

Manufacturing Company Replaces Its Antiquated Extranet Site with a Sleek New Portal

When our client embarked on an upgrade to their QAD version, they faced the question of what to do with an extranet site being used by one of their divisions.

The site, used by internal sales, external reps, distributors, and OEMs, housed product pricing and split commission information. It also allowed for order taking and tracking and provided viewing of PDF drawings from their public site.

“One of the challenges we faced,” said the company’s Director of IT, “was that the extranet site was old, used C Sharp programming and was very difficult to maintain. Users relied on the portal, so it definitely had to stay. We decided to replace it rather than put all our efforts into the old one.”

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Director of IT



They looked at several alternatives: QAD’s SSM portal; custom programming using QExtend; traditional outside web programmers; EDI; and some mobile applications. They decided the QAD SSM portal and QExtend were both too expensive and complex for them and none of the other options was a good fit. They had been using 32 Soft’s Data Loaders for several years, so they took a look at 32 Soft’s Customer Work Center (CWC) web application.

“It started to blossom on us that this could be something that would be useful,” said the Director of IT. “One reason was that CWC is already packaged. We knew we wouldn’t have to go into a six-month project of laying out requirements and talking about programming challenges. Another reason is that it is flexible so we could add and remove pieces quickly to meet our needs.”

The company had two main concerns. First, they wanted to make sure it wouldn’t be taxing on QAD. Secondly, they didn’t want to have to babysit the vendor through the process.

The IT Director managed the project from the business perspective and was a little leery because he had a lot of big projects going on. “It was an essential project, but I didn’t have time for a lot of hand-holding,” he said. “The 32 Soft team absolutely knows what they are doing when it comes to QAD, and Nancy does a great job of identifying what’s happening throughout the project.”

In the end, they achieved all of their goals and more for this project. They needed the security to control the specific pricing and order information seen by users, which is easy to do in CWC—even by non-IT managers. The reps love that they can jump on a website with their ipads and get real-time order status right before they are ready to walk into a client’s office. The external reps find it helpful that they can click a link to see an image of a switch from their public site. IT is relieved that the portal requires minimal attention from them—with a little training, users do most of the managing.

“The launch couldn’t have been more successful. When we went live, we had very few technical phone calls. Probably the happiest group is Customer Service. They knew they were getting a better application than what they had and were nervous about the impact it might have on their job security. But they love it. It has reduced phone calls and freed them up to do other things.”

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