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KCI Technologies

Unitask Output Director Simplifies Printer Management

The Situation

With revenues of approximately \$142 million in 2008, KCI consistently places among the top consulting engineering firms in the country. Founded in 1955 in a Baltimore County home, KCI's roughly 900 employee owners now operate 24 offices in 12 states. The firm offers turnkey expertise in a wide range of disciplines in land development, transportation, facilities, environmental services, construction, and telecommunications. The ability to deliver such broad technical services requires KCI's IT department to implement and maintain a flexible IT infrastructure—specifically the Oracle E-Business Suite—to support the company's continued growth.

“When we first rolled out the Oracle E-Business Suite,” said Jean Farmer, senior Oracle developer for KCI, “it supported several HP printers and that was okay. However, over time, Oracle users purchased their own printers, not realizing that the printers could not print Oracle output.”

The Oracle E-Business Suite's inability to produce printed output as easily and flexibly as other applications, such as Microsoft Office Word® or Excel®, caused support issues for KCI's IT department and concern within the Oracle user community.

The Challenge

KCI's user community and its printing needs were continually growing. Users had new printers that needed to process Oracle output: KCI was establishing remote offices, and each with printer needed to be Oracle-enabled. Also, KCI had telecommuting employees who needed to produce Oracle output to home printers. Given the complexity of configuring and managing printers within the Oracle environment, KCI knew the support burden was going to continue to grow, unless it could find a better way.

As one of only two people supporting all aspects of KCI's Oracle Applications environment—from system administration and code

development all the way to functional end user support—Farmer needed to balance the needs of the user community against the challenge of wearing many different hats within the organization.

Ultimately, KCI needed to find a solution that would reduce printer support calls and eliminate any future need to configure printers among a growing organization.

To enable the user community to print Oracle output to the ever-growing number of printers, Farmer and her team began exploring solutions outside of manually configuring printers within the Oracle E-Business Suite. Soon, KCI found Unitask Output Director.

The Solution

The next step was to install an evaluation of Output Director into KCI's test instance.

"Unitask offered a remote demo version of Output Director that enabled me to print a report from the Unitask instance to my printer over the web. From start to finish, the demo worked in about 10 minutes," said Farmer.

KCI then exposed the product to a few users to obtain real-life feedback. The users quickly figured out for themselves how Output Director enabled them to print Oracle reports to any printer anywhere, and a groundswell of demand grew. As Farmer explained, "It really sold itself. Once we presented the solution to the users, they said, 'Hey, we need this!'"

"Moving the product from the test instance to the production instance was quite simple and posed no problems," said Farmer, "And for training, we just sent an email explaining how to use it."

The Results

By deploying Output Director in its production instance of the Oracle E-Business Suite, KCI Technologies was able to increase user satisfaction by enabling users to print Oracle output to any local or network printer, eliminate the need for the IT department to configure any additional printers in the Oracle E-Business Suite, and automate the Oracle printing capabilities for each new KCI regional office. All users could immediately print, preview, and email OEBS output easily. The need for UNIX print queues was eliminated, and security was tightened leading to better compliance

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“We’ve never had a problem with Output Director. It has worked flawlessly since we installed it,” said Farmer. “When we initially started this project, setting up printers involved many steps. Unitask has given us the freedom not to worry about tedious printer setups. This is a considerable time-saving device.”

“In addition,” said Farmer, “many of our users use Unitask’s preview and mail options to send reports to project managers and executives as well as invoices to clients. It’s a wonderful way to get a report out of Oracle and ship it around. They love it. Additional tools like PDF options make it an invaluable tool for both me and the users. It is one of the few add-ons to Oracle that has really proven its worth.”

About KCI Technologies

KCI is a 100-percent employee-owned engineering, consulting and construction firm serving clients throughout the Northeast, Southeast and Mid-Atlantic, as well as other parts of the U.S. and beyond. Their multi-disciplined service offering allows the company to provide exceptional turnkey expertise to federal, state and local government agencies, as well as institutional and private-sector clients. KCI’s revenue increase of more than 150 percent since 1994 is a tribute to the hard work and technical expertise of more than 900 dedicated employee owners. With revenues of approximately \$142 million in 2008, *Engineering News-Record* magazine has placed KCI 88th among the top 500 engineering firms in the country. KCI is also ranked among the top 100 hottest firms in the nation based on revenue growth by ZweigWhite, a national management advisor for engineering, architectural, and environmental consulting firms. KCI’s Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions are ISO 9001:2000 certified.

<http://www.kci.com>

About Unitask

Unitask is committed to helping organizations implement, manage and run their Oracle E-Business Suite. Unitask creates, sells and supports software products based on experience gained from over a decade of Oracle E-Business Suite implementation projects. Customers of the Oracle E-Business Suite around the world rely on Unitask products to eliminate implementation and operational risk, improve the quality of the application and accelerate time-to-value. For more information, please visit www.unitask.com.