Case Study

Rayonier Matariki upgrades SAP and replaces database with Sybase

When the time came for Rayonier Matariki to upgrade its SAP system to the latest release, the forestry company turned the project from a technical exercise into one that added business value.

Rayonier Matariki manages more than 130,000 hectares of plantation forests across New Zealand and has long run its accounts and financials on SAP. With the looming end of life of their old R/3 4.6 system, the decision was made to upgrade to the new SAP version, ERP 6.

IT Manager Craig Cleary said that after discussing the project with their support provider, Soltius New Zealand, Rayonier saw the potential for cost savings and improvements to both their business processes and the user experience.

"We have had SAP for 10 years but hadn't done much with it in the past. This was a chance to leverage the solution and rather than just do a technical upgrade we decided to carry out functional improvements at the same time."

SAP's acquisition of Sybase provided an additional benefit – SAP offered a licensing package that would enable Rayonier to replace its old

SQL Server, which would also have required an upgrade, with a new Sybase ASE server.

"The licensing model SAP offered for Sybase was analysed and over five years the total cost of ownership was less than if we stayed with SQL Server," Craig said. "Soltius largely manages our SAP solution and after analysis, it was felt that migrating databases would not have any major risks that could not be managed. Sybase has proven to be a stable platform and we're happy with the decision."

Rayonier took advantage of the project to improve several business processes and implement functionality from the latest SAP Enhancement Packs, primarily relating to the user interface (UI).

With the upgraded system including a new UI, NetWeaver Business Client (NWBC), its implementation was included as part of the project. Soltius helped to create power lists, role-based navigation and cockpits that display worklists and related transactions individualised for the user's role, but Craig said the real gains came from the general improved look and feel of the system.

"We saw the new UI as an easy win," said Craig, "and the response has been positive. They like the interface and find the look and feel more intuitive.

"Usually with a new system we would expect a lot of support calls from users. But we haven't had that with NWBC, which makes our jobs easier."

Prior to the upgrade, SAP was not generally considered for Rayonier's other business needs. Craig said that with the upgrade project completed, "we will take a fresh look at what else SAP offers as business needs arise and because of the upgrade having been successful, we may pull transactions currently handled by custom systems into SAP in the future".

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