ASNA

Case Study

MPL uses ASNA Wings to improve AS/400 operator productivity

Mediterranean Cleaning Products (MPL) is a 14-year-old company with 60 employees with headquarters in Valencia, Spain. Backed by a product development team with more than 30-years' experience, MPL creates and sells household cleaning products, personal hygiene products, and DIY products. MPL has customers worldwide and has an ISO 9001- and ISO 14001-certified lab.

A long-time AS/400 (IBM i) shop, MPL uses a customer RPG application to run most of its business. While that RPG application otherwise does a great job for the business, the limitations of its green-screen user interface were limiting productivity and business possibilities.

Says Pablo Pons, MPL's Logistics and IT Manager, "AS/400 RPG application does a great service for us, and we are highly committed to the AS/400; but as our company has grown and our needs have become more sophisticated we now need to do things that are hard, if not impossible, to do with a green-screen user interface. We needed a way to increase operator productivity, eliminate costly manual processes, and add new features to our existing RPG application."

Having been a long-time ASNA customer, MPL naturally turned to ASNA again to improve its RPG application's user. With the technical help of ASNA distributor **Galilea IT**, a Spanish AS/400 IT consultancy, the team used ASNA Wings to modernize the existing application and create a great solution for MPL. Wings quickly and easily creates a browser-based user interface for RPG programs from the existing display file source members. Out of the box, Wings screens are a dramatic improvement over the old green-screen, but they can also be customized to add additional improvements and features.

Wings delivers quick and measurable results

A challenge that Galilea faced with the project was ensuring that the network of MPL commerce agents—the majority of whom don't work with MPL exclusively—would accept the functionality of managing their portfolio of documents in MPL as they did with other types of CRM tools such as SalesForce or Sugar CRM.

The agents' resistance to work with the original green-screen application is what forced the need for modernizing the MPL application. Galilea proposed, based on their success with previous similar projects, to build an integrated web-based solution for the MPL ERP. This would include transforming the existing green screens to a web environment with additional modernization coming in phases.

Wings doesn't require any RPG modification to create its Web versions of the UI, but MPL wanted some additional features added to the RPG before starting the UI modernization. MPL used Galilea to add the new features and functionality the RPG application. After testing these improved programs, the program objects and DDS source were passed on to ASNA's Services team for UI modernization. The initial project took about three months and then three weeks were spent customizing the final UI. Additional features including direct data export to PDF and Excel as well refining page rendering with custom CSS.

Before and after screens

Figure 1a.

The original MPL work with items screen.

MPL CATÁLOGO DE ARTICULOS

IMAGEN	REFERENCIA	PRODUCTO	FORMATO	UDS CAJA	CAJAS PALET	MARCA	OPCIONES	
	300009	SIMIL 250 AGUARRAS	BOT. 1/4	24	88	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300010	SIMIL 500 ML AGUARRAS	BOT.1/2	24	56	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300016	SIMIL 750 ML AGUARRAS	BOT 750 CC	20	48	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300017	SIMIL 1L AGUARRAS	BOT. 1 LT	20	40	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300056	PURO 250ML AGUARRAS	BOT. 1/4	24	88	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300057	PURO 500 ML AGUARRAS	BOT.1/2	24	56	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300080	PURO 1L AGUARRAS	BOT. 1 LT	20	40	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300082	PURO 750 ML AGUARRAS	BOT 750 CC	20	48	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300100	UNIVERSAL 1L DTE	LATA 1 L	12	48	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300109	EXTRA 1L DISOLVENTE	LATA 1 L	12	48	SPB	🔍	🛒
	300150	NITRO 1L DTE	LATA 1 L	12	48	SPB	🔍	🛒

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Figure 1b.

The modernized work with items screen.

Figure 2a.

The original MPL item detail screen.

Figure 2b.

The modernized item detail screen.

On time and on target

Says Mr. Pons, "Going into this project we had a great deal of confidence with ASNA and we were not disappointed. The ASNA and Galilea teams did a great job modernizing our RPG application. Our RPG application has been given a new life and it works very well. The new UI was widely accepted by a group of 10 users and the app is now being deployed to 35 or so of users at MPL. This new user interface increases the reliability of user input and reduces errors significantly. We've noticed up to 50% productivity improvement for our order management with has also lead to substantial delivery time improvement."

Another advantage of the improved application is that the app can now be used by both desktop and tablet users.

With Wings built-in tablet support, a new type of user is now being introduced to MPL's RPG application. Not only does this help with productivity, but the perception of the AS/400 application is substantially improved. Users are no longer frustrated or impeded by an obsolete user interface.

Goals achieved

The Galilea and ASNA Services Group team worked very well together on both the design and development of the project. Continuous progress status updates during development and implementation kept all team members efficient and productive. This team communication was a key success factor to ensure that the project delivered on time and on target.

Concludes Mr. Pons, "We're quite pleased with the improvements ASNA and Wings have brought to our RPG application. Our original goals of reducing processing and administrative costs have been realized. In the future we're going to incorporate some of this new functionality with mobile apps, expand the number of users, and add even more features to help improve order tracking."