality plus the tools and services for a Web configurator for custom orders at a significantly lower price than the competitor's solution."

Rapid Growth and Custom Orders

Blackmer's products are used in a number of industries including refined fuels, pulp & paper, oilfield, wastewater, food & sanitary, military and commercial marine, transport and chemical processing. Most of Blackmer's customers are distributors who specialize in a specific industry, for which they understand the equipment requirements thoroughly.

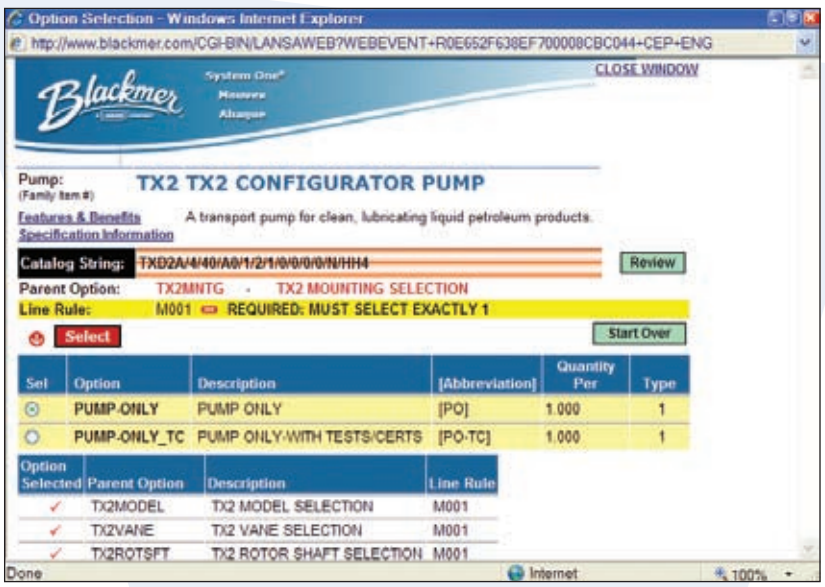
"We have experienced application engineers working for us who can give the skeleton configuration for virtually any application, but most of the time our distributors know exactly what they want to order," explains Kanous. "They are the ones who know the application and they know what they need."

"Before we had the online capability, orders were taken in via fax and phone by our customer service department and then keyed into our BPCS ERP, which we have been using since 1996."

"We are rapidly expanding our business and our customer service team, who also handled the majority of the account and product inquiries, often had to put customers on hold or ask them whether we could call back later. To guarantee fast customer service we would have had to add staff and also work in shifts, as over 60 percent of our orders and inquiries are from overseas time zones."

"Giving distributors Web access was the obvious solution. But as most of our orders are for custom-configured pumps, a standard Web catalogue solution would not suffice."

"We run a stock standard version of BPCS 8.2.01 and our business philosophy is to keep it that way, so anything that meant modification to BPCS was not considered. We also wanted the site to run on the same server and update the BPCS database in real time."



Blackmer gave its distributors online access to BPCS orders and account information, including a rules-based configurator for custom assembly orders.

> **"Our cost per order has come down substantially."**

"I had seen LANSA at trade shows, in magazines and also was impressed by the LANSA-powered Web sites I visited. I knew LANSA had experience with BPCS and could integrate tightly on the same System i platform. On top of that, the price for LANSA, including their services to customize and implement the BPCS Web extension, was about a third of what we would have spent for a vendor solution."

Rules-based Configuration

To handle standard orders, Blackmer chose to implement LANSA's Commerce Edition for BPCS, a B2B self-service framework solution for account, price and inventory inquiry and order entry and tracking. The framework would then be extended with a Web configurator module built in LANSA for placing custom orders.

The Web inquiry site was released to distributors within two months. The order entry facility for standard items was ready soon after, but Blackmer held back deploying the Web ordering until the Web configurator was ready to be released, as most distributors place mixed orders for both standard parts and custom-configured pumps.

With the assistance of LANSA Services, Blackmer created a question-and-answer script that feeds into the BPCS file structure. Thousands of questions, answers and business rules allow the configuration of even the most complex and diverse application pumps.

Kanous explains, "It is what is called a rules-based configurator, meaning options are based on answers to previous questions. We have similar questions and answers in our BPCS configurator system, so the additional work by our engineering department was not significant."

"All custom configurations, whether entered by customer service or by the distributor,

are now reviewed online by our application engineers. Many of our pumps are used in hazardous applications, pumping acids and compressed gasses that can be very explosive and flammable. The product liability issues are huge."

"Once the order has passed the review process, we send out a very detailed order acknowledgement to the distributor by email. The distributor then has 24 hours to make changes without charge, before we start building the pump."

"When we have the parts in stock we can assemble, paint and test pumps very quickly. We have a foundry on site to make our own castings. Blackmer is highly vertically integrated. Our production is very efficient and we turn a lot of orders around within 24 hours, so smooth order entry procedures are important. Unusual configurations may take three days to two weeks before we ship."

Faster, 24x7 Service

"Web ordering has been very well accepted by our distributors. We originally thought that we would have to offer our distributors incentives to place their orders online."

"But most of the distributors love it because they can make decisions while they are ordering. They may fine tune or upgrade their configuration as they see prices and options on their screen. They have more control over the ordering process."

"While the distributor is online to place an order, they can also look at their account details and status of pending orders, or reprint an invoice. The reaction from our distributors has been outstanding. They love the ability to get the information on their own without having to make a phone call. They also love the fact it is always available."

"Our customer service has improved by offering the online alternative. Customer service now has more time to help distributors who have questions that the Web site cannot answer. Their work has become more interesting, because the mundane routine queries are now handled by the Web."

"The site takes a lot of orders and inquiries outside our office hours. This is especially important for our overseas distributors, who are over 60 percent of our business."

Blackmer is the world's leading manufacturer of positive displacement pumps, centrifugal pumps and compressors for the transfer of liquid and gas products.

"We are growing the business and we can handle the increased volume without adding additional staff or working overtime."

"We don't have to touch Web orders and our cost per order has come down substantially."

"Our overseas subsidiary companies are also using the Web solution. This includes our plant in Auxerre, France, which is our biggest customer in volume of orders. To get them online has provided an enormous reduction in the number of orders that had to be entered by customer service. Our subsidiaries are very happy with the efficiency the solution provides them. We also operate an assembly operation in the Czech Republic and LANSA Commerce Edition is being considered as an option for order fulfillment."

An Excellent Investment

"While Web inquiry and ordering is tightly integrated in real time with our BPCS ERP system, we didn't have to change a single line of code," says Kanous.

The project was handled almost entirely by LANSA Services. We were not involved in writing any of the code. We just provided the rules and validated the data. Our policy is that our IT team is here to support the applications, not to develop them. We don't even have the source code of BPCS, except for the parts where we need to integrate."

"LANSA has turned out to be an excellent value for investment."

"LANSA Services were always fast to respond and helped to push along any project that hovered too long in user acceptance stage. Also, we never had to spend time explaining how BPCS works."

"While we run our reporting and office applications on Windows servers, our core business applications are running on System i with its high reliability, availability and security. Web ordering for distributors is part of our core business system, so we wanted to run that on the System i as well. The LANSA Web site has added almost no extra administration."

"LANSA has turned out to be an excellent value for investment. I can't think of anybody, even at the president's level, here at Blackmer who has anything but the highest praise for the LANSA Web project," concludes Kanous. ■

Company and System Information

- Blackmer, a Dover company, is a global leader in the design and manufacture of high-quality flow technologies, including peristaltic hose, eccentric disc and rotary vane positive displacement pumps, centrifugal pumps, screw compressors, air elimination systems, and sliding vane and reciprocating compressors for the transfer of liquid and gas products. Blackmer pumps and compressors are used worldwide in a variety of industries, including LPG, Chemical and Industrial Processing, Energy, Food & Sanitary, Military/Marine, and the Mobile Transport industries. Blackmer is the global leader in flow solutions for light petroleum and biofuels and the U.S. Navy has specified Blackmer pumps on every ship for the past 50 years. For more information visit: **www.blackmer.com**
- Blackmer uses BPCS version 8.2.01 running on a System i model 550 that is partitioned with the LANSA Web site and BPCS operations run in separate partitions.

PGI Nonwovens automates production with LANSA

PGI Nonwovens B.V. in the Netherlands is part of the Polymer Group, one of the world's leading producers of nonwoven materials for medical, hygiene, wiping, industrial and specialty uses. PGI used Visual LANSA to automate over 30 production lines at its manufacturing plant in Cujik, the Netherlands. The Windows applications integrate in real time with PGI's PRMS ERP on the System i and drive barcode scanners, label printers and robotic devices that count, pack and label products.

Fred Rambow, IT manager at PGI Nonwovens B.V., says, "With LANSA applications and related process changes, we have increased throughput without adding any production lines and reduced labor by fifteen percent in both our converting and manufacturing divisions. We did this with our own small team at a fraction of the cost of a packaged solution. Plus we have a 100 percent fit."

The Opportunity to Improve

PGI Nonwovens B.V., through its Chicopee Wiping division, is the supplier of well-known brand names as Chux, Dusty, B-Clean, Quix Wet, Lavette, J-Cloth, Super-Twill, Ko-Ton, Triko-Tex and Econoline. From its offices in the Netherlands, PGI looks after the entire European and Middle East markets. Major customers include hospitals, retailers, industrial clients. Its largest customer and former owner is Johnson & Johnson.

PGI has a long history with IBM midrange servers and has used the PRMS ERP since 1987. While PGI successfully used RPG to customize and enhance the ERP's back office applications, Rambow saw an opportunity to increase the company's efficiency with integrated PC-based solutions.

"In the mid '90s we wanted to give sales reps in other countries access to customer and sales history on their laptops," explains Rambow.

"We also wanted to automate production lines and forklifts with barcode scanners, label printers, WiFi and other devices."

"Obviously we could not use RPG to automate these PC-based processes, so we looked for a tool that could help us deliver PC solutions that could also tightly integrate with our ERP implementation on the System i."

"I wanted to keep our IT team small and use the same developers for both Windows and System i. LANSA offered standalone PC, System i and client/server deployment."

In 1995, PGI built a wireless 5250 solution that allowed forklift trucks drivers to see the location of materials. At the time PGI was using an aging IBM S/38 with performance problems, aggravated by slow wireless communication with the forklift trucks.

"We were new to LANSA and WiFi and it wasn't a success. But LANSA kept intriguing us as a development tool and we decided to use LANSA for our next project, which was truly PC-based," continues Rambow.

One of 18 workstations equipped with scanner, screen and label printer that sit next to a slitter machine in PGI's manufacturing department.

"Without adding new lines, we increased throughput and reduced labor by 15%."

Laptop Access for Sales Reps

PGI delivered a small but successful Windows application that gave remote sales reps in France, England and the Netherlands a view of sales figures and budgets from their laptops. The raw data was generated by PGI's PRMS ERP solution and made available for download from a Web server in PGI's U.S. head office. A Visual LANSA application on the laptop imported the rep's data and massaged it into a Sybase database.

"The application shows sales history and recent sales transactions in a friendly, graphical format and allowed the reps to communicate more effectively with their customers and negotiate with more knowledge and confidence," says Rambow.

"Clear proof of the application's success were the phone calls from the sales reps we got immediately the site went down."

The Converting Division

Rambow then saw an opportunity to use LANSA in PGI's manufacturing processes.

The manufacturing division produces large master rolls of up to 6,000 meters of fabric and cuts them into slits of 2,400 meters. Each slit gets a barcode label and several are packed onto a roll, wrapped in plastic and labeled.

These rolls are collected with a forklift and moved to a warehouse. When customer orders are received, the converting division gets the rolls from the warehouse, cuts the fabric into small wipes and packages it for distribution.

Operators in the converting division used hand-held terminals to scan the barcodes and enter the hours they worked, but data was only uploaded to the System i twice a day at the end of each shift. Back office staff then

added additional production information and released it for further processing by PRMS.

Rambow wanted to improve the process by capturing information at the source with thin client terminals communicating via Wi-Fi at each of the 12 converting lines. A LANSA solution that prompts operators to complete work order details on the spot and updates the System i data in real time was implemented in six months by a single developer.

"Information is checked and corrected immediately at the source, which avoids the need for expensive correction procedures by back office staff further down the track. System i production and order data is updated in real time, as boxes roll off the line."

"Production staff, many of them unfamiliar with computers, found the solution easy to use and readily accepted the new procedures."

Next the converting division wanted to use robotic devices to print and apply customer information labels to the boxes of packaged wipes as they left the production line.

"While we were unfamiliar with building software that integrated with robotic devices, we decided to give it a try with Visual LANSA. And we succeeded," says Rambow.

The solution involves three Visual LANSA programs. The first uses a COM port to read the production line's programmable logic controller (PLC) to find out if a box is approaching. The PLC reads a barcode that indicates the type of product in the box.

A second program keeps track of the current production orders by communicating directly with PRMS. This program also determines the information to be printed on the label and updates a label file.

The third program detects boxes as they pass, checks the barcode via a COM port and then reads the label database file. If a label is to be printed, it sends the label information to the label printer, via a COM port and the PLC instructs a robot to stick the label on the box. The time from a box approaching the PLC to sticking on the label and updating the ERP is only five seconds.

The Manufacturing Division

PGI's manufacturing division was using an unsupported barcode scanning and labeling network that met only basic requirements.

PGI Nonwoven's IT development team, from left to right Fred Rambow, Robert Buteijn and Enrico van Dinten.

"There was no connection with our ERP system," says Rambow. "Every work order was printed, resulting in large stacks of paper with production details, including the bills of materials. After every shift, the manufacturing department sent these stacks of paper back to the office for entry in the ERP system."

Rambow and his team put in place a similar, but more complex, work order and product registration solution. Again this was followed by a product labeling system.

"By now, we had experience with Visual LANSA and integration with our ERP system was straightforward," says Rambow. "The biggest challenge was finding a thin client with four COM ports."

"Visual LANSA is pleasant to use and lets us deliver smart solutions, quickly."

The Benefits of Automation

"With the help of the LANSA applications on the workshop floor and related process changes, we have increased throughput without adding any production lines and achieved a fifteen percent reduction in labor in both our converting and manufacturing divisions," says Rambow.

"To put that in perspective, the converting division employs 40 people in three shifts per day for five days per week with 12 workstations where operators use the application. The manufacturing division employs 150 people who work in five shifts per day for seven days per week and have 18 workstations where operators use the application."

"Additional benefits are a significant reduction in paperwork and improved accuracy in work orders and production data. Managers and supervisors also have a better view of what is going on because production information in our ERP system is updated in near real time."

"My team consists of two analyst/programmers and three operational staff who look after the network. With this small team, who also maintain our core RPG ERP system, we have been able to put an automated workshop floor solution in place that has cost us far less money than we if we had purchased a packaged solution, or outsourced the development. Plus, we now have a 100 percent fit," concludes Rambow. ■

Company and System Information

- PGI Nonwovens B.V. (PGI) is a subsidiary of Polymer Group, Inc., the third largest producer of nonwoven materials in the world, with 25 manufacturing facilities in 12 countries on four continents. PGI Nonwovens B.V. in the Netherlands was previously part of the Chicopee Wiping division of Johnson & Johnson and was acquired by the Polymer Group in 1995.
  For more information visit: www.chicopee-europe.com and www.polymergroupinc.com
- PGI uses the PRMS ERP solution from SSA Global Technologies (now part of Infor) running on a System i model 520.
- PGI's IT department consist of an IT manager, two analyst/programmers and three operational staff. Over 150 users connect to the ERP system and the workshop floor solution in the converting and manufacturing division is used via 30 thin clients.

Francis Marion University modernizes with RAMP

Francis Marion University (FMU), one of 13 state-supported universities in South Carolina USA, has nearly 4,000 students at its Florence campus. FMU extended its student administration system with LANSA, by giving online access for students and faculty members to registration, class scheduling, grades, degree audits, financial aid applications and more. FMU is now modernizing its core System i applications with RAMP and Visual LANSA.

John Dixon, chief information officer at Francis Marion University, says, "When I joined Francis Marion in January 2007, it became apparent our users wanted an up-to-date presentation of university information. As a short-term strategy, I decided to implement a GUI interface to our existing ERP system. We reviewed several applications and decided RAMP offered the most flexibility and easiest deployment."

Modernization vs Replacement

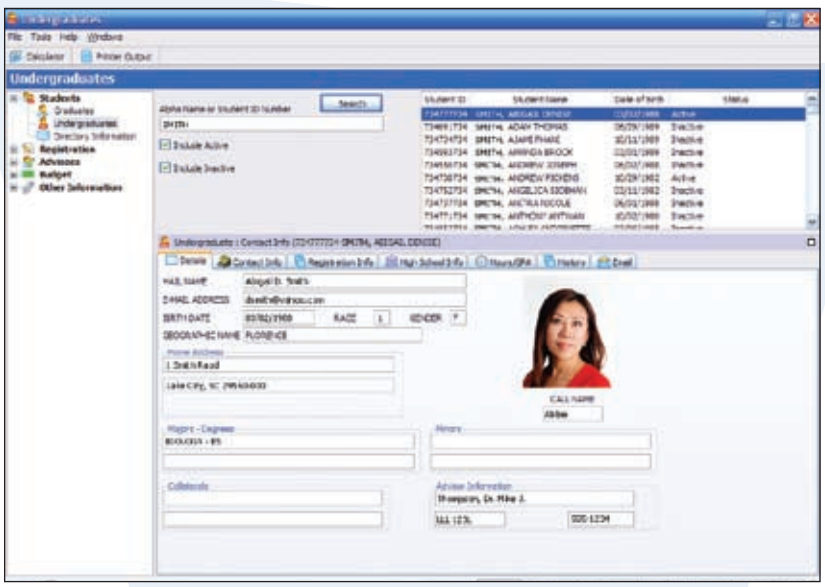
The roots of FMU's student administration system go back to the 1970s, when FMU leased IBM S/34 computer resources from a local service bureau. FMU purchased its own IBM S/36 in 1986, followed by an IBM AS/400 a few years later. Development was done in RPG, with the addition of LANSA from 2000 onwards.

The student administration system stores a lot of business logic and contains great information, but its 5250 screens and RPG code, some of it still running in S/36 mode, were hampering user productivity and integration with new technologies.

Both in 2000, when FMU looked for a way to provide students with online access and again in 2007, when FMU wanted to modernize its legacy RPG applications, one option was to purchase a packaged solution.

"With the sophisticated functionality our users are accustomed to, package prices range from one to two million dollars," explains **Robin Moore**, director of campus applications and data services at FMU. "If your existing system is not working well, you might find it easier to justify spending that kind of money. But we didn't want to just throw away what we had, because it was working so well."

"We talked with several package vendors, looked at development tools and also at what other universities were doing. We decided to modernize our existing solution, because that way we can continue to modify and enhance the system any way we want and service our users best."



The new RAMP module has sophisticated searching with quick point-and-click access to student details. Enhancements include a photo ID to improve security and an email tab.

Francis Marion University

"We already had a positive experience with LANSA's older development tool, because we have successfully delivered Web access for students, faculty and staff members. We evaluated Visual LANSA and specifically liked its Web Application Modules or WAMs, that let us use the same object oriented programming style in Windows and browser applications and snap programs into the Visual LANSA Framework."

"Our student administration system has 8,000 programs and 4,000 files. Eventually we want to have a graphical, cross-platform environment with no reliance on RPG. Using RAMP, we can cost effectively modernize the priority modules and gradually get there."

"RAMP offered the most flexibility and easiest deployment."

Modernizing the Core System for Internal Users

FMU faculty and administrative staff used IBM's Client Access and BOSaNOVA terminal emulation to access the 5250 screens, but that did not make it easy to get to the data.

"New and infrequent users found it especially hard to remember how to use the system," explains Moore. "So we decided to modernize the student registration module first. Registration only happens a few times each year and for many users it is the only time they use the system. Another good reason to tackle this module first was that it also needed new functionality, such as photo identification and email integration."

The new RAMP-ed module offers a sophisticated search and sort of student records, with tabs to quickly point-and-click to the required details. Student information has been extended with a photo ID, reducing the risk of identification theft. The email tab offers new functionality and easy integration with MS Office.

"It also has graduate and undergraduate searches, so users can look up a student's history, open classes, directory information and lots more. Users can point and click to all the information they need to advise and register a new student," explains Moore. "Moreover, they can now print information

on their local PC printers, instead of having to walk to one of the system printers."

"The new modules, named SwampFox, are easy to use and intuitive, even for those users who only access the system a few times a year. Users like the GUI, the tabs, the point-and-click and the fact they can send an email so easily from within the application."

"Even though this was our first Windows rich-client implementation, the project was fairly easy and straight forward," says Moore.

"Two staff members worked on the project with my help. We purchased RAMP in May 2007, did the RAMP training, worked with the faculty members on requirements and deployed the GUI module in September 2007."

About 45 tabs in the new module contain refaced RPG programs ("cherries"), while five tabs contain entirely new functions ("plums") that were built in Visual LANSA. In addition, the search, sort and navigation programs are all new and were automatically generated by the Visual LANSA RAMP framework.

"We selected RAMP's Windows rich-client interface and use LANSA's Just-in-Time deployment to update a user's PCs every time they connect. So deployment is easy. Out of 250 internal users, 100 use SwampFox, including five Macintosh users, who use remote desktop to run the application from a Windows server."

Opening the System to Students

Although FMU has only recently started to modernize its student administration system for internal staff, improved services and communication with students have been priority since 2000.

"We started out with an Open Classes module," explains Moore. "It lets students see what classes are open and how many seats are left in the class. Students can also review and print their class schedules from the Web."

Other LANSA-based Web applications include Student Registration, which kicks off procedures to verify the entered details and comply with government regulations.

Students can pay over the Web via a third-party service for credit card payment and check the status of their admission online. Students can apply for financial aid over the Web and once granted keep track of their account balance online.

Francis Marion University, one of South Carolina's 13 state-supported universities, provides strong liberal arts based programs for both undergraduate and graduate studies.

"Reusing existing pre-tested RPG logic saved a lot of time."

Behind the scenes, the LANSA Web applications call both LANSA and RPG programs. "We didn't have to write all the programs in LANSA," says Moore. "It was easy to reuse existing RPG logic with rules and calculations consistent with paper-based applications, so that saved a lot of time."

Students can also look up their grades and verify their personal information online and change their contact details. Faculty and staff can download rolls from the Web and post grades securely, all using LANSA.

Students can also do a Degree Audit, which analyses degree requirements, checks the courses completed and tells the student what courses they need to finish their degree.

"The logic is quite complex and 100 percent LANSA," continues Moore. "The program that does the analysis has over 2,490 lines of RDML. The files and rules are maintained dynamically by the Registrar's Office, so there are another 30 or 40 programs to maintain the degree requirements and course information."

Delivering Modern Applications

"With our small and knowledgeable team of four developers and the help of LANSA services, we can deliver modern applications and online services to our staff, faculty members and students. We don't have to rely on a package vendor and we don't have to hire new staff," concludes Moore.

"One of the main reasons we selected RAMP and Visual LANSA is the framework approach. It provides for a very intuitive, consistent end-user environment and because the framework is automatically generated, development is more productive."

"Visual LANSA can work with System i and Windows data. LANSA's cross platform capabilities are crucial to us."

"Our developers can use Visual LANSA for all development, whether Windows, Web or native System i. That will boost productivity in our team. Next, we will look at application areas that need modernization or replacing. As time permits we will change "cherries" over to "plums" and finally get rid of the remaining System 36 code."

"We have done a lot with LANSA in the past and we are going to do a lot more with RAMP and Visual LANSA in the future. Now our users have seen the first RAMP-ed module, expectations have been set very high." ■

Company and System Information

- Francis Marion University (FMU) is one of South Carolina's 13 state-supported universities, providing a strong liberal arts based education. FMU offers undergraduate degrees in the arts, laboratory sciences, business, education, social and behavioral sciences as well as graduate programs in education, business and psychology. In 2008, for the seventh year in a row, FMU was ranked by U.S. News & World Report magazine as one of the South's top 100 masters level universities. For more information visit: www.fmarion.edu
- The core student administration system and all other IT systems, including financial aid, admission, accounting and payroll, are developed and maintained by FMU's small in-house team that consists of four developers and a director.

Save the Children extends Synon system with LANSA

Save the Children USA (SC USA) is the leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in the USA and around the world. For 75 years, SC USA has helped children survive and thrive by improving their health, education and economic opportunities. SC USA used LANSA to provide integration and extensions to its core donor Synon system and to rebuild its Sponsorship Web site to add end user content management, donor self-service and PDF generation.

Associate VP for Sponsor and Entry Donor Marketing, **Denise Kuendig**, says, "Giving visitors to our site more control of their experience as a prospect or sponsor has greatly improved our service capabilities. That ultimately translates to helping us meet our goal of doing more for children in communities where we work."

Giving Users More Control

Save the Children USA is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, a global network of 28 independent organizations working to ensure the well-being and protection of children in more than 120 countries. In fiscal year 2007, SC USA spent 90 percent of all expenditure on program services and consistently receives the top Charity Navigator rating.

It is important for SC USA to offer easy access to sponsorship programs on its own Web site, as well as easy integration with information from third-party fundraisers and events. But SC USA was hampered by limitations in its IT architecture.

Its Web site had facilities to view available sponsorship programs and register as a sponsor, but was hard to maintain and lacked self-service functionality. SC USA needed a more dynamic solution that users could maintain themselves.

SC USA uses several systems and platforms to manage its donations, sponsorship programs, field office information and financials. The core Synon 2E donor and sponsorship information system was developed in-house in the mid-1990s and contains a huge amount of information and business rules that need to be used by other systems, including the Sponsorship Web site.

SC USA had already used LANSA to extend its core donor system and decided to use LANSA for its new Sponsorship Web site including content management and generation of PDF Welcome Kits and receipts.

Save the Children USA has increased the self-sufficiency of the staff in the Sponsorship department as they no longer have to wait for a developer to update the Web site.

Save the Children USA

"Giving site visitors more control has greatly improved our service capabilities."

The Sponsorship Web Site

The new Sponsorship Web site was built with LANSA's XML/XSL-based Web Application Modules (WAMs). The site's text and images are stored in files maintained by end users using a content management system built with the same LANSA technology.

With the LANSA platform, prospective sponsors can now view children who are in need of sponsorship and use the advanced search function to choose specific criteria to identify a child to sponsor. LANSA is also used to securely authorize credit card payments.

Child safety is one of SC USA's primary concerns, so the site limits the number of child profiles viewed per session and enforces timeouts. This strikes the right balance between maintaining the dignity of children who have applied for a sponsor and giving Save the Children supporters access to a personal, customized online application.

The site gives each sponsor a password-protected personalized homepage, with a picture of the sponsored child, where they live, their birthday, personality traits, daily activities and other details. When a sponsor supports more than one child, homepages can be selected from a drop down.

Using Synon APIs, the LANSA programs reuse tables and rules in the core donor system to ensure the children in greatest need are displayed with priority on the Web site and are easy to search for.

The site lets sponsors view and print a PDF of their official charitable tax deduction receipt online using LANSA Integrator. The sponsor can also download a template to write a letter or email the sponsored child via the local SC USA field office.

LANSA Integrator is used to manage and process various donor communications, including the Digital Case History solution, which contains about 30 templates used to generate PDF Welcome Kits for donors. The templates are maintained by users in the sponsorship department avoiding the need for programmers to make changes to the text.

The child-related information is managed by SC USA's Windows-based Assist system,

which maintains all the information about the children, their family, where they live, what school programs they are involved with, and so on. A small subset of this information is kept on the System i and, once a child is sponsored, is linked to the donor. For sponsored children, the donor ID is also kept in the Assist system, so there is two-way integration.

For each new sponsorship, the LANSA application determines the appropriate template, based on factors such as the child's age and country, and sources the information from the System i and a photo of the child from the Windows-based Assist system.

The Welcome Kit contains a lot of information, such as confirmation of the sponsor's details, child or project specific information, how to get in touch with the child, and so on. Printing that information and putting the kit together manually was complex and time consuming.

"Now the Welcome Kit is generated automatically. It could be sent electronically if the sponsor wants, saving time and effort," says **Lee Steuber**, Deputy Chief Technology Officer and Applications Director at Save the Children USA.

Uploading Electronic Feeds

SC USA receives data such as new and updated donor contact and commitment details from various sources for various projects. SC USA used LANSA to build a system to upload and process this data, which is received in fixed file, CSV, tab delimited and many other formats. The upload system has a modular, parameter-driven design that uses workflow and data mapping components to provide a flexible, self-documenting interface to the core donor system.

The user interface was built with Visual LANSA with backend processing done by LANSA iSeries functions and Synon APIs.

Using five basic components, the system can be set up to perform a variety of functions, such as data validation, duplicate donor checking and resolution, donor creation, and donation and commitment processing. All transactions are integrated as required into the core Synon-based donor system.

Christine Lay, business analyst and project leader, explains that SC USA spends a lot of time resolving duplicate donors once they are in the system, so preventing a duplicate getting into the system saves time and money. "Validating canvassing commitments for duplications and mapping the data submitted by vendor to the values required for the donor database and creating financial transaction and canvasser logs has saved the Sponsorship department an estimated two hours a day during first year of use."

Save the Children USA IT team, from left to right: Glen Norton, Lee Steuber, Nadia O'Dell, Dominic Machado, Christine Lay, Qing Wang and Santha Kumar.

Upload files can be used for very high volume campaigns, such as collections for the Boxing Day Tsunami and events like 'American Idol Gives Back', where people can make donations via toll-free lines and the Internet. Steuber adds an interesting anecdote about an unusual upload example.

"Two years ago we had a 'Caps for the Capital' program. As it was our 75th anniversary, we were aiming for 75,000 baby caps. But we received well over 380,000 that took one floor of a whole wing in our building. We worked with a large number of volunteers to enter the data in spreadsheets and processed these in the Upload system, avoiding the need to rekey any data."

The Benefits of LANSA

"With LANSA, we doubled the number of our people who can do development on a project. LANSA Version 11 was easy to learn for our PC developers who are familiar with VB and Delphi. PC developers instantly feel familiar with Visual LANSA. This means we have more flexibility on who can be assigned to which project," concludes Lay.

"Users can change text and images on the site themselves."

"One advantage of extending and integrating the donor system with LANSA using Synon APIs, is that we can reuse the core logic that has been functioning for over 10 years and is already tried and tested. We get the best of both worlds by combining the ease-of-use and quick development capabilities of LANSA with the extensive business rules and complex logic in our legacy systems."

"LANSA has been of particular benefit to the Sponsorship Department," concludes Steuber. "We have increased the attractiveness of the Sponsorship Web site and given more control to sponsors and prospective sponsors."

"We have also increased the self-sufficiency of the Sponsorship Department. Using the content management system they can change the text and images on the Web site themselves and by altering a template they can also change the way a letter or Welcome Kit is phrased. Having that business department self-sufficient improves ROI as well." ■

Company and System Information

- Save the Children USA, based in Westport, Connecticut, is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, a global network of 28 independent Save the Children organizations working to ensure the well-being and protection of children in more than 120 countries. For 75 years, Save the Children USA has been helping children survive and thrive by improving their health, education and economic opportunities and, in times of acute crisis, mobilizing rapid life-saving assistance to help children recover from the effects of war, conflict and natural disasters.
- For more information visit: **www.savethechildren.org**

Walon boosts workshop productivity with LANSA

Walon, the leading supplier of finished vehicle logistics to the U.K. motor industry, is responsible for over 1.2 million vehicle movements a year on behalf of vehicle manufacturers, fleet operators and dealers. In its first year with LANSA, Walon gave manufacturers and dealers Web access to its Vehicle Tracking Management System (VTMS) and built a real-time Workshop Management Control system.

Colin Williams, head of IT at Walon, says, "Using LANSA, our own experienced team added functionality to our existing VTMS. We can now manage our workshops in a far more sophisticated way and offer our customers contracts that measure activities in greater detail and in real time. We also supported totally new revenue streams. There is now enthusiasm in the company for us to deliver more good-looking applications through LANSA and further new products and services."

The Challenge of Adding Value

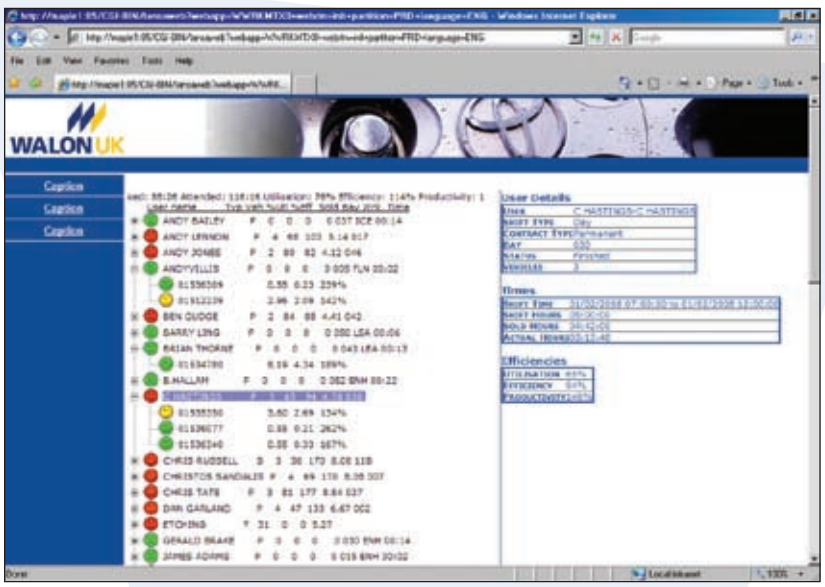
Walon takes responsibility for a vehicle from the point it arrives in the U.K. off a ship or from the production line of a manufacturer. Via its network of 25 centers and a fleet of 500 car transporters, Walon then delivers the vehicles to the dealers of most major vehicle manufacturers and leading brands, including Alfa Romeo, BMW, Fiat, GM, Lexus, Mini, Nissan and Toyota, handling half of all new U.K. registered vehicles.

Walon also offers related services, such as customs and excise, pre-delivery inspection, secure vehicle storage and managed services. In addition, Walon performs late configuration and technical enhancements of vehicles to meet model variations, local requirements and individual order specifications.

"Our value-added technical services let manufacturers build more generic vehicles for the global marketplace, which we enhance for the U.K. marketplace and to individual requirements," explains Williams.

"In our workshops, we handle anything from changing a badge, fitting an alarm or audio system, upgrading wheels and tires, to cutting and stitching leather for the interior and seats."

"We manage all the administrative processes in VTMS. Starting from the beginning, when a batch of, say 800 to 1500, vehicles arrive at a compound, our staff use handheld devices to scan a barcode that uniquely identifies the car through its preparation and delivery stages. All our compounds have wireless networks, so the moment a barcode is scanned, the vehicle is registered in real time in our VTMS as being under our care and responsibility."



Using the new workshop management control system, Walon can now monitor performance levels, both individually and as a department, in real time and take immediate remedial action.

"We monitor performance in real time and take action immediately during a shift."

"We update the manufacturer via EDI or data transfer with vehicle progress, including as components are fitted. The manufacturer typically feeds these updates into their dealer management system. We receive EDI transmissions throughout the day from manufacturers instructing us to deliver vehicles to specific dealerships or destinations. Most of our data communication is with the manufacturer, they are our customers, and historically it was up to them to keep their dealers informed."

"However, things are now changing. We want to give both dealers and manufacturers Web access to our VTMS for them to see the progress of their vehicles. In the past, we used Web facing products, but these have their limitations."

"VTMS has just over 600 internal users and has been enhanced and extended continuously in RPG since we delivered the first version in 1990. Over the last few years, we evaluated modernization tools and selected LANSA for its productivity and easy integration with our existing VTMS and System21 (Aurora) software."

"LANSA also stood out because it offered a practical framework approach to modernizing our internal applications. LANSA's Web Application Modules (WAMs) let us use the same components in Web applications for external users, as well as in Windows applications for internal users."

"In 2007, LANSA became a major part of what we call Project Vision, our VTMS modernization project. We also fitted our trucks with GPRS connected PDAs and printers that let us inform our customers of the actual delivery date and time and promote a paperless environment."

"To meet priority business requirements, we started with three small, but very visible and high impact, LANSA projects." ➔

Online Vehicle Configuration

Walon's first LANSA application lets dealers configure vans and small trucks online. The dealer places an order for standard vehicles on the manufacturer's site. If modifications are needed, the site re-directs them to Walon's site and they see the price and expected delivery date as they select options.

"In effect the dealer is registering a work order directly in our VTMS scheduling system," explains Williams. "We invoice the manufacturer who then invoices the dealer."

"Using LANSA we created a totally new revenue stream for our business. Without a Web solution the costs could have been prohibitive. Even though this was our first Web application and also our first LANSA project, two members of our existing VTMS team delivered it in just three months."

Real-time Workshop Management

The second LANSA application was a workshop management control system. Historically, Walon would book the budgeted time for all the modifications that were done to a vehicle, regardless of the actual time taken.

Walon installed screens and scanners beside the technician's work bay, so they can register each job as it is done. Each car has a 'my job card' with a barcoded list of the activities that need to be carried out. The technician deals with the activities that he is skilled in and registers the actual start and stop time for each individual task directly into VTMS.

"We can now measure workshop efficiency and provide details of the workshop hours we are selling. Managers can see the efficiency of the whole workshop live through a WAM-developed dashboard," says Williams.

Simon King, Walon's divisional manager for Toyota at the Royal Portbury Dock, comments, "We can now monitor performance levels, both individually and as a department, in real time and take remedial action during a shift. Previously we could only analyze performance levels the following week."

"Over productivity, which can indicate poor work quality, can also be investigated immediately. Quality has gone up two percent and productivity has gone up around four percent at the same time," concludes King.

"We work very closely with Toyota," continues Williams. "They take an active part in managing the process and are very impressed with the application."

The Walon IT team: (From left to right) Tim Wiseman – UK IT manager, Colin Williams – Head of IT and Stuart Smith – Project Vision manager.

"Within a year, our existing team delivered three major new products & services."

"We can now manage our workshops in a far more sophisticated way and offer our customers contracts that measure activities in greater detail and in real time. The historical data also helps to implement structural improvements and more realistic planning."

Walon's third LANSA system, also built in 2007, is for the administration of demonstration cars from manufacturers to companies with huge fleets of leased cars. Walon takes care of the inspection, delivery and collection of these cars and also for any damage or warranty issues whilst that car is on loan. Walon built a Web appointment system that lets manufacturers look up and book out available cars.

"We delivered a functionally rich user interface that catered for the calendaring system. Again, as with other developments, LANSA allows us to utilize the existing VTMS data structures, but in a much more modern way," says Williams.

Modernizing the Core System

"Within a year of purchasing LANSA, our existing team has been able to deliver three major new products and services to our customers and a lot of business benefits," says Williams.

"Our VTMS still sits virtually unchanged behind the new functionality, but with LANSA we now have better tools to develop new functionality and frontend applications."

"Now that we have started, there is new enthusiasm in the company for us to deliver more good-looking applications with LANSA WAMs. Users are coming up with new ideas all the time."

"We enjoy working with LANSA. Gaining experience in developing XML-based Web applications has given a boost to the skills and confidence of our development team as well."

"Expectations have been raised that we should now use LANSA to modernize our core VTMS system. We are delivering systems in agreement with the business and give priority to where we can add business benefit, so from that point of view it was good to start with a few very visible Web systems," concludes Williams. ■

Company and System Information

- Walon, headquartered in Yeovil, Somerset, U.K., is a leading supplier of finished vehicle logistics services to the U.K. automotive industry. With a fleet of over 500 car transporters and a network of 25 centers, it is responsible for over 1.2 million vehicle movements annually. Walon's customers include most major vehicle manufacturers and leading brands, including Alfa Romeo, BMW, Fiat, GM, Lexus, Mini, Nissan and Toyota. Walon UK has 1,800 staff and is part of the AutoLogic company, a leading provider of logistics services that specializes in used vehicle refurbishment and new vehicle preparation, enhancement and distribution. For more information visit: **www.walon.com**
- Walon has an IT team of 23. The LANSA applications integrate with Walon's bespoke RPG-based Vehicle Management Tracking System and Infor's System 21 (Aurora).

DSI customers save with virtual supply chain solution

Distribution Solutions Inc. (DSI), headquartered in Secaucus, New Jersey, USA, is a comprehensive logistics, distribution and transportation company. DSI's services focus on critical supply chain initiatives, including postponement distribution, consolidation and deconsolidation, transloading, order replenishment and Internet order fulfillment. DSI's two developers built all its IT systems with LANSA and manage all electronic data exchange with LANSA Integrator.

"The importance in our industry, of a flexible, easy to customize IT system is well illustrated by the fact that either our CIO or myself usually come along on sales calls," explains **David Meenen**, IT manager at DSI. "To get new customers on board it is crucial that we can meet their requirements and integrate with their IT systems."

One-stop Shop Distribution

Founded in 1989 by its current CEO **Jeffrey M. Wolpov**, DSI is a continuation of a family business that dates back to 1969. With deep roots in the garment industry, DSI has developed into a comprehensive service provider handling general merchandise, hard and soft lines, consumer goods and apparel.

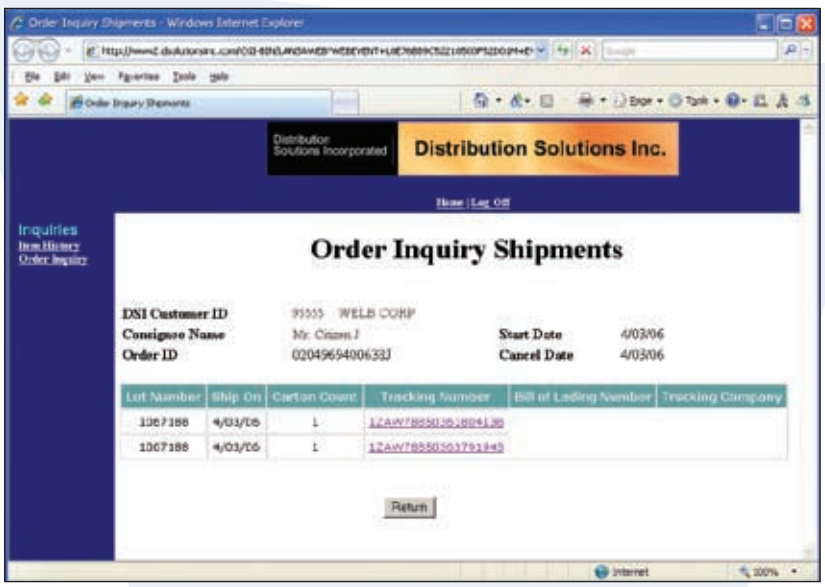
Today, the company operates from three primary warehouse facilities with over 1.2 million square feet of warehouse space, manages a fleet of 100 trucks and employs 500 staff.

DSI's Garment On Hanger (GOH) facilities include miles of storage rack capacity and specialized pressing, refurbishing, quality control and ticketing services.

"We aim to be the one-stop shop distribution solution provider for our customers," says Wolpov. "Distribution is much more than loading and unloading from an airplane to a truck. It is about managing every aspect of the supply chain. It is about having the right product, at the right spot and at the right time. It is about speed to market. Key in this business is a seamless flow of information."

During the nineties, DSI purchased and developed systems to support its logistics business, but they lacked the flexibility to support diverse customer requirements. At that time, DSI did not have a Warehouse Management System (WMS) and was investigating tools to develop one.

"We needed a flexible and productive development environment that would give us easy customization and total control," says **Chuck Feldman**, CIO at DSI. "I already had experienced the benefits of developing in a 4GL and felt it was not a good plan to continue with a 3GL like RPG."



DSI's warehouse staff use wireless guns to scan goods as they are processed, instantly updating the WMS system so DSI's customers can view the status of shipments in real time via the Web.

"Our first introduction to LANSA was a packaged accounting solution. LANSA's practical approach to software development fits our pragmatic business culture, so in 2000 we chose LANSA as our development platform to develop our WMS from scratch."

DSI has since used LANSA to provide Web access for customers and for handling AS2 (EDI over the Internet), EDI, FTP and email transactions with customers.

"We can upload in minutes hundreds of orders, which previously took hours to rekey."

An Integrated WMS is the Core

"A typical implementation starts with a customer sending us their item master data," explains **Julie Lai**, senior developer at DSI. "We retrieve that data through LANSA Integrator AS2 services. The item master data is then massaged into our WMS file structure with codes to recognize the customer's specific business rules. Once the master files for a customer have been set up, we are ready to move goods for them."

Shipment requests are also processed via LANSA AS2 services. DSI, via its Jefco trucking division, provides airport and pier pickup and handles customs procedures for its customers. DSI's truck drivers carry handheld devices to receive their pick-up orders and provide up-to-the-minute status updates to DSI's system. DSI's link with the Automated Manifest System notifies DSI and its customers within 10 minutes of U.S. Customs releasing goods.

All three of DSI's warehousing facilities are wireless and when containers are delivered for transloading, warehouse staff use wireless guns to scan pallets and GOH as they are placed in a location – instantly updating the inventory which DSI's customers can view in real time over the Web.

"Pick tickets mostly arrive through AS2, but may also be entered on our Web site or sent by fax. Over 85 percent of our orders arrive electronically and are processed directly without any human intervention into our WMS," explains Meenen. ➔

"Our key area of expertise is just-in-time store replenishment, responding super fast to shipment requests from our customers. While we use our own Jefco truck fleet for picking up containers from airports and ports, most of the delivery to the retail store outlets is via United Parcel Services (UPS), FedEx or a carrier that the customer nominates."

For each shipment a bar-coded pick list is printed. Warehouse staff scan the barcode, read the location and take goods to a packing station. Order information is pulled from the System i and a UCC-128 label with delivery details is printed. A Bill of Lading is created and carrier tracking codes associated with the pick order, inventory is updated, an email is sent to the customer, an advanced shipping notice is sent to the party who will receive the goods and the pick order is closed.

"The nucleus is our WMS," summarizes Lai. "It is 80 percent LANSA RDML code, 15 percent CL code and 5 percent RPG."

"The middle core consists of special implementations, the code that enables customer specific rules and processes. The outer layer takes care of the communication with the outside world, including the import and export of data and AS2 and EDI transactions via LANSA Integrator services. Customers can view all information using our Web site or via Mocha 5250 terminal emulation."

Seamless Information Flow

"Each new customer is effectively a new implementation," explains Feldman. "Using LANSA, we have delivered a flexible WMS solution that can meet the needs of each customer implementation."

"We work closely with our customers," adds Meenen. "We help them with their file layout and go through different designs and ways to exchange information. Some of our customers use XML or EDI, but others simply email us their orders as spreadsheet attachments or use FTP. With LANSA we can setup automated workflow procedures for all our customers."

"We went from a system that was predominantly manual to a solution where over 85 percent of data exchange with customers is electronic. We can now upload a few hundred orders in a couple of minutes, where before orders had to be keyed in by customer service, which took several hours."

"Exchanging information electronically has cut costs for our customers as well. It has also improved accuracy and taken hours from our order fulfillment procedures."

"Web tracking and automated data exchange has helped to establish a seamless flow of information between our customers and us. If the information is always available, accurate, up-to-date and integrated with a company's in-house systems, it doesn't matter whether an internal or external party provides the information. It becomes irrelevant."

"LANSA's 4GL makes life a lot easier. You don't have to worry about sub-files or any other low-level coding. LANSA takes care of all that and lets us concentrate on the business issue at hand. In addition, the repository of fields, files and components provides consistency across our applications."

"LANSA provides a very productive development environment. With a small development team of two and with the help of the LANSA toolset, we have delivered systems that let our customers run their logistics in a very efficient way."

"The reliability of our IT environment, both LANSA and the System i, are crucial to us. We run a minimum of two shifts per day in our warehouse, with three shifts during the busy season. We cannot afford any down time. It is even hard to find a few hours in the weekend to upgrade software," says Meenen.

DSI's Garment On Hanger facilities include miles of storage rack capacity and specialized pressing, refurbishing, quality control and ticketing services.

"With a small team of two we deliver systems that make our customer's logistics very efficient."

Outsourcing the Supply Chain

"We can help our customers manage all their back office distribution services," says Wolpov. "We can work with their broker, collect their freight, store their goods, participate in their quality control, replenish their stores, drop ship to their customers, do their data entry and generate their picking lists and invoices."

"Outsourcing warehousing and distribution requires a seamless flow of information. Our WMS and front-end office systems enable the required flexibility in the ever-changing retail business environment. Technology drives our operations. We do this through our in-house technology team and are dedicated to providing a system that can meet the changing needs of today's business world."

"We want to be a partner in distribution, allowing our customers to focus on their core competency and help them grow the business. We want to help our customers do their supply chain at a variable cost. Managing the supply chain is for many companies the last opportunity to take margin under control," concludes Wolpov. ■

Company and System Information

- Distribution Solutions Inc. (DSI) provides nationwide distribution and warehousing services that focus on retail consumer goods. DSI's warehousing facilities are U.S. customs bonded and cater for both flat pack cartons as well as Garment On Hanger services. DSI has over 1 million square feet warehouse space, employs 500 staff and operates a fleet of over 100 trucks. For more information visit: www.dsi3pl.com
- DSI's IT team consists of two developers (one part time), the IT manager and one network support person.

Legacy is the new asset and RAMP provides a low-risk modernization path

INDUSTRY SHOWCASE
by MarJanna Frank

Enterprise systems are not built overnight. The logic, rules and database structures are often embedded within millions of lines of code and hundreds of files that have evolved over the years. Although many of these systems are past their prime from a technical view point, the intelligence encapsulated in these legacy assets is not something that can be or should be easily discarded.

The Rip and Replace approach is rarely a desirable option and IT departments that get involved in this often find themselves spending years tweaking code and parameters in the new system to get back to the functionality of the old system. Even worse, while people can usually size their investment in legacy code and functionality, they can overlook their investment in testing. The cost of properly testing a replacement application often exceeds the cost of design and development.

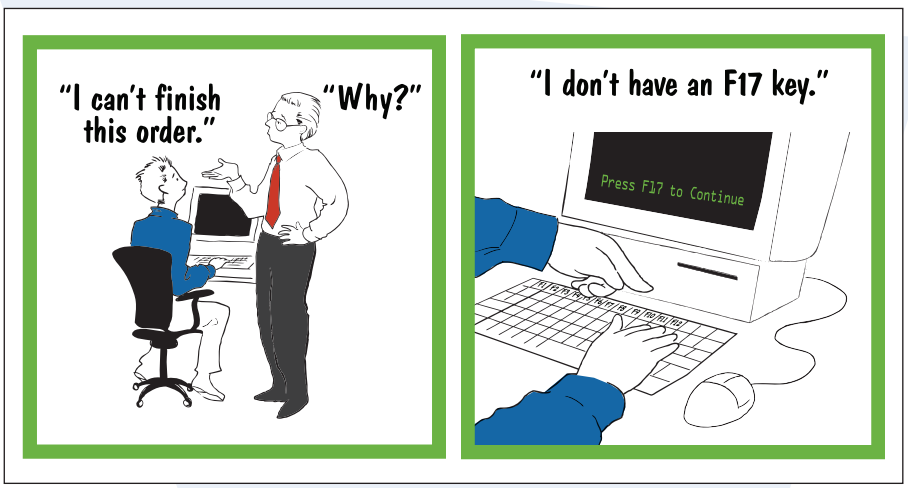
Many companies use LANSA to extend their legacy systems with new functionality, including Web self-service for customers and partners, Windows functionality, along with Web services and other forms of integration.

However, there comes a time when the core of the system itself needs modernizing. User productivity is often dragged down by the limitations of 24x80 character screen design, even after cosmetic refacing.

But modernization is not just about adding a GUI to improve user productivity. The maintenance effort that goes into these systems is disproportionately large, as the developers – if you can still find them – are hampered in capability and productivity by outdated tools.

For companies with a significant investment in existing System i applications and where refacing for looks alone is not enough, LANSA has developed the Rapid Application Modernization Process (RAMP).

RAMP is a unique stepped approach that provides a low-risk modernization path. First, you rapidly consolidate your existing applications into a graphical easy-to-navigate application framework, then incrementally replace legacy programs with new portable Visual LANSA components or add new functionality. All in the same visual application framework and in a time frame that makes sense to your organization.



The End Destination is Portability

The end destination is a platform-independent Visual LANSA Framework application with Outlook style tree navigation and Windows rich-client or Web browser deployment. The framework gives all the search filters, results lists and navigation, while the tabs in this application contain your redeveloped programs alongside new functionality. Developers use Visual LANSA's productive 4GL and, where needed, LANSA Integrator for XML and Web service integration with other systems.

A key benefit of LANSA is its repository architecture where database related rules and definitions (field properties, display components, formula fields, validations, triggers, etc.) are stored centrally. Database changes require very little time to implement, as there are virtually no programs to change or recompile. This makes future system enhancement and maintenance easy.

Modernization is a Journey – Not a Destination

If you don't have the need, or resources, for complete redevelopment in a single phase, your framework with tree navigation, search filters and lists would be similar. But some of the tabs in your framework would contain refaced programs, while others would link to redeveloped or new functionality.

Refacing in this context is not just providing a better looking screen. It also provides automated navigation (scripting) to get from one screen to another, abolishing the need for function keys and drastically reducing the number of keystrokes and screens.

As you continue on your modernization journey, you progressively replace refaced screens in the framework with new portable Visual LANSA functions. ➔

Modernizing Key Business Systems

This article showcases some modernization projects where RAMP is being used to transition from the old to the new. First let's examine some System i modernization projects where companies have modernized in-house COBOL, RPG, Synon and LANSA applications, as well as packaged solutions that they have customized over many years.

Later in this article, we look at how a growing number of ISVs also use RAMP to rapidly deliver and market a modernized version of an existing solution, while progressively transforming it into a completely modernized and platform-independent solution.

CHS Inc. used RAMP to modernize a large COBOL legacy application.

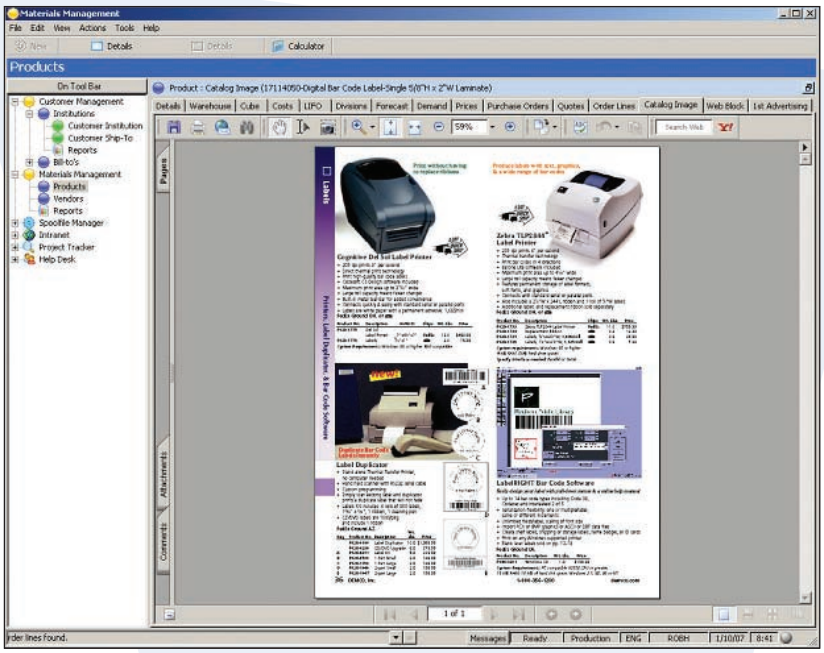
Formerly known as Cenex Harvest States, CHS is a diversified Fortune 200 company that supplies grain, food and energy products. Headquartered in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, USA, CHS is North America's largest cooperative refiner and manufacturer of lubricants, the third largest propane supplier and also operates over 800 convenience stores.

CHS's grain business is a major force in the U.S. and global markets, with a closely integrated network of grain elevators, marketing offices and export terminals. CHS is a partner in the USA's largest wheat milling operation and a leader in confection sunflower and oilseed processing. It also provides producers and local cooperatives with transportation, commodity brokerage, insurance, financing and government services.

The COBOL-based Contract Management Information System (CMIS) used by its Grain Marketing & Oilseed Processing divisions has grown in functionality over the years, but the user interface was archaic and unfriendly. Business is rapidly expanding and CHS decided to modernize CMIS with RAMP when faced with training the new employees its grain division acquired through market expansion.

CHS had already used LANSA for Web extensions, so a major advantage of RAMP was the ability to integrate the existing LANSA Web extensions and modernized 5250 screens in a single portal. Another plus for LANSA was its capability for language localization to support CHS's expansion into Europe and other non-English markets.

André Dubé, IT manager for CHS grain division, says, "With over 500 programs and more than 200 screens involved, RAMP was simply the best and least expensive way to modernize our core application with state-of-the-art technology and navigation. Why spend 10 times more to rewrite?"



DEMCO used RAMP to modernize its green screen ERP system, avoiding the high cost and disruption that an ERP replacement would entail.

"The modernized application is easy to learn and gives the user a complete view of all the information they are authorized to access in a productive tabular format. There is no more guessing as to which action or function to select, as buttons and tabs define all options and drop down tables display the appropriate field entry options. With navigating made simple, the casual user is no longer intimidated and cheat sheets are out."

Cinram UK used RAMP to make its legacy system look and behave like Windows SAP.

Cinram UK, a division of the world's largest manufacturer and distributor of prerecorded entertainment media, holds exclusive agreements with major brands including Warner Home Video, 20th Century Fox, MGM and EMI.

Cinram had won a major contract to manufacture and distribute CDs and DVDs for one of the largest players in their industry and had positioned the specialized nature of their IT system as a key differentiator to win the bid.

But the customer had been using a modern SAP system, so going back to "legacy" green screens from a graphical Windows front end became a major source of dissatisfaction. Although the system was functionally rich, fast and robust, the users just could not see past the limitations of the green screen interface.

The goal was to make the legacy system look and behave like SAP. RAMP was selected for the modernization project and within a year the goal was achieved.

Cinram's customer now enjoys the best of both worlds: the underlying strength of the existing core system married to a graphical front-end that has perceived parity with SAP. Cinram has also delivered better integration between the legacy system and desktop applications.

Cookson Precious Metals improved productivity across 12 key business processes by 25 percent using RAMP.

Cookson Precious Metals, a division of Cookson PLC, a FTSE 250 company, is the largest supplier to the U.K. jewellery trade with a catalog of over 10,000 products and annual sales of £280 million. Cookson has responded to falling prices and global competition by reengineering core business processes and sourcing from Asia – all of which introduces new complexities into managing their supply chain.

Cookson's core business system is a set of green screen applications. The business driver for modernization was to increase productivity in the sales order processing area, which handles over 1,000 inbound calls per day. The old green screen interface was cryptic and laborious as users needed to navigate through 31 screens to process a four-line order. Over twenty percent of inbound calls were order inquiries and without the right information

at their fingertips staff spent an average of several minutes on each call.

A new graphical front-end – built with RAMP – reduced the keystrokes needed to complete an order from 101 to 26, a 75 percent reduction. Likewise, an order status call can now be answered by looking at a single screen, instead of navigating 14 different green screens.

The total effect has been a 25 percent productivity improvement across 12 key business processes and a significant reduction in errors and training time for staff. New functionality includes a decision-support module that guides staff on whether to source locally or from Asia according to business rules set by management.

DEMCO is an example of a long-time LANSA customer modernizing their core systems with RAMP.

DEMCO Inc, based in Madison, Wisconsin USA, provides supplies, equipment and furniture to libraries and schools in North America and Europe. DEMCO uses LANSA for its core operational system and for customer and supplier facing Web sites.

Recently, DEMCO used RAMP to modernize its green screen ERP system, avoiding the high cost and disruption an ERP replacement would entail.

After seeing RAMP at Spring COMMON 2006, DEMCO commenced a modernization pilot. Mark Anderson, VP business development and IS, explains, "We were very pleased with the results, with positive benefits in the compression of navigation. In some areas, the number of screens was reduced by a factor of 30. Plus we could blend rich-client and browser functions seamlessly in the same framework."

After the success of the pilot project, DEMCO embarked on a full modernization project and is now progressively deploying the modernized functions throughout the organization. Anderson estimates that the costs for customizing, testing and implementing a packaged solution are 35 times higher than modernizing an existing system.

"Of the last three people we brought into the application development area, two were .NET developers. They've adapted well to this modernized environment and are enthusiastic about the structure and efficiency that the LANSA development environment provides," explains Anderson.

"The way is now clear for us to fully commit to Visual LANSA development for our core business system as opposed to 5250 development. For us, RAMP was – and still is – the best way to take a big application, get it modernized and set the stage for transition into the years to come, preserving what we've got and setting the stage for where we want to go with our business systems. Building new applications with the existing base already modernized, is very beneficial."

Francis Marion University (FMU) is using RAMP to progressively modernize a large RPG-based student administration system that includes S/36 code.

FMU, one of 13 state-supported universities in South Carolina, USA, provides strong liberal arts based programs for both undergraduate and graduate studies. Over the years, FMU has used LANSA to extend its RPG-based student administration system with self-service Web access by students and faculty members for registration, class scheduling, grade enquiries, degree audits, financial aid applications and more. FMU is now modernizing its core system with RAMP and Visual LANSA.

FMU faculty and administrative staff used IBM Client Access and BOSaNOVA terminal emulation to access the student administration system's 5250 screens, but that did not make it any easier to get to the data.

The new RAMP-ed module has sophisticated searching and sorting of student records, with tabs to quickly point-and-click to the required details. Student information has been extended with photo IDs to reduce the risk of identification theft and an email tab that offers easy integration with MS Office.

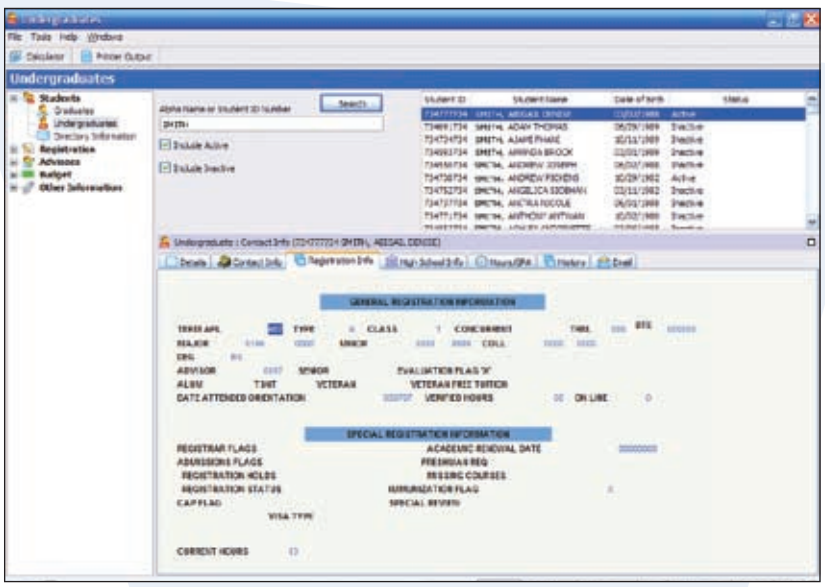
"Now that our users have seen the first RAMP-ed module, expectations have been set very high," say Robin Moore, director of campus applications and data services. "Eventually we want to have an environment where there is no reliance on RPG and deployment is graphical and cross-platform. Our student administration system includes about 8,000 programs and 4,000 files. Using RAMP, we can cost effectively modernize and redevelop those modules that have a high priority and gradually get there."

"The project was easy and straight forward, even though this was our first Windows rich-client implementation. Two staff members worked on the project with my help. We purchased RAMP in May 2007, did the RAMP training, worked together with the faculty members on the requirements and deployed the first GUI module in September 2007."

Gannett used RAMP to create a portal to multiple System i servers for several hundred customer service staff.

Gannett Co., Inc. is a leading international news and information company with revenues of $7.4 billion. Gannett is the largest newspaper publisher in the USA, with 85 daily newspapers, including USA TODAY, and daily paid circulation of approximately 7.2 million. It also has nearly 1,000 non-daily publications, 23 television stations and a large U.K. newspaper publishing operation.

Since 1998, Gannett has managed circulation, advertising and marketing for most of its newspapers with a LANSA-based application called Genesys. The newspapers run Genesys and other applications independently on 56 System i servers. Internal users access the system with green screen and



Francis Marion University is using RAMP to progressively modernize a large RPG-based student administration system to give faculty and administrative staff point-and-click access.

Windows clients, while external users have Web access – all developed with LANSA.

Gannett used RAMP as a temporary solution to enable a rapid consolidation from many down to three customer service call centers, allowing time to create new custom call center software. RAMP gave over 300 customer service representatives access to all newspapers and System i servers from one application window with a single sign on.

"We picked RAMP from LANSA because no other solution could have done the job. The first center was opening as soon as the phones could be installed. All we had was a cryptic, code-based green screen application that used almost every available function key and could only handle one newspaper," said Peter Olsen, manager of Genesys development at Gannett.

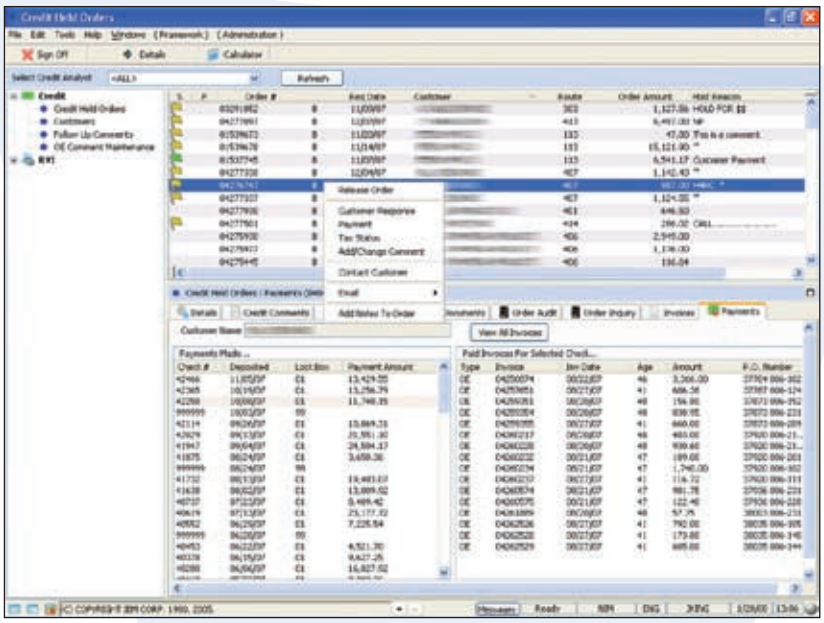
"Yet RAMP managed all that potential chaos, providing a tree view to select newspapers, using simple drop-down lists instead of codes, spelling out abbreviations, and automating screen navigation. RAMP reduced training time and errors. It also reduced call handling time, which was a major part of this project's ROI."

Norfolk Iron & Metal (NIM) redeveloped 90 percent of its Credit Hold Orders application and snapped the remaining applications into a single Visual LANSA Framework portal.

NIM, headquartered in Norfolk, Nebraska, is one of the top 30 steel services providers in the USA. Family owned and run since 1908, NIM has expanded to 550 employees and has additional service centers at Emporia in Kansas, Greeley in Colorado and Rock Island in Illinois. Services include laser cutting, plasma cutting, shear cutting, press baking, band sawing, coil lining, shot blasting and temper passing, all using state-of-the-art processing equipment. NIM's deep inventory allows for fast turnaround and its fleet of over 100 semitractors and 200 trailers has 85 percent next-day delivery success rate.

To continue to support its dynamic and fast operations, NIM is planning to modernize and redevelop its entire RPG-based in-house ERP system using Visual LANSA Framework and RAMP.

As a first step, NIM modernized its Credit Hold Orders application. This application involves a lot of communication between the credit analyst, sales reps and customers and was a prime candidate to benefit from new Windows functionality and tight integration with MS Office and Outlook.



Norfolk Iron & Metal redeveloped 90 percent of its Credit Hold Orders application and snapped the rest of the application into a single Visual LANSA Framework portal.

Held orders are now available in a grid that can be filtered and sorted. All the information the credit analyst needs to release an order is available via the tabs from a single consolidated screen. Users just right click on a customer name to start Outlook with the customer and order details already prefilled in a template message.

The entire process of invoicing, applying payments and releasing orders has been streamlined. Invoices can now be generated, viewed and emailed in PDF format and the payment module integrates with check scanning software.

Jason King, IS manager at Norfolk Iron and Metal, says, "About 90 percent of the Credit Hold Orders application has been redeveloped with Visual LANSA Framework and we used RAMP to snap the less frequently used applications into the same Framework. This 90/10 approach gave us more time to focus on rebuilding and improving the areas that are used frequently."

"We want to bring Windows functionality to our entire ERP, but we will not touch a lot of the applications for the time being. The end result we are aiming for is that all our programs will have been rewritten for Windows, using Visual LANSA Framework. RAMP is the tool that we are using to get there."

PartyLite used RAMP to boost user productivity and feedback while its core application is redeveloped with Visual LANSA Framework.

PartyLite Worldwide, Inc., with its European IT center at Heidelberg, Germany and its American IT center at Plymouth, Massachusetts, is one of the fastest growing direct sales companies in the world with 65,000 independent sales consultants selling premium fragranced candles and a wide range of decorative accessories to consumers through the party plan method of direct selling.

PartyLite has customer service centers in its European countries of operation with 8 to 15 staff that felt slowed down by the 5250 applications used to handle calls from sales consultants. The main request was to modernize the screens and consolidate data displayed over multiple 24x80 screens. After modernization with RAMP the application offers easy sorting and searching of consultants and orders, based on multiple criteria. The application also has new functionality, such as integrated Internet access to track and trace parcels.

Hartmut Vietzke, application manager for PartyLite's European operations, says, "Now customer service can give a quick and accurate answer when consultants call about the status of their order."

"Our goal is to redevelop the entire application in Visual LANSA Framework. Going through the RAMP stage was helpful, because even though parts of the programs are still refaced, it let us improve productivity in our call centers quickly. Also, because the current Windows version is far easier to use than its 5250 predecessor, the users are getting

enthusiastic, resulting in better feedback to us regarding what should be included in the next stage."

"With no previous Windows development skills, the project took about one man month spread over three calendar months. We now feel very comfortable with Visual LANSA Framework and we look forward to the next project."

Strattec Security Corporation used RAMP to streamline allocation of backorders by modernizing its System21 solution.

Strattec, headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, is the world's largest producer of automotive locks, keys and related security access control products for global automotive manufacturers. Formerly a division of Briggs & Stratton, Strattec's heritage goes back nearly 100 years to the early days of the automobile. Strattec ships products to customer locations around the world and provides full service aftermarket support.

Strattec uses System21 (formerly from JBA now Infor) and wanted to modernize parts of this application to provide better productivity to users. One particularly time consuming procedure for staff was determining which items in shipments from their plants needed to be allocated to fill backorders and which items could be kept in stock.

The 5250 application required many steps, including printing the list of received goods and manually checking each item on the list to see if there were backorders and then enter the quantity to be allocated. Staff had to switch menus several times, exit screens and write down customer numbers for pick slip sorting later in the process.

The RAMP-ed process automatically checks all confirmed shipments for items on backorder and displays the relevant item receipts and backorder information. The user only has to confirm the stock allocation and pick slips are automatically generated in the desired sequence.

"In the old system, a shipment took on average 162 minutes to process," says Nick D'Allessandro, technical lead at Strattec Security. "Now in the RAMP-ed version a shipment takes on average 24 minutes to process. We are very pleased with the solution because we didn't have to change the way the process works, we just streamlined it and made it six times faster."

Getting Modernized Solutions Quickly to Market

Independent Solution Vendors (ISVs) can benefit tremendously by redeveloping existing applications in Visual LANSA to support cross-platform and hosted ASP deployment, in multiple languages from a single set of source code. RAMP lets ISVs quickly create a solution that is marketable to new prospects and existing customers, while progressively releasing rearchitected modules. This approach also provides a low-risk modernization path for existing customers.

American Health Care Software Enterprises Inc. (AHC) is modernizing 20 million lines of Synon Cool/2E and RPG code with RAMP.

AHC, an IBM business partner located in Burlington, Vermont, USA, is a solution provider to the American healthcare industry with over 125 accounts that include nursing and retirement homes, home care providers, assisted living apartments, outpatient clinics and other healthcare providers.

AHC's Harmony Health Care Management System offers fully integrated software suites that can be used standalone or in combination, including Continuum of Care, Clinical Care, Home Infusion, Human Resources and Finances. Harmony has over 20 million lines of Synon Cool/2E and RPG code with over 8,000 screens, many of which were originally refaced with Seagull and later with Web2E.

As part of a long-term modernization plan, AHC will initially modernize and extend their Harmony application with RAMP. Over time, Harmony will be reengineered with LANSA to create a highly graphical solution that can be deployed to multiple platforms and on a Software as a Service (SaaS) basis.

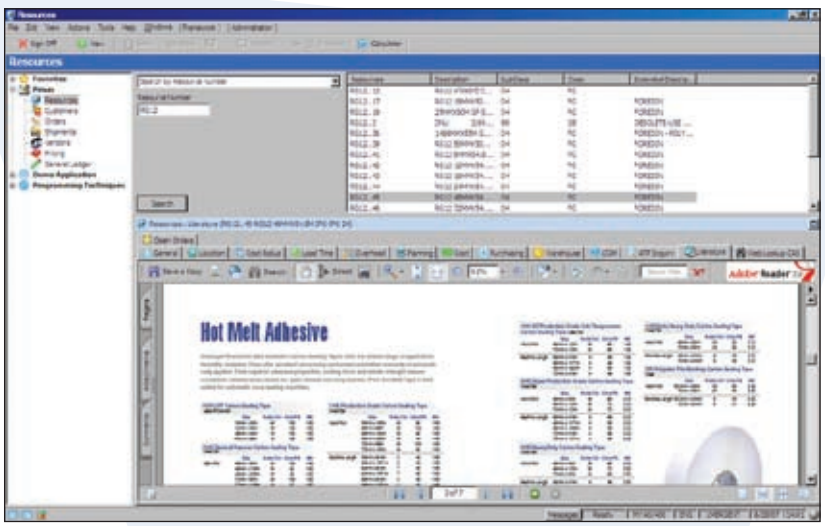
Marcia DeRosia, president American Health Care Software Enterprises, Inc., explains, "Harmony is a very large application with several integrated application modules. I have long-serving and very knowledgeable staff who understand the application, the healthcare industry and Synon, but not necessarily modern development languages."

"If we were to redevelop Harmony in .NET or Java, I would have to recruit different staff and we would probably be looking at a five-year project before we have something marketable. With LANSA, we can get there much quicker and with our current staff who can continue to support our existing product line during the transition."

"Equally important is that, as RAMP lets us combine modernized and new functionality in a single integrated framework, we can take new functionality, like electronic care records, to market while we are still in the modernization stage. We protect the investment of our existing clients in the database on the System i and provide them with options for the future."

Control Systems Software (CSS) chose RAMP to modernize a member-driven RPG agribusiness solution.

CSS, based in Urbanvale, Iowa, USA, is the member-owned and -driven developer of the CONTROL agribusiness solution. CONTROL is a fully integrated system that includes POS, bulk fuel, inventory, commodities management and financial



Precision Solutions Group, Inc. is using RAMP to modernize PRISM, a suite of ERP software targeted at process manufacturers, to meet the continuing needs of its users.

modules, with interfaces to a range of industry solutions, such as scale and feed interfaces, agronomy applications and more. Members take an active role in determining enhancements and after extensive evaluations RAMP was chosen to help CSS modernize the RPG-based solution.

Carol Stewart, CEO of CSS, says, "While the text-based interface works well and many long time users like it, new hires expect a GUI interface. RAMP's efficient navigation structure will be more productive for our members, but we will give individual users a choice of green screen or GUI. The Favorites facility will also make it easy for management to find their way to information, as they can bookmark the functions that are relevant to them. The Visual LANSA Framework will also give us faster development down the line."

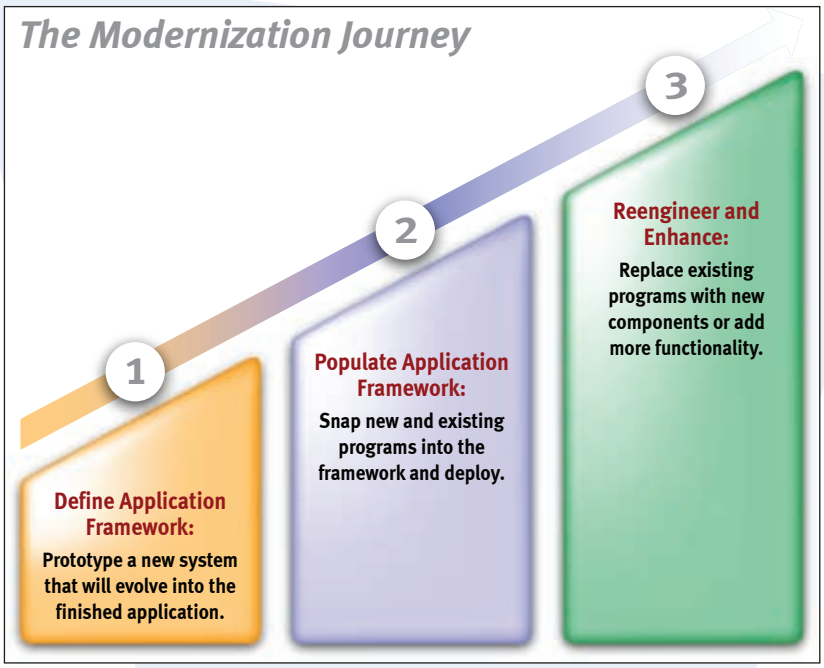
Precision Solutions Group, Inc. (PSGI) is using RAMP to modernize PRISM, a suite of ERP software targeted at process manufacturers.

PSGI, based in Walpole, Massachusetts, USA, was founded in 2003 with the specific goal of extending the life of its customers' legacy enterprise systems. PSGI helps companies achieve greater efficiency, significant cost savings and higher ROI by getting more out of their existing investment in business systems.

PSGI provides customer support and professional services for the majority of North American-based companies running the PRISM process ERP application and a growing number of JD Edwards World customers as well. Customers have already benefited from PGSI's service offerings as well as products that work with PRISM and provide business intelligence, mobile computing, RFID, product life cycle management and supply chain planning solutions. PSGI is now using RAMP to modernize PRISM, ensuring it continues to meet the needs of its users.

Larry Dube, president and co-founder of PSGI, explains, "PRISM serves its users extremely well delivering the functionality they need to run their businesses. Our primary mission is to extend the life of PRISM through expert customer support and consultancy services and a continuous stream of enhancements and add-on products."

"Now, using RAMP and with the PRISM user community's assistance, we can provide a modernization framework that cost effectively satisfies today's business requirements and offers a path for future development in a fraction of the time and cost of migrating to a new application."



RAMP provides a low-risk modernization path that lets you rapidly consolidates existing System i applications into a graphical, easy-to-navigate application framework, then incrementally replace legacy programs with portable Visual LANSA functions.

"Past efforts to modernize PRISM failed for two reasons – too much emphasis was put on simply developing a GUI version of what users already had and the customizations at each customer site were not accounted for."

"The PRISM user community has reacted extremely positively, because in addition to GUI screens and better access to information, we are also providing more functionality and better integration with other software, databases and hardware platforms."

"Most importantly, RAMP has methods for modernizing PRISM that take into consideration the customizations that users have made."

"Not only are we moving PRISM forward, but we are also moving our customers forward by delivering the most cost effective and low risk modernization path available today. RAMP provides the framework in which we can continue to enhance and support PRISM for years to come."

Rippe & Kingston Systems is using RAMP to modernize their leading maintenance management solution used by hundreds of companies.

Rippe & Kingston Systems, a highly successful software development, consulting and services firm based in Cincinnati, Ohio USA, has been a LANSA Partner since 1989. Rippe uses LANSA for several of its solutions and as an integral part of its services.

"Our METHOS application is a leading product for plant and facility maintenance but it had a 5250 interface," says Thom Davidson, president of Rippe & Kingston. "The market demands more than just screen scraping and a rewrite was not a good answer because of time, money and risk of losing capabilities in the process."

"With RAMP we can now deliver Web and client/server capabilities for METHOS without risk. In addition to the very rapid delivery model, we have a dramatic improvement in application navigation, simplification and expansion of our business into the ASP model. We can also plug RAMP functions directly into any leading portal, including our own e.ssential portal." ■

RAMP
from LANSA

Your legacy and future can live in harmony.

To take advantage of new business opportunities and new technology options, you don't have to discard the power and functionality of your green-screen 5250 applications.

Amaze your users with a brand new look-and-feel and with a modern, simpler way to navigate through your current 5250 applications – without changing any code. All through the power of LANSA's RAMP technology.

LANSA's RAMP technology lets you isolate and encapsulate the valuable portions of your legacy applications and repurpose them inside LANSA's modern application framework that can be deployed as a rich-client and/or browser application.

Then you can progressively extend application functionality with email, video, voice, desktop integration or Web interfaces and other technologies without disruption to your business and customers – all using LANSA.

Discover what other companies have to say about their experiences using RAMP to improve and extend their legacy systems at **www.lansaramp.com/customers.htm**

Your Legacy is Your Asset.

ASIA PACIFIC:
Sydney Australia
Tel: +61 2 8907 0200
Email: info@lansa.com.au

EUROPE:
London England
Tel: +44 1727 790300
Email: info@lansa.eu.com

THE AMERICAS:
Chicago USA
Tel: +1 630 874 7000
Email: info@lansa.com

LANSA®
ADVANCED SOFTWARE MADE SIMPLE