

Information Builders enables agile information solutions with business intelligence (BI) and integration technologies. WebFOCUS – the most widely utilized business intelligence platform – connects to any enterprise system or application and enables simple and intuitive interaction with information.

Orange and Rockland Utilities

Snapshot

Organization

Orange and Rockland Utilities, a subsidiary of Consolidated Edison, Inc., a provider of electricity and natural gas to New York and parts of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The Challenge

Provide upper management with secure, real-time access to employee information; eliminate calls to HR; improve processes involved with tracking equipment tests for regulatory agencies.

The Strategy

Create a self-service Web application delivering on-demand employee statistics for authorized users and a Web-based calendar enabling employees to easily obtain their HR reports; automate the reporting of electric meter tests.

The Results

Executives have vital information easily available; efficiently obtained personnel statistics eliminate calls to HR; streamlined meter-testing tracking processes increase accuracy and reduce labor costs.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS, Consulting, Customer Education.



Powering Up With WebFOCUS

Web-Enabled Apps Boost Employee Productivity

For more than 100 years, Orange and Rockland Utilities has been supplying gas and electricity to customers throughout the northwestern New York City suburbs. Today, as a wholly owned subsidiary of Consolidated Edison, Inc., one of the nation's largest investor-owned energy companies, Orange and Rockland, a regulated utility, provides electricity and natural gas, serving a population of roughly 700,000 people in seven counties in New York, northern New Jersey, and northeastern Pennsylvania.

Like most utility companies, Orange and Rockland needs to manage vast amounts of data. Turning that data into information is an ongoing challenge, which is why Orange and Rockland decided to use Information Builders' WebFOCUS to create several new self-service reporting applications. Two of these WebFOCUS applications streamline HR processes for executives and employees by making information available on-demand via Web browsers, while a third eliminates cumbersome manual processes involved in reporting completed meter tests.

“Information that would sometimes take days to compile is ready now at the touch of a button. That means greater productivity for us across the organization.”

“Thanks to WebFOCUS, we now have vital HR information available at our fingertips to help us make important business decisions,” says Nicholas Illobre, director of Human Resources and Environmental Health and Safety at Orange and Rockland. “Information that would sometimes take days to compile is ready now at the touch of a button. That means greater productivity for us across the organization.”

Previously, HR information was obtained by running scheduled batch reports on mainframe computer systems. Furthermore, these reports were static, so if managers wanted additional information, IT pros would have to create additional reports. With the new WebFOCUS system, this same information is available 24/7 via the corporate intranet. Authorized managers can log on to the system with a standard Web browser and get the data they need with a few mouse clicks. Similarly, if employees need information about their vacation or sick-leave balances, they can access a secure online calendar.

Plugging In

Orange and Rockland has been a longtime user of Information Builders’ FOCUS for Mainframe. When the corporate planning committee requested an executive HR reporting system, IT professionals at the company decided that it was a perfect opportunity to Web-enable their reporting processes using the self-service capabilities of WebFOCUS.

“We had three IT personnel writing reports for us who had some training in FOCUS,” says Tom Swierczek, project manager in Systems Solutions and Consulting at Orange and Rockland. “They thought WebFOCUS looked like a perfect tool for creating flexible, parameter-driven reports that users could access with little or no training.”

WebFOCUS is a comprehensive and fully integrated enterprise business intelligence suite that satisfies the diverse needs of an unlimited number of users and user types. Its information delivery and management capabilities allow Orange and Rockland to schedule, distribute, share, and archive corporate information – making it instantly accessible when it’s needed most.

Throwing the Switch

These comprehensive reporting and information delivery capabilities came in handy almost immediately. The IT team at Orange and Rockland was under a deadline to create an executive HR system. “We had to deliver a fully functioning system in a very short period of time, and we were looking for a tool that would enable us to meet our deadline,” recalls Sue Kogan, director of Systems Solutions and Consulting at Orange and Rockland. “WebFOCUS had the capabilities we needed. If we had to create this system on the mainframe, it would have taken a lot more time. By using WebFOCUS, we were able to develop a reporting system very quickly.”

Orange and Rockland brought in consultants from Information Builders to ensure that this pilot project was completed on time and to help with security. Information Builders’ system engineers were very helpful in getting the software installed and configured. Because of the nature of HR data, security was an important consideration. Information Builders helped create a front-end security architecture that enforces the corporate security standards. The new system was ready in less than four months. “We completed the project on time and within budget,” Swierczek says. “Information Builders did an excellent job getting us started.”

“Already, we can tell that WebFOCUS will be a very useful tool over the long term. Our managers are more efficient, which causes a ripple effect of productivity throughout the organization.”

Ultimately, with the help of Information Builders’ Consulting, Orange and Rockland created three self-service WebFOCUS applications: an executive HR system, a company-wide employee calendar application, and a Scheduled Electric Meter Test Report application. All three applications allow users to access information on-demand with little or no training, using a simple Web browser.

Shedding Light on Employee Data

Today, the executive HR system gives upper managers a secure method to quickly access parameter-driven reports about the Orange and Rockland employees. Having current information about time and attendance, employee turnover, labor costs, and retirement eligibility helps executives make intelligent, informed decisions. They can choose from among several reports organized by topic, select various parameters such as date range, and then either view the report in PDF format or save the data into an Excel file for further manipulation.

Today, approximately 100 managers access the executive HR system. WebFOCUS works in conjunction with the corporate security standard to ensure that these users can only access information they are authorized to see. “Already, we can tell that WebFOCUS will be a very useful tool over the long term,” says Swierczek. “Our managers are more efficient, which causes a ripple effect of productivity throughout the organization.”

The company-wide employee calendar application simplifies activities for Orange and Rockland’s HR department by eliminating the need for employees to call in with questions about sick days, vacation time, and similar matters. Employees throughout the company can log into the system to quickly access relevant personal data. The calendar is color-coded to differentiate among categories such as jury duty, military service, sick leave, and vacation days, and is available to more than 1,000 employees. Each employee has access only to his or her own personal data.

Meanwhile, the Scheduled Electric Meter Test Report application eliminates burdensome manual processes involved in tracking meter tests. Previously, the metering department at Orange and Rockland used spreadsheets to track completed test counts for three states’ programs. “Each state has different requirements,” Swierczek explains. “It was a huge task to test the various meter types by manufacturer, create spreadsheets, and send them to a central location to be compiled. Now we do all that through a data warehouse. WebFOCUS generates reports and automatically combines information into spreadsheets.”

Key supervisors in each of three divisions now have a useful tool when using WebFOCUS to generate equipment test reports on demand. The reports are parameter-driven, so users can select specific information such as what was tested during a certain month, in a specific division or for the entire company. “The new system is very valuable for helping the department with its planning,” Swierczek continues.

Transfer of Power

WebFOCUS is installed on three Microsoft Windows NT servers devoted to report development, testing, and production. HR and metering data reside in mainframe DB2 tables. WebFOCUS accesses the data through native DB2 interfaces to create real-time reports. “All this takes place transparently to the users,” Swierczek says. “They don’t need to know where the data is coming from. They simply submit queries with their Web browsers and get the results they need.”

Find Out More

To find out how our solutions can help your company succeed, talk to an Information Builders representative today. Contact your local Information Builders office, visit us at **informationbuilders.com**, or in the U.S. and Canada, call **(800) 969-4636**.

Orange and Rockland relies on Information Builders' Education department to train its developers three or four times per year at Orange and Rockland's own facilities. "The classes are going very well," Swierczek says. "By holding them onsite we can maximize the number of developers we train."

Another WebFOCUS application in development generates electric outage reports. "We are developing over 100 reports for outage analysis," Swierczek continues. "WebFOCUS will provide graphs, charts, and text for upper management to help keep track of factors like tree and storm outages, the number of residents affected, and how quickly power is restored. It has all the tools we need to develop analytical reports and graphs."

In the near future, Orange and Rockland plans to use WebFOCUS to develop reports for crew monitoring, training, and environmental applications. "We have found WebFOCUS to be very valuable," Swierczek concludes. "It has enabled us to create secure reporting applications that place information directly into the hands of end users – when and where they need it."



Corporate Headquarters Two Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121-2898 (212) 736-4433 Fax (212) 967-6406 DN7504943.0505
informationbuilders.com askinfo@informationbuilders.com
Canadian Headquarters 150 York St., Suite 1000, Toronto, ON M5H 3S5 (416) 364-2760 Fax (416) 364-6552
For International Inquiries +1(212) 736-4433

Copyright © 2009 by Information Builders. All rights reserved. [81] All products and product names mentioned in this publication are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.

 Printed in the U.S.A.
on recycled paper