



CUSTOMER:

Fred Deeley Imports
Exclusive Canadian distributor of Harley-Davidson motorcycles

INDUSTRY:

Automotive

APPLICATION:

UltraComm

INPRISE TOOLS:

Delphi, Delphi/400, MIDAS, InterBase

INPRISE PARTNER:

InfoCan Management
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OVERVIEW:

- Fred Deeley Imports wanted to replace a legacy DOS-based system and move to a browser-based system for exchanging information with its retailer network.
- FDI selected Inprise Premier Partner and Authorized Education Center InfoCan Management to help its IT staff develop the new system.
- The new system, called UltraComm, has enabled FDI and its network of authorized retailers to achieve new efficiencies in their businesses, realize significant cost savings, access information much more quickly and accurately than was previously possible, and has delivered a dynamic framework for their business in the years to come.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- UltraComm, enables both FDI and its authorized retailers to work more productively and to exchange information much more quickly and efficiently. New system functionality allows FDI and its retailers to perform electronically many tasks that were previously accomplished manually.
- A centralized database has resulted in significant savings for FDI and its retailers. Additionally, synchronization and data integrity issues are now minimized.
- The new system offers valuable reporting functionality and enables FDI to perform business analysis that was previously unavailable.
- The new system is flexible enough to accommodate added functionality as FDI's business model evolves and new business opportunities emerge.





COMPANY BACKGROUND

Fred Deeley Imports, or FDI, is the exclusive Canadian distributor of Harley-Davidson® motorcycles, parts, accessories and related products and services. The company sells its products and services through a network of 75 authorized retailers located throughout the country. As an automotive distributor, FDI is responsible for registering and tracking the sales of its motorcycles throughout Canada, as well as for maintaining warranty information for all Harley-Davidsons purchased there.

PARTNER BACKGROUND

Inprise Premier Enterprise Solutions Partner and Authorized Education Center, InfoCan Management, was established in 1989 and has been focusing on database-related training and consulting ever since. Its services offering covers all of Inprise's flagship products: Delphi, C++Builder, JBuilder and MIDAS, and are now moving into other Inprise enterprise-computing technologies, such as Entera, VisiBroker and AppServer. InfoCan's customer base ranges from Fortune 500 companies, such as KPMG and the Swiss Bank Corporation, to Government agencies, such as the Department of National Defense and the Ministry of Finance, to corporate IT departments such as Manulife Financial, First Union National Bank and Gulf Canada Resources. InfoCan was recently voted the number-one training company in North America by the *Delphi Informant's* Readers' Choice Awards, for the second year on a row.

SITUATION:

FDI had a DOS-based, custom-designed application that used an EDI standards-based engine for sending and receiving transactions with its Canadian retailers via private VAN and direct dial connections. The application was designed to use client-side data tables for field edits and verification. This system was written by an external developer, meaning that changes to the application could not readily be made by the internal IS staff at FDI. As a consequence, improvements and enhancements to the application occurred infrequently. Local data tables required updating at least twice a year in order to keep the information used by the application for edits and verification synchronized with FDI. The process required the manual creation and mailing of diskettes for each site using the application. The DOS nature of the application limited its ability to integrate with the current generation of graphical Windows 9x and NT operating systems. The application was unable to operate properly on modern, high-memory hard drives.

The system assumed that a retailer would use a single stand alone machine to perform the various functions and inquiries. It became apparent that in the larger facilities, tasks were necessarily broadly distributed. As a result, retailers began to demand multi-user capability.

FDI recognized that it needed to adopt a dynamic tool that enabled them to not only provide the existing functionality, make improvements such as multi-user capability and be able to quickly accommodate new functionality in the years ahead.



SOLUTION:

FDI called on the services of Inprise Premier Partner, InfoCan Management to assist them in developing and deploying a new system to meet their current requirements and lead the company and its retailers into the 21st century. InfoCan and FDI used Inprise's Delphi, Delphi/400, MIDAS, and InterBase products to build UltraComm, a browser-based system that solved the problems of the previous application and made several important enhancements. With the new system, FDI can exchange information electronically with its 75 retailers in Canada, allowing them to more accurately track sales information and perform valuable business analysis. With UltraComm, FDI is able to work much more effectively with its retailers. The system also serves as an effective vehicle for distributing promotional information.

Now multiple employees at FDI's 75 retailers have access to the same information, enabling them to work concurrently and thus dedicate less time to administrative tasks. By making FDI retailers more productive, UltraComm has had an immediate impact on sales total. Furthermore, since the database is now centralized, FDI's IT staff has saved a great deal of time by no longer sending database updates on diskette.

Designed to allow efficient addition of application functionality, the flexible UltraComm system will continue to deliver benefits to FDI as the company unrolls new features in the years to come.

INPRISE ADVANTAGE:

Delphi and Delphi/400 enabled InfoCan and FDI to rapidly develop the individual components of UltraComm, allowing them to concentrate their efforts on underlying architectural issues. Due to the strength of the Delphi product line, they were able to get various components up very quickly. Inprise tools have also given them the flexibility to make future application enhancements quickly and easily.

"Michael Li of InfoCan Management was instrumental in basically validating our initial design and answering questions we had about Delphi's capabilities. Then Dave Hamdon, an InfoCan consultant, came on board and was able to lend his expertise with Delphi 4 to actually create those components. It would be hard for us to imagine tackling a project like this without a good tool, but at the same time it would be hard to imagine tackling it without a capable consultant."

— Lawson Greer
Director of Information Services
Fred Deeley Imports



TECHNOLOGY:

Database Server: Primary: DB2/400
Secondary: InterBase 5.5
Platform: Primary: AS/400; Secondary: NT Server 4.0 SP4
Network: TCP/IP
Size of Database: DB2/400: 8gb
InterBase: 30mb
Number of Users: 400 external, 30 internal

DEVELOPMENT:

Tool Used: Delphi 3.0/400 C/S
Other Tools Evaluated: Visual Basic, Visual Studio 1.0, Rumba-ODBC, OLE-DB
Team Size: 2
Development Time: 8 months
Deployment Date: August 1998

UltraComm Network

