TW Metals

Boosts transaction processing and employee productivity

Industry
Manufacturing

Challenge
Make it easier for customers to access key account information while accelerating transaction processing

Results
- Reduced inventory management transaction processing time for more than 600 employees
- Decreased training and development times for new employees by more than 50%
- Delivered a more elegant customer experience by consolidating data screens

Products
- Rocket® LegaSuite® Web
- Rocket® API

Company

TW Metals is a primary and secondary distributor of specialty metals and materials in stainless, aluminum, nickel, titanium, alloy, and carbon steel. Sixty percent of the company's business stems from its role as a subcontractor to the aerospace industry. TW Metals also provides products to a wide range of customers such as machine shops, race car designers, track manufacturers, and retail organizations. Headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, the company was formed in 1998 through the merger of Tubesales and Williams & Company.

Challenge

At the heart of TW Metals' business is a proprietary inventory management system that runs on the IBM i platform. Used daily by more than 600 employees, the system is central to managing thousands of TW Metals product SKUs. In 2010, the company's CIO recognized the need to optimize employee interactions with this system, based on the amount of time it took to complete necessary tasks using its green screen-based user interface. The management team at TW Metals also noted that it had become difficult to hire and retain new employees who were accustomed to working with more modern technology. In fact, given the wide age range of TW Metals employees, some had never even seen a green screen before, let alone used one.

Another priority for the company was to improve the customer experience with its direct sales web portal. Ideally, TW Metals wanted to provide customers with a UI that would deliver key insights into the entire order management lifecycle—including information stored in a multitude of different systems—on a timely basis.

According to Aldo Miceli, Vice President and CIO of TW Metals, the company values longevity, not only regarding its employees, but also its systems and processes. "TW Metals' proprietary inventory management and direct sales systems have been a fixture within the company. They have received numerous customizations and investments," Miceli explained. "For that reason, we want to make the most out of what we have in place already. A replacement is too disruptive and too expensive in terms of capital investment and man hours needed to manage such a project. We would also have no guarantee of success."

Solution

After a short review of available options, the company determined that Rocket® Software modernization solutions would best address its needs. TW Metals deployed Rocket® LegaSuite Web in 2010 to modernize the UI of its inventory management system and customer-facing web portal with the browser, mobile, and tablet experiences commonly found in consumer applications. In 2014, the company implemented Rocket® API to modernize its proven, host-based systems.

Results

With Rocket API, TW Metals transformed its existing 5250 green-screen applications into reusable SOAP and REST web services that the company's development team could use to create modern Web and mobile applications. The enhanced user experience improved productivity without requiring a single change to existing code. "The Rocket Software team knew exactly what our challenge was, both from a business and a technical perspective," Miceli said. "Rocket LegaSuite Web was first, and when Rocket API became available, it was the right solution to extend process efficiency to the user."

As of 2017, more than 600 TW Metals employees and partners were interacting with the company's inventory management systems using a more current UI that promoted greater efficiency. Transactions were processed faster because the functionality supporting these UIs was orchestrated into new workflows, making it easier for employees to do their day-to-day work. New employees were also trained 50 percent more quickly than they were before the Rocket deployments, ensuring their ability to contribute immediately to the company's output.

Within the TW Metals order management system, Rocket API streamlined the buyouts management process. This process, related to the buying and selling of SKUs that are not physically in stock, previously involved more

than four data screens, including logistics management, invoice coordination, and other necessary product management paperwork. Using Rocket API, the IT team reduced the buyouts process to one screen, bringing information from disparate systems together and minimizing processing time for the company's employees and its partners.

Within its direct sales portal, TW Metals leveraged both Rocket LegaSuite Web and Rocket API to simplify and improve the customer service experience

Customers could now access relevant order information faster, which translated to higher CSAT (customer satisfaction) rates. This included improved access to the billing, shipping, and product availability information derived from multiple systems within the TW Metals systems infrastructure.

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>
> *Aldo Miceli*
> *Vice President and CEO*
> *TW Metals*

Rocket
LEGACY POWERS LEGENDARY