

## AQUASCAPE DESIGNS



## *MB Foster's UDALink™ pools information throughout the enterprise*

Across the US, prospective customers can tour homes which use the products and services of Aquascape Designs. Every week these Parade of Ponds tours supply a sign of success for the dynamic 10-year-old company. Aquascape, whose fast-growing operations in pond construction, supplies and training make it the leader in US pond construction, is a firm whose information flows as freely as any of the biologically-savvy waterfalls in the company's inventory, thanks to MB Foster's UDALink.

For the past four years Aquascape has held onto a place in Inc. Magazine's Inc. 500 rankings, an achievement honored by the business journal that identifies the fastest-growing companies in the US. Maintaining a spot on the list of privately-held firms for four years in a row shows sustained growth — the kind of business expansion that can slow the flow of information through overtaxed servers and bottlenecked databases.

Tony Nicolas, who manages the flow of information between Aquascape's datacenter and its business analysts, said that using MBF-UDALink transformed the company's data into a data mart, something the firm can use to look into the future.

"MB Foster helped us take all these records and transformed them into a format that's more representative of our business," Nicolas said. The MB Foster software connects the Analysis Services in an SQL Server database with data in the company's HP server, creating marts for Aquascape's business experts to mine data.

"I recognized a quick return on investment by implementing this tool," he said. "I can respond and generate every report requested, and I can see trends in the data." Aquascape uses the Ecometry e-commerce application with its HP server, but the stock reports from the application software weren't revealing trends, or locating potential problems in the database.

Customer information was spread over six different records in the company's application. MB Foster's datamart helped create a single repository. "Now I can find what I need by just looking at one table, versus having to run queries," Nicolas said.

Once the company was able to set up a data mart, the extra functionality changed the way the fast-growing firm does business. Aquascape's managers and analysts are getting more accomplished with their data. Every request for reports can be fulfilled, giving the company's management a complete view of business trends.

"The data is more meaningful to them now," Nicolas said. "It's easier to group data and compare periods. We can even create data mining tools using Analysis Services. It's more intelligent and helps us make wiser decisions."

It wasn't always this easy. A report request before Nicolas and Aquascape implemented MBF-UDALink 'could take all day,' the manager said. About one report request out of every five just couldn't be met. Now, Nicolas said, "I can meet all requests, in a fraction of the time."

MB Foster also helped the company save money on its application licensing. By moving the application's data into SQL Server data marts, Aquascape can keep its licensed user count low, economizing on software and support fees.

Prior to the implementation of MB Foster's datamart, Nicolas said, "I needed more resources from our servers. Now, the users don't have to log into the system to view the data. They get the data from a different server, and we can have limited licensing on Ecometry. It saves a burden on the CPU to run all these reports together."

Setting up the software was easy, because MB Foster Professional Services provided Aquascape with its expertise to implement as part of the MBF-UDALink installation.

"They supplied the services that go along with transforming the data," Nicolas said. "They would sit with me and listen to my needs, convert and customize my data to give me what I wanted. We put the data together to make it more efficient and to the point."

The company will be making the transition away from its HP server, a move that means Nicolas must devote time to migrate from his environment. The time has been made available because MB Foster's data mart streamlined the flow of data out of the company's application and into the mart.

"By having this flexibility, I can manage my time better," Nicolas said. "That means I can focus on my migration." Aquascape is spending its time investigating by planning its process. "We will be ready to implement a migration anytime that it's required," Nicolas said.

"MB Foster will be migrating our data mart, and we've had good experience with them," Nicolas said. "I was looking for more than tools to transform our data. I wanted something more, a way to organize the data in a way where it's much quicker. MB Foster helped us turn the raw data into business information."

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*Data marts fill pond supplier's business prospects.*

**MB Foster**  
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