

OPEN/DB-Jacana-Valet End User Reporting at Brown County

Brown County introduce efficient and productive
end user reporting to their HR department

Brown County is a local/municipal government agency based in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Brown County itself comprises 16 towns, 6 villages and 2 cities, of which Green Bay is the most progressive and rapidly growing city. Home of the Green Bay Packers, National Football League champions on 12 occasions, Green Bay itself relies heavily on its paper industry. It is also the largest cheese processing, concentrating and shipping center in the United States. Paper converters, recycling, custom log homes, furniture, fisheries, meat processing, dairy products, cold storage are other important industries established in the County.



Brown County's Human Resources Department provides both City and County human resources and labor relations services. One of the department's aims is to improve and promote quality customer service. To support this objective the department looked to extend its reporting capability. The requirement was simple: a reporting solution that could provide non technical 'end users' with access to HR data to develop their own reports quickly and efficiently with minimal IS involvement.

Brown County had already implemented the MPAL Human Resource Management System, an application that is now maintained in house. With a recent hardware upgrade to an IBM AS/400 RISC machine Brown County took the opportunity to upgrade to the latest version of MPAL and also the client-server version of Momentum's OPEN/DB-Jacana-Valet reporting system. Already using a green screen derivative version of OPEN/DB called MPALwrite they decided to take advantage of the intuitive desktop Windows report design and report running capabilities available in Jacana and Valet respectively. This project required implementation of the latest software release of OPEN/DB-Jacana-Valet; conversion of data subsets and their expansion to include new files and fields; and training in the benefits and use of Jacana and Valet in particular.

One of the major features of the Momentum solution is its Information Interface (sometimes referred to as 'data subsets') that enables the file relationships of an application to be described to the report writer. With this feature the user is presented with easily recognizable fields and is not required to know the field and file relationships of the underlying database. Brown County had already invested time and effort into writing data subsets and it was important that this work was not lost.

"The implementation went so smoothly, Momentum converted our old subsets to enable us to take advantage of Jacana and Valet (using OPEN/DB) and they enhanced our existing subsets to incorporate the new data elements in the MPAL software. Momentum held our hand the whole way, with both telephone support and on-site training we were able to develop our mission critical HR and Payroll reports quickly and easily." comments Laura Workman, Assistant Manager Information Services.

Now Brown County's HR and Payroll clerks are writing their own reports with minimal support from the IS Department. Within a few months over 140 reports providing a comprehensive range of reporting were introduced, including employee lists (e.g. by job title, seniority, department etc), performance reviews, wage analysis, insurance and deduction information, medical plans, vacation details as well as data extracts for Excel analysis and mailing labels. With the data subsets and basic reports established, the focus turned to making the reporting available throughout the HR department. To achieve this Valet has been installed so that the running of reports can be initiated from the users' desktop.

Advanced features of OPEN/DB allow security to be applied at a 'record level' so that different users running the same report will receive only the information they are authorized to view (e.g. only the employees in their department).

As Laura confirms "I believe the users are very happy with the ability to really customize the way each report will look. The true benefit for all of us here is that the users have the ability to create their own reports without the assistance of the I.S. team. This not only helps them keep their costs down, they are able to get exactly what they want, when they want it."

These changes benefit both the user and the IS department. The IS department can now leave the report writing to the HR department, significantly reducing their costly involvement in writing and maintaining HR reporting. Most importantly the Information Interface ensures that all the file linkages required in the construction of the reporting is not compromised by an end user's lack of technical knowledge. In addition, OPEN/DB also provides the security and statistical housekeeping information to ensure that I.S. retain operational and audit control over who does what reporting and when. The users on the other hand are empowered, no longer needing intimate knowledge of the MPAL application's database, with Jacana and Valet they have the tools to write and run their own reports as they need them.

Sandie Motkowski - Human Resources Coordinator confirms the benefit to their users. "I think the most obvious benefit for us is the greatly reduced turn-around time in getting reports designed and generated. We know the information we want, and now we know where it is, and how to make best use of it."

Looking ahead Sue Pable - Asst Finance Director comments "The great advantage of using OPEN/DB-Jacana-Valet is that we are not restricted to using it for just HR reports. OPEN/DB can be used with other applications as well, so there are no reasons not to implement the system elsewhere in the organization."

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