

SYNTEX CORPORATION

BLYTH SOFTWARE SUCCESS STORY



Executive Summary

Customer: Syntex Corporation

Industry: Pharmaceuticals

Business Problem: Shorten drug approval process and reduce time to market.

Solution: Using OMNIS 7, developers have built an easily portable, multi-platform user interface to an application that streamlines document management and expedites the critical drug-approval process at Syntex Corporation.

CSC Consulting, a Waltham, Massachusetts-based unit of Computer Sciences Corporation, has solved its share of large-scale systems integration problems. This experience came in handy when the company was hired to develop a reengineering solution for Syntex Corporation, a \$2 billion dollar pharmaceutical company based in Palo Alto, California. The reengineering effort—initiated by CSC Index, another unit of Computer Sciences Corporation—was needed to support a redesign of the way Syntex plans, manages, and produces new drug applications (NDA). The goal was to reduce time to market in an environment where each day can mean a difference of more than a million dollars in revenue.

A Staggering Amount of Coordination

Over the 7-10 years typically required to test and document a new drug, documentation can run to hundreds of

thousands of pages, every word of which must meet excruciating standards of authenticity, consistency, and completeness. Collaboration, coordination, and communication are critical.

The effort and cost can be staggering—and may determine whether a given drug makes or loses money. In the summer of 1992, managers at Syntex felt this pressure more than ever. They called on CSC to devise a solution.

Choosing the Tools

As project manager Steve Scribner points out, the solution depended on a sophisticated development tool to meet demanding objectives of scale and functionality in the limited time available. Also critical was multi-platform support, since the user base was distributed about 50-50 between the Windows PC and Macintosh desktop systems.

For these reasons Scribner and other members of the development team selected Blyth OMNIS 7 to help them



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develop the application's user interface. This interface would be the front end to a client/server system based on the Documentum product and accessing a central repository residing on Sun 1000 and 2000 servers. For the user interface development platform, the team selected PC Windows.

Dramatic Savings in Time

Nine months after launching development, team members released the first production version of the application, known as Worldwide Registration Management, (WRM). Today WRM is used by more than 400 researchers, statisticians, regulatory staff members, documentation specialists, and other professionals at the three Syntex sites. Communications are based on a TCP/IP LAN at each site connected by a WAN with Sun NFS as the file-system protocol.

With WRM the savings in time have been dramatic. For example, using the old, paper-based process, 4-6 months were typically required to collate, publish, and print the documents constituting a major submission. With WRM, the task takes less than two weeks. To generate a new-drug submission to secondary markets Syntex might spend 3-4 months on each one. Today, Syntex can prepare the primary and all secondary submissions simultaneously.

As for document retrieval, users for the first time ever have online access to almost any of the thousands of documents they need. "This kind of accessibility means everyone involved can do their job more confidently, more efficiently, and more cost effectively," Scribner says.

Thanks to the multi-platform capabilities of OMNIS 7, development also proceeded efficiently and cost effectively. "Essentially, we developed the user interfaces for both platforms in the time it would ordinarily take to develop a user interface for one platform," Scribner reports. Equally important are the maintenance benefits of parallel platform development and the advantages of the OMNIS 7 Change Management System. "Upgrades are transparent across the two platforms and can be automatically downloaded to both as soon as they're ready for one," he explains.

Future Licensing Opportunities

Upgrades for Syntex aren't the only enhancements that can be made to WRM. Through an exclusive license to CSC, Syntex has chosen to make the solution available to others companies with similar document management needs. In fact, during WRM's first year of deployment at Syntex, close to a dozen other pharmaceuticals showed interest in the application. "We consider WRM an excellent foundation for other custom solutions," Scribner says.

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"We developed the user interfaces for Windows and Macintosh in the time it would ordinarily take to develop a user interface for one platform alone."

*Steve Scribner,
Project Leader,
CSC Consulting*

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