

Archer Daniels Midland



ADM, the US agricultural giant, selects Infra for IT Service Management across its international network.



Archer Daniels Midland Company



Corporate Background

Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM), incorporated in 1923, is a leading global agricultural company engaged in procuring, transporting, storing, processing and merchandising agricultural commodities and products.

Based in Illinois, USA, ADM employs more than 26,000 people across six continents. The company has 270 domestic and international processing plants, and a worldwide transportation network.

ADM staff around the world report IT problems in the first instance to their local (national) service desk. These service desks refer some problems on to ADM's US headquarters, but are otherwise self-reliant.

Business requirement

ADM had a requirement for an IT service management system that could be used company-wide across its substantial network of international plants and offices.

The Company wanted a central repository of information (i.e. single database) for the purposes of reporting and knowledge sharing, which nevertheless accommodated time and language differences and enabled regional service desks to have an uncluttered view of their own data.

ADM's existing support system had been developed in-house, utilizing Microsoft Outlook. As well as operational problems such as job tickets becoming lost, the system was no longer compatible with the Company's preferred IT strategy.

ADM also wanted a system that had the potential to be extended beyond its IT Service Desk use - in other words, that provided maximum flexibility into the future.

Business solution

ADM evaluated five enterprise-level service management systems, finally selecting a fully Web-based application from Infra Corporation.

Rolling out a single system across such a large and dispersed number of locations was potentially a huge logistical, as well as very costly challenge.

For this reason, Infra's fully Web-based architecture was a key reason for its selection, as it enabled the system to be installed on a single database in ADM headquarters and run across the Internet to the company's international locations.

Bill Weimer, Manager of Infra for ADM, says the other major requirement met by the system was the ability to easily obtain a high level of visibility of the entire global service desk operations, through centralized reporting and other management features.

The ADM IT Department in Decatur has been using the Infra system since the first phase of its rollout. The second phase included adding support officers in South America, and the third phase added support officers in Europe.

A partitioned database accommodates regional differences

ADM has partitioned the Infra system to protect the integrity of each international work unit's unique data set, including client and call history, while still providing access to common problem types and knowledge.

At corporate headquarters, Bill Weimer can view and run reports on all data within the system, while service desk operators within a particular region will see only their own local data.

"We initially tested the system with just one partition for U.S. support officers," says Weimer, "with plans to add partitions for South America and Europe."

"We then went ahead and rolled out the live system in the U.S. After using it for several months, we added partitions for South America and Europe."

Implementation in Brazil

Bill Weimer traveled to Brazil to train the local service desk on the Infra system, and assist in the setup for their partition. That implementation has provided the template for its subsequent expansion to other areas.

ADM's Brazilian operation consists of a number of locations, some remote, which access the Infra system via the Web - a capability that has surprised and delighted the local offices, according to Weimer.

Partitioning has enabled the Brazilian service desk to record regional incident and problem data in the Portuguese language. The html-based screens give them the ability to customize the screens to show all labeling in Portuguese.

In addition, the time-zoning in the system allows Brazil to view dates and times in local time, as well as giving realistic service level calculations.

Central control and reporting

"It is very important for us to maintain hands-on control of our systems," says Weimer. "That was one of the Infra application's selling points." As the requirements on the system grow and change, ADM are able to independently create their own customizations, including custom reports through Crystal Reports.

"We run a lot of reports out of the system, and I have come to depend on Crystal. The reports are mostly run end of month to see how many incidents and problems we have, what type they are, and how they are broken down by group and location. The reports have been essential in helping to identify areas where we need training, or need to update part of the network infrastructure."

For a real-time view of current service desk activity, Weimer uses the Infra Monitor, providing an instant graphical snapshot.

"We now have a history for every incident, and are better able to solve problems at the tier 1 level instead of escalating them to tier 2," he says.

"The bottom line is that we have a quicker response time, and quicker resolution. This has definitely helped in creating more satisfied customers."

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