



WILLAMETTE VALLEY INTEGRATES IFS APPLICATIONS™, ATRION FOR MATERIALS COMPLIANCE

Headquartered in Eugene, Oregon, the Willamette Valley Co. supplies goods and services to manufacturing and forest-product industries as well as to consumers.

The company consists of five divisions and three subsidiaries built around a base of eight manufacturing locations, three research and development laboratories, two engineering facilities, and marketing, sales and service organizations supporting sales worldwide.

THE CHALLENGE

Chemical manufacturers are faced with a growing alphabet soup of regulations ranging from the UK's Chemicals Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply Regulations (CHIPS) and European Inventory of Existing Commercial Chemical Substances (EINECS) to US directives including the Clean Water Act (CWA) Clean Air Act (CAA), Comprehensive Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA), as well as newly-adopted and ambitious European Registration, Evaluation and Registration of Chemicals (REACH) rule, designed to regulate the manufacture, import, marketing and use of chemicals. REACH came into effect June 1st, 2007, and represents an attempt to unify over 40 existing EU directives into a logical and efficient system.

Meeting this mish-mash of regulations is difficult enough for chemical industry manufacturers with a handful of products that remain the same year after year. But for Eugene, Ore.-based Willamette Valley Company, which has numerous product lines with exact formulations that might change daily or hourly, a highly engineered IT solution was necessary to ensure compliance. The engineered wood products company manufactures a broad spectrum of products used in plywood and construction-related industries. Offerings range from patch and putty and paint, primers, sealers and repellents to specialized two-part elastomer coatings and spike filling compounds used in railroad ties.

THE SOLUTION

Before Willamette Valley implemented IFS Applications™ in 2002, the company was at a disadvantage when it came to creating the materials safety data sheets (MSDS) required to ship their products across county or state lines—or to export to other countries.

“The previous legacy system that we had was not ideal,” Willamette Valley CIO Gerald Nakamura said. “It was more a separate, disparate system that required you to log in to generate the transport documents, so there was a lot of

ABOUT WILLAMETTE VALLEY COMPANY

Willamette Valley Company manufactures coatings, fillers, adhesive products, customized robotic equipment, as well as a myriad of other products for the wood industry and other industries in need of innovative solutions. WVC is a multi-national corporation with product distribution and service throughout the United States, in Europe, Canada, Asia and South America.



duplication of effort. We were really running two systems instead of one integrated package.”

Compliance documentation was just one challenge Nakamura and his associates faced in selecting and implementing a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) package. With 10 divisions and diverse product lines, Willamette Valley employs a variety of production environments. Some of the company’s divisions use make-to order, others use make-to-stock, and still others switch from one environment to another to meet customer demands. Most divisions are process oriented, but others are involved in discrete manufacturing.

Willamette Valley’s IT staff faced a major challenge because its legacy IT systems lacked the flexibility to handle the diverse types of manufacturing. To complicate matters, the company’s systems were batch-oriented and poorly integrated.

“We felt that IFS offered us the Tier One functionality we wanted, and demonstrably met our core needs,” Nakamura said. “But it did not seem that anyone in the ERP industry was doing a very good job with chemical industry compliance. IFS does very well with Sarbanes-Oxley and other financial compliance issues.”

Nakamura said the natural solution was to integrate Willamette Valley’s instance of IFS Applications with a regulatory compliance package from Montreal, Canada-based Atrion International, Inc.

“IFS was smart enough to recognize the smartest strategy and make the recommendation to integrate IFS Applications with Atrion’s Materials Compliance Suite,” Nakamura said. “In a nutshell, it was a very well thought-out strategy by both IFS and Atrion. It was one of my better integrations with IFS. Right when we hooked it up, it worked out of the box.”

The database-level integration eliminates re-work that had been previously necessary, and has been easily uplifted to accommodate newer versions of Oracle databases and a 2006 upgrade of IFS Applications, according to Nakamura.

“During our recent upgrade of IFS Applications, we had to test the integration with Atrion and it worked as expected,” Nakamura said, stressing that other chemical industry manufacturers ought to consider the bolt-on approach. “It is transparent. What is important is that we have documents ready about our products for our customers and our shippers. These documents are automatically ready to go on every shipment even as we change our formulations on the hour or on the minute.”

According to Nakamura, integrating a comprehensive enterprise suite with a specialized compliance tool may be the smartest strategy for chemical manufacturers in today’s environment.

“Our work with IFS and Atrion reinforces the importance of integration provided by both these companies who have helped us embrace a cohesive IT strategy,” Nakamura said. “We have seen measurable success in achieving production efficiencies, resolving non-compliance, reducing compliance costs, delivering best practices and knowledge sharing. As an early adopter we have seen how IFS Applications, integrated with Atrion’s system, have helped deliver marked performance.”

BENEFITS

- Willamette Valley Company automated its MSDS compliance system.
- Standardizing on a single ERP package for both discrete and process manufacturing.



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