CUSTOMER
County of Essex

INDUSTRY
Municipal Government

LOCATION
Essex County, Ontario

SYSTEM
Sage Accpac ERP
Sage Accpac Insight

County Government Enjoys Economic Benefits With Sage Software Solutions

The County of Essex in southern Ontario Province enjoys economic prosperity due to a thriving mix of manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture. In recent years, a surge in growth plus increasing complexity in their transaction processing and reporting requirements overwhelmed the County's existing database platform. With separate, disconnected databases managing different entities within the government, the County endured widespread inefficiencies and, without direct access to real-time financial data from its various departments, decision-making and planning were often delayed.

System-Wide Inefficiencies Prompt Search for New System

According to Wendy St. Amour, manager of IT for the County of Essex, "Due to our database indexing problems, locating specific invoices was very time-consuming and generating management reports was very tedious and inefficient. Getting new budget numbers back into Sage Accpac sometimes took up to a month to complete because we had to ask other staff members to tackle this project in their spare time."

To resolve these inadequacies, the County wanted a system that could reduce the time required to generate annual budget reports, improve remote users' transactional processing, and increase overall productivity.

Fast, One-Week Implementation

Acting on the recommendation of Sage Software business partner Synergy Plus Solutions, the County of Essex opted for an upgraded version of Sage Accpac running on Red Hat Linux with the IBM DB2 database. They also implemented Sage Accpac Insight, a comprehensive reporting, budgeting, forecasting, and consolidations tool.

CHALLENGE

The County lacked the tools to efficiently process financial transactions and create reports that conformed to provincial guidelines and meet the needs of department managers.

SOLUTION

The County implemented Sage Accpac Insight plus an upgraded version of Sage Accpac ERP running on Red Hat Linux with the IBM DB2 database.

RESULTS

Sage Accpac solutions provide the County with a highly efficient, real-time environment for enhanced transactional processing and streamlined reporting.

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ABOUT SAGE SOFTWARE

Sage Software has been responding to the needs, challenges, and dreams of small and midsized businesses for over 25 years. With a complete range of business management solutions and services, Sage Software helps companies improve customer relationships, reduce costs, and automate and integrate a variety of operational activities. Its solutions support the specialty needs of a broad scope of industry segments, including manufacturing, distribution, construction, real estate, nonprofit, and professional services.

While the implementation figured to take many months to complete, the entire project was completed in just one week. "With multiple databases and such a high volume of transactional data, we figured the implementation would be problematic and very time-intensive," said St. Amour. "Amazingly, a week later, we were going 'live' with the new system, and we have enjoyed the benefits ever since."

IBM DB2 and Red Hat Linux Provide Cost-Effective, Peak Performance

The introduction of IBM DB2 as a database for Sage Accpac and DB2's reputation for robust functionality and low cost of ownership led Synergy to recommend DB2 as the County's new standard operating platform. According to Joe Santoro, president of Synergy Plus Solutions, "With Sage Software's decision to offer Linux as an operating system for its Sage Accpac product, and the County's decision to use DB2 for its Web-based community portal, it made good sense to migrate Sage Accpac over to Linux/DB2 for their financial software application."

"We had already implemented Red Hat Linux and found the performance very solid and the implementation quite easy and very cost-effective," said Jim Gignac, the County's network administrator. "Together, Linux and DB2 provide a flexible, scalable database solution that will grow and change with us for the long haul."

Sage Accpac Insight Streamlines Reporting and Budgeting Processes

Sage Accpac Insight has dramatically improved the County's ability to generate financial reports that conform to the provincial government's requirements. Insight has enabled County staff to quickly integrate information into meaningful reports and distribute them across the enterprise in a real-time and secure environment. Insight has also provided secure access to department heads for reporting and drilling down for further analysis on financial data.

"With Sage Accpac Insight on hand, managers of different departments can access the desired reports at any time through a dedicated icon on their desktop," said St. Amour. "In fact, our engineering department can double-click on an icon such as time and materials or budget versus actual expenses on a construction project and get a real-time status update."

Dramatic Cost Reductions and Time Savings

"The economic benefits of this system have been truly amazing," exclaimed St. Amour. "With all the efficiencies of Sage Accpac running on DB2 and Linux, and Sage Accpac Insight, we have enjoyed greater productivity, improved remote transaction processing (among departments), and the ability to report in a more timely fashion to management and to the provincial government."