

ROCHESTER INSTRUMENTS (RIS)



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How does a supplier of instrumentation for the power and process industry provide a business solution that will allow their sales reps and managers access to information pertaining to their customers/products/commission rates in a timely manner while still maintaining security? What difficulties would there be in training their end users to use this new business solution?

For Rochester Instruments (RiS) these were the questions the MIS department was tasked to provide answers to in 1991. RiS would extract information from the HP3000 to floppy disks preformatted for Lotus spreadsheets. These were then distributed to the sales force.

With the increased use of personal computers, there was a motivation for the MIS department to get the information out and let the sales managers massage their own data. For RiS MIS department this would mean a reduction in development time. For the sales department they would be able to instantly see current information for Order Details, Customers, Products, Commission Rates and manipulate the data based upon their needs.

Jennifer Litwak, MIS Manager, began looking for the solution. After viewing MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) demo, the business decision to purchase this data access and delivery tool was very clear. "The convincing part," says Jennifer "was that MBF-UDALink would integrate with our PowerHouse Schemas. We realized we could accomplish our goals and because the product is so easy-to-learn and easy-to-use, we could readily deploy it within our existing environment."

With MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress), RiS is able to access data on their own and then make that information available through individualized month end reports, batch processing, customized reports and ad-hoc reporting.

By learning to take advantage of MBF-UDALink's capabilities

and then sharing this knowledge through internal training, the users are now able to retrieve their own data without a heavy reliance on MIS. End users are much more independent and making better business decisions based upon timely, accurate information. The MIS department has also realized benefits with a decrease in programming time and better internal relationships between all divisions.

The Finance Department uses the extensive configuration capabilities of MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) to retrieve and manipulate information. Data is retrieved from the RiS ManMan business application using procedures that are easily created and modified for changing needs. In cost accounting, MBF-UDALink is used to analyze labor reporting, manufacturing variances and inventory. With MBF-UDALink, Finance is better able to provide management and other departments with timely accurate information. Month end reporting cycles are completed sooner, allowing earlier performance assessment.

In addition to the MIS and Finance Department, the Engineering Department uses MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) to track part components and vendors. Large intensive volumes of information are being tracked and processed by MBF-UDALink. Manufacturing uses routines developed by users for shop floor control.

When RiS first installed and ran MBF-UDALink, Jennifer used MB Foster's telephone support to administer some of the more complex procedures. "I did not involve any onsite services" says Jennifer "because the product is solid, easy to use and it works for me. When I have needed help, I've called tech support and assistance was available and immediate."

With batch reports running every night and the users having the ability to get at their information in a specialized way, its not surprising to find that MBF-UDALink (formerly DataExpress) is always running somewhere at RiS.

