

SYSB-II CASE STUDY

Office Depot reduces batch processing

 Retail Office Equipment **Business objective**

Simultaneous processing of warehouse orders with warehouse online processes.

 **Application**

DCMCS; Dallas Systems.

 **Operating system**

IBM 3090 (MVS).

 **Alternatives replaced**

- CA ShareOption/5 (replaced)
- Multiple CICS regions; CEMT Batch (replaced)

Today's organizations are searching for technologies that will give them a competitive edge and address critical business issues such as reducing costs and increasing efficiency.

Corporations with rapid growth often find that this expansion causes a bottleneck somewhere in their information processing. Such was the case with Office Depot, the world's largest office products retailer.

Since its first store opened in 1986 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Office Depot has experienced remarkable growth. Office Depot now has over 1,400 stores in the United States and Canada, and it is expanding in several markets in other countries.

The delivery business has played a critical role in Office Depot's success. Unlike the early years, when call-in orders were filled from the nearest store, Office Depot now operates a national sales network consisting of 23 Customer Service Centers (CSCs), or delivery warehouses. Each CSC takes from 1,000 to 5,000 orders per day.

At the end of each business day the orders are sorted, routed, sequenced, and then processed in batch. The next morning, a fleet of Office Depot trucks is on the road, delivering the orders to customers in their offices and homes.

The Problem

Every CSC warehouse requires a wide variety of documents to assemble each order and ensure accurate and timely delivery. Restrictions in Office Depot's distribution application permitted only one warehouse at a time to batch process orders. Furthermore, each process allowed for only about 800 orders to be processed in one step. With only one batch process allowed to run at a time and taking 15 to 20 minutes each, the last CSC in line was pressed for time to get the orders fulfilled.



Office Depot espouses a 100% customer satisfaction policy. The delay in order processing was not only undermining that policy, but was contributing to overtime in the warehouses.

The Solution

To solve this problem, Office Depot sought out SYSB-II, the VSAM file-sharing solution from H&W. By using SYSB-II, Office Depot's MIS staff was able to reduce batch processing time by three hours. SYSB-II changed processes that ran single-threaded to run simultaneously while still allowing full access to files.

The CSC was able to start shipping goods to customers sooner; orders are now fulfilled in significantly less time and are ready for delivery the next day. Ken Anderson, Director of Distribution Systems, summed up the benefit: "From a business standpoint, what SYSB-II did was make a big impact in customer service. It allowed us to provide a much better level of service to customers, which leads to increased sales and higher profits."

Along with the SYSB-II product, Office Depot received technical support from H&W for installation. Mr. Anderson stated, "It is refreshing to use a software package that you can install and get up and running based on its documentation and then have it work as advertised." SYSB-II was such a product for Office Depot. Senior Developer Phil Reaston said, "The key to this successful project was H&W's technical support people and their responsiveness."

Many other applications at Office Depot have benefited by using file sharing with SYSB-II. As others in the company started finding out about SYSB-II, they asked MIS to expand use of the product. Some departments have been able to completely replace CEMT Batch with SYSB-II. In side-by-side testing where files were closed and then reopened, the additional CEMT functionality in SYSB-II came out much faster.

The bottom line

What's the bottom line? SYSB-II has proven to meet the needs of Office Depot effectively. The company has successfully met its goals of simultaneous processing, stability, ease of maintenance and administration, and strong performance.

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