



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



Just In Time Automation Beds Down At Silentnight

CLIENT PROFILE

Industry: Manufacturing

Company: Silentnight

BUSINESS

Firmly established as the UK bed industry's largest manufacturer and brand leader, Silentnight is committed to offering consumer choice, quality, comfort and support, whilst constantly innovating with an aim of producing the ultimate bed selection.

CHALLENGE

- Consolidate business operations to centralized ERP
- Reduce batch window and response times
- Automate JDE Enterprise 1 background processes

SOLUTION

- Easy to use colorful process visualization
- Validated JDE Enterprise 1 interfaces
- Object oriented modular architecture
- Output scanning

BENEFIT

- Savings of 2½–3 hours processing time every night
- End-to-end business process visibility
- Increased productivity for IT and administrative staff
- Enhanced performance against business SLAs

Business

UK bed industry's largest manufacturer

Silentnight is synonymous with providing a relaxing and comfortable night's sleep to millions of consumers. Firmly established as the UK bed industry's largest manufacturer and brand leader, Silentnight is committed to offering consumer choice, quality, comfort and support, whilst constantly innovating with an aim of producing the ultimate bed selection. In addition to building and distributing a range of major brands including Pocketsprung, Layezee and Rest Assured, the UK organization is the only manufacturer outside the United States licensed to make Sealy beds.

Operating across three locations in Barnoldswick, Batley and Espacia, the company had relied upon a DEC Alpha based IT application IMPCON to support its manufacturing processes. When Silentnight became the last UK company to be using the ERP, concerns about lack of integration were compounded by notice that the vendor's last support engineer was about to retire. Ticking all key boxes with manufacturing, distribution and financials components Silentnight decided to implement JD Edwards Enterprise 1 as its corporate ERP standard.

While each plant had been dedicated to producing individual brands of bed, Silentnight wanted extra flexibility in terms of being able to route resources to match production demands. Consolidating business operations into a single JD Edwards instance would allow the bed maker to achieve this goal. Centralizing workload would also lead to Silentnight's JDE Enterprise 1 application needing to support a significant amount of transaction processing.

Challenge

Consolidate business operations to centralized ERP

With a customer commitment to build and deliver beds within 6 days of ordering, Silentnight would need to optimize its IT processes to align with business demands. JDE generates massive quantities of transaction data – much of which requires batch processing. The internal JDE Enterprise 1 scheduler relies upon built-in time lags to prevent dependent jobs starting too soon, introducing avoidable latency into critical business operations. Failure to correctly estimate finish times could also result in jobs processing incorrect data.

"Going forward I knew JDE wouldn't cope. When you get to multiple sites you get issues. I knew the demands for processing would put so much pressure on the JDE platform. Jobs were taking much longer to run. Jobs that needed to run within a 24 hour cycle would take 29 hours," said Juilan Lempriere, JDE Project Manager at Silentnight. "We were having performance issues with balancing real time and batch processing demands. End users were feeling the impact with poor response times."

Solution

Object oriented modular architecture

Silentnight selected CA Automic Workload Automation because it offered unique rapid application automation of JDE Enterprise 1 batch processes through validate interfaces. Dynamic scheduling meant that elapsed time for overnight high volume workload could be compressed to fit into a shrinking batch window. It would also allow daytime background processing to be optimized, maximizing throughput at minimal impact.

"A scheduler was on my wish list. Previously experience of using in-house developers to write scripts and operating system tools combined with us not having a huge depth of technical knowledge told me I didn't want to develop our own scheduler at Silentnight," said Lempriere. "I knew what I wanted. I wanted end-to-end visibility into our business operations and I knew we would not get this from a homegrown tool. CA Automic talked the right language. I saw business value in rapid application automation of the JDE scheduler and our other key applications such as Cognos."

Selling the idea of needing to acquire additional tools to non-technical staff at Silentnight steering group level was not easy. Having invested in an expensive ERP they can be surprised to learn they need to spend more to get a system that performs efficiently. The ROI tool provided by CA Automic helped improve Silentnight senior management understanding of the benefits a workload automation solution could bring to their JDE environment.

"The 8 hour overnight batch window didn't give me enough time to run the jobs I needed to run. At the end of each day we needed to run MRP, sales updates, cost roll-ups, Cognos extracts and integrity reports. Occasionally there would also be the need to apply system changes. Prior to implementing we had incidents where the batch load would overrun. This would impact response times and end-user performance. This was an immediate win with CA Automic Workload Automation. This was nice because you could see benefit of the software from the first day," said Lempriere.

Business users rapidly identified CA Automic Workload Automation as a great tool for getting real time updates around the factory with no-one needing to hit the ENTER key. Automated alerts ensure Help Desk staff no longer needs to manually check reports. The object orientation allows Silentnight to manage and monitor IT workload as logical groups that reflect its business process flows. With an IT insight, business users can easily plan and make changes, while IT staff becomes more flexible in responding to business demands.

CA Automic Workload Automation is the automation layer in the IT architecture that Silentnight has established to support its business. "We've been making a cake," said Lempriere. "We got underway with establishing a nice foundation. We're now putting new controls in. This is aimed at two things – reducing TCO with tools that make our systems run smarter and enabling greater flexibility in terms of making manufacturing and distribution processes match business demands. Automation is one of the ingredients that is helping make sure our cake is low fat."

Right Information to the Right People at the Right Time

Prior to implementing UCA Automic Silentnight integrity reporting jobs would run even though the primary sales update job failed. With CA Automic, dependent jobs don't run jobs if a primary job fails. This means time is not wasted and systems don't get clogged re-running jobs. Finance and admin users no longer need to manually check output files. Silentnight has automated integrity checks of reports releasing staff from trawling through pages of figures.

In addition to JDE Enterprise 1, Silentnight is also using Cognos for business intelligence management reporting and as its corporate data warehouse. Other critical applications include QAS (address management), Q Software (security), Formscape (electronic forms) and DSI (bar code scanning) are other running on IBM UNIX, Windows & Web-based platforms. Rapid application automation has allowed Silentnight to extend its use of automation to integrate with other systems crucial to its business operations.

"It's funny but we use old equipment when we are building beds but use modern IT tools to manage our business. We get status updates from real-time reporting that comes out of JDE. Cognos drives our production dashboard giving us instant brand analysis dissected by models and ranges," said Lempriere. "With CA Automic Workload Automation we have automated emailing of reports to managers, senior management and executives ensuring they get detailed insight into individual brand performance."

Benefits

Enhanced performance against business SLAs

Silentnight is benefiting from CA Automic Workload Automation with a responsive JDE Enterprise 1 ERP system that ensures staff doesn't spend time waiting on IT systems, that beds are manufactured and dispatched in time to fulfill customer promises. Automating Cognos workload ensures that Silentnight senior management gets to work with reports that contain the most accurate information allowing them to make smarter decisions on business operations.

"We couldn't afford to continue running systems that had in-built slack times if we were going to support our business operations. Being able to eliminate the gaps from our JDE processing means Silentnight saves between two and a half and three hours on our overnight workload. We are also achieving efficiencies with staff spending less time doing tedious manual tasks such as checking reports. There's also a closer alignment between business and IT users which means that we have become more effective as a team supporting today's and tomorrow's business challenges. CA Automic Workload Automation is firmly established as the automation platform across the Silentnight IT landscape and will be an integral IT component in our future business growth," said Lempriere.

For more information, please visit ca.com



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