



Amalgamated Sugar Ogden, Utah

Using J Walk[®], Amalgamated Sugar Enhances Their Legacy-Based ERP System with a GUI and Web Access

The Internet has affected virtually every industry, placing immense pressure on companies to improve accessibility and maximize productivity to keep pace with the accelerated speed of business. Customers now want instant answers to questions about their accounts or orders, expect to receive products faster than ever before and demand a higher standard of service.

For sugar provider Amalgamated Sugar, their ability to keep up was being inhibited by their legacy-based ERP system, which offered no Internet access, provided inefficient application workflows and presented users with complex, difficult-to-use and -learn green screens. In addition, the system forced the company to rely heavily on paper and expensive, inefficient information transfer via phone and fax. Although Amalgamated Sugar recognized their urgent need to make a change, they couldn't simply replace or redevelop their existing system, which housed critical data and business logic. They needed a solution that would allow them to modernize and extend their legacy applications to avoid the risk of altering the existing code.

After examining several vendors, Amalgamated Sugar selected Seagull Software's J Walk technology. J Walk, a component of LegaSuite[®], provides industry-leading developer tools and infrastructure for Web-to-host and Windows-to-host access to iSeries back-office applications. J Walk offers a dynamic development and deployment environment that empowers you to deploy your iSeries applications to Java, HTML and Windows environments in a single work effort.

New GUI Improves User Productivity

With J Walk, Amalgamated Sugar transformed complicated green screens into a dynamic GUI. Now, instead of typing in commands and memorizing countless function keys, Amalgamated Sugar's employees located in warehouses throughout the U.S. can use a mouse to easily point and click their way through the ordering and inventory applications, which ultimately lead to a reduction in training. "Before, the training curve was pretty high, but with J Walk we were able to simplify the screens and incorporate things like tabs and push buttons. When we deployed J Walk, we gave the warehouses just a day's worth of training, and then we stayed with them a day to ensure there were no problems. In the old days, that would have been a week's worth of training and a week's worth of hand-holding," said Farrel Farnes, IS manager for Amalgamated Sugar.

In addition, J Walk allowed Amalgamated Sugar to reorganize and consolidate the screens to improve workflows and simplify navigation. With their previous system, orders had to be entered one at a time on individual screens. But with J Walk, Amalgamated Sugar can now input up to 20 orders on one screen. "Users can put all of a customer's order information on one screen. Once they hit the button, all the orders are automatically processed behind the scene. That is about a 40:1 improvement in the speed of inputting orders," said Farnes.

Amalgamated Sugar Company is based in Ogden, Utah and provides sugar throughout North America. They are owned by Snake River Sugar Company.



Accelerating Service to Customers

With J Walk, Amalgamated Sugar also deployed specific business functions to the Web, allowing salespeople, sugar brokers and the warehouses to connect to the system and access real-time data. Now, salespeople and brokers can easily place orders online, allowing warehouse employees to respond faster to order requests. Previously, orders were faxed in and handled by three different people before they were manually entered into the system and fulfilled—an inefficient process that typically took two days. "We wanted to eliminate some of the redundancy and reduce the cost of processing an order. With J Walk we accomplished that. We cut the time it takes to process an order by a day, and we were able to give some of our employees new job functions," said Farnes.

J Walk also helped Amalgamated Sugar improve customer service and minimize the amount of calls coming into their customer relations department. Brokers can now input orders and monitor their status online, giving them 24 x 7 real-time visibility into their accounts. "The new system was very well received by our warehouses and brokers and it cut down on all the phone calls to Customer Relations," commented Farnes. In addition, Amalgamated Sugar integrated J Walk with their transportation system, so users can view not only the status of their order as it moves through the warehouse, but they can also track an order's movement as it is being shipped. "Through J Walk, we've basically intermingled two legacy applications—ordering and transportation. But from the broker standpoint, it looks like one seamless application," said Farnes.

Because of J Walk's flexibility, Amalgamated Sugar acquired the ability to respond to changes quickly and affordably. J Walk offers powerful scripting capabilities that allow users to alter and customize their applications whenever necessary—without changing the existing code. "In one case, we needed to make a simple change. To make the change in the main system, it was going to take a long time and cost us \$10,000. With J Walk, we did it easily in a half hour," said Farnes.

Through scripting, Amalgamated Sugar also reduced the time necessary to correct data entry errors. If a mistake was made in their previous system, users had to backtrack through many different screens in a specific order just to make one change. "Before J Walk, it might take 30 minutes to correct a mistake. Now, by using scripting, users just click a button and all of the processing to correct the mistake happens automatically, behind the scenes. We've been able to make a lot of positive enhancements without having to make any RPG programming changes," commented Farnes.

By deploying J Walk, Amalgamated Sugar has experienced many benefits. They have become more efficient, have seen an increase in productivity, are delivering faster service to customers and have been able to do it all by leveraging their existing legacy system. "By deploying J Walk, we have improved our operation without having to spend millions and millions of dollars. We have been able to maintain our staff even though our volumes are up. And we have improved our cash flow by reducing lag times in the ordering and invoicing process. Overall, we've been very pleased with J Walk, and Seagull Software as a vendor has met our expectations," said Farnes.

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*Farrel Farnes
IS Manager
Amalgamated Sugar*



Seagull Software specializes in powerful technology for connecting proprietary legacy applications to service-oriented architectures in J2EE and .NET environments. The LegaSuite® platform of integration, Web-enablement and terminal emulation solutions reflects over 14 years of legacy liberation experience, and is used by over 8,000 organizations around the world for business-critical operations.

Every day, millions of end users depend on LegaSuite for online banking, relocation services, e-government, insurance claims processing, cable/utility/telecom call centers, kiosk bill payment, online order processing and many other important business processes.

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