

ZOOTS

Solution Overview

Industry

Retail Consumer Services

Scenario

ZOOTS needed an innovative system to automate their high transaction invoicing and collections processes, and integrate seamlessly with Microsoft Great Plains eEnterprise.

Company Profile

ZOOTS is dry cleaning for busy people. ZOOTS offers quality service through door-to-door home pick-up and delivery as well as convenient store locations.

Benefits

By automating, customizing, and integrating key processes, managers spend exponentially less time key entering and reconciling data. They have a confidence level in the integrity of the data that they did not have previously, which allows them to concentrate on providing customers with high quality, convenient service.

Software Used

Microsoft Great Plains eEnterprise
 General Ledger
 Payables Management
 Receivables Management
 Bank Reconciliation
 FRx
 Sales Order Processing
 Integration Manager
 Lock Box Processing
 Fixed Assets
 Inventory Control
 Payroll Connect
 Customization Suite
 Credit Card Processing

Microsoft SQL Server

Demographic Information

Annual Revenue: \$50+ million USD
 Number of Employees: 1000+
 Number of Users: 13
 Number of Sites: 2

Transaction Volume: The company processes approximately 86,000 invoices and 6,800 credit cards each month; in addition, they transmit 29,000 statements and generate 2,500 personalized collections letter a month.

Two years ago, anticipating rapid growth in a high transaction business, ZOOTS recognized that they would need scalable, innovative technology customized to their business processes. It was clear that without extensive automation and systems integration, they would eventually drown in redundant data entries and paperwork. Controller Kyle Gendreau summed up the challenge when he stated: "There aren't enough temps in the entire Boston area to key in all of this data."

ZOOTS is dry cleaning for busy people. ZOOTS' operating philosophy is to surpass the quality and convenience expectations of today's time-challenged consumer. The Company was founded in 1998 by Tom Stemberg and Todd Krasnow, creators of the office superstore, Staples.

ZOOTS offers home pick-up and delivery services for the customer who is a heavy user of dry cleaning services, and who prefers the convenience of home pick-up and delivery services. For customers who prefer to do dry cleaning in a more traditional way, ZOOTS stores offer an untraditional level of convenience and service, including drive-thru and pick-up at most locations, 24-hour pick-up at most locations through secure personal lockers or an automated pick-up machine, and 24-hour Xpress service drop-off.

Once you become a ZOOTS customer, the company's Web site becomes a convenient way to communicate. Web-based **MY ZOOTS** offers a variety of services such as garment care tips, coupons and discounts, personal preferences, and order status, safeguarded by a user ID and password.

Wanted: Full Automation and Integration

Around town, ZOOTS is often referred to as "the company with the distinctive purple trucks." They wanted to maintain that customer-focused image by implementing business processes that were tailored to their customer's needs but could scale to meet their high transaction volume. The system would have to scale to their business. ZOOTS needed a mid-market solution that could be rapidly implemented and tailored to their needs.

ZOOTS embarked on five areas of innovation to customize, automate, and integrate invoicing and collections processes: 1) an integration process that integrates 86,000 invoices per month from the Spot dry cleaning system into eEnterprise Sales Order Processing; 2) monthly processing of 6,800 credit cards using an application that integrates with Microsoft Great Plains; 3) transmission of 29,000 customer statements per month to an external processing firm, Standard Register; 4) generation of 2,500 tailored collections letters; and, 5) an enhancement to the integration process that would handle their new Office Park business.

Step-by-Step Architecture

In response, DataSys and ZOOTS architected an integration pipeline to manage the import and reconciliation of invoices from the Spot dry cleaning system to eEnterprise Sales Order Processing. ZOOTS' information systems staff, accounting team, and DataSys analyzed every step of the integration process to make sure the process would scale, require minimal user intervention, and provide customers with 100% accurate information.

Using SQL Server and the Integration Manager, the integration process is managed by a custom application, the Rejection Manager. DataSys created this application to remove successfully imported invoices from the integration staging table, retain failed records in the staging table, and display an easy-to-read error message from the Integration Manager. The ZOOTS accounting staff uses the Rejection Manager's GUI interface, right from their computers, to correct the rejected transactions and finish the integration.

The Final Touches

In developing the integration pipeline, the accounting staff wanted final control over the data integrity before posting the invoices. DataSys created an automated reconciliation report that compared the data in the pipeline to the data that was integrated into eEnterprise.

Although the initial invoice volume was small, ZOOTS never wanted to print and review edit lists—they needed a hands-off, automated process from the start. With 86,000 invoices per month and growing, the integration process requires the accounting staff's input to edit failed transactions and post batches only.

Customer-Focused Technology

ZOOTS offers its customers flexibility in paying their balance. Customers can opt to have their credit card charged each month, or receive a statement for payment by check. They currently process credit card payment for 6,800 balance forward customers each month.

DataSys created a process that extracts the customer's current receivables balance (provided the customer's credit card has not expired), and utilizes the Integration Manager to import the balance into Cash Receipts. The credit card module then processes credit card payment.

For customers who opted to receive a statement, DataSys architected a completely automated process to manage the processing of 29,000 statements per month. The resulting Statement Export Utility extracts the customer information, billing detail, and reconciliation information from the receivables tables. The Utility consolidates the information into the predefined file format, supplied by Standard Register, and creates a zip archive that contains all of the data for the statement run. Standard Register manages the printing and mailing of the statement to the customer.

The Impact of Innovative Technology

By automating the invoicing, credit card processing, statement processing, and collections process, ZOOTS can now more effectively focus on customer service rather than entering and reconciling data. They've been able to expand into 10 states, 46 stores, 7 delivery hubs, 4 dry cleaning labs, and hundreds of communities without significantly increasing their accounting overhead.