

Company Net is a leading business consultancy and software development house with nearly 15 years of dedicated experience in helping organisations improve business performance and successfully manage change through the intelligent application of technology. Dedicated to building upon the Microsoft platform to help businesses throughout the UK achieve financial growth, we enable our customers to increase revenue, reduce costs, and improve customer service to gain competitive advantage.

Case Study

BP is one of the world's largest energy groups whose main activities are in the exploration and supply of Petrochemicals and renewable energies. In the past few years the group has experienced rapid growth, through mergers and acquisitions.

BP's Requirements

Used Oil Analysis is a service provided by BP and Castrol, which give their customers a qualitative and quantitative assessment of their machinery. Poorly maintained machinery can be dangerous, inefficient, costly to repair and can damage the business. Monitoring machinery regularly allows customers to manage it effectively, and protect the significant investment involved in buying and running the machines. Samples are taken regularly and sent to BP and Castrol's labs for analysis. Results are collated in back-end systems and sent to the customer electronically.

The Marine and Energy Lubricants business unit had operated three different customer-facing used oil analysis (UOA) reporting systems for a number of years under both the BP and Castrol brands. Each of these systems was developed over 10 years ago and had not been updated for a number of years. BP and Castrol customers found the systems outdated and BP competitors offered more advanced systems.

BP wanted to give their customers a single downloadable application that could:

- Provide 'dynamic' and immediate access to current and some historical used oil analysis data via a secure extranet interface.
- Provide the user with graphs and trends from UOA data.
- Allow the user to export data to third party applications (such as Microsoft Excel) for greater data manipulation.
- Allow for different levels of access for internal and external viewers.
- Include the ability to print off, at any time, all or part of the reports via downloadable PDF files. This helps customers who either prefer a paper version or do not have high-speed internet access facilities to support continual on-line enquiry.
- Provide alternate "branding" of the application for BP and Castrol customers.

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Our Solution

The solution consisted of a “click-once” client application that customers could download and install on vessels and also on-shore. This application had a compact SQL database, which was synchronised via secure web services with a central SQL database at BP’s data centre. Used Oil Analysis samples are imported into the central database using a dedicated windows service and distributed on demand to client applications.

The application displays analysis data and charts historical data to show trends. It provides an audit trail of key actions and automatically generated alerts to tell users about key facts such as the arrival of new sample data.

Business Benefits

The system has been successfully piloted and is currently being rolled out to over 300 vessels.

According to Alessia La Rosa, Project Manager at BP:

“We wanted to demonstrate to our customers that we are committed to our used oil analysis offering by launching a tool that will help them better manage their fleet by giving them the chance to benchmark results for all vessels. The main benefit for us is to increase customer loyalty.”

In addition, the system has provided cost savings through consolidation as BP no longer need to support three different products, and internal efficiency gains through a more streamlined analysis process.

Future Plans

On the back of the successful delivery and adoption of the system, the vision for the solution is to further extend it by building in an Inventory system to allow vessel users to record lubricant levels and consumption rates and to provide SMS and e-mail alerts when lubricant levels drop below specified minimum thresholds.