Boise Cascade

Boise Cascade's new Web-reporting system is up and running in 3 weeks thanks to m-Power.

The Basics

Boise Cascade manufacturers a variety of wood products, including plywood, lumber, particleboard, paper, newsprint, and pulp. While BC's trucking division was successful, a competing trucking firm had surpassed it in one area: Web-based reporting. As a result, company management decided it needed a Web-based reporting system that was at least as good, if not better than its competitors."

The Challenge

The word came down from Boise Cascade's management in May like a ton of pulp: Develop a sophisticated Web-based reporting system that interfaces with multiple host systems, and do it in three weeks. For the folks on BC's application development team, that deadline seemed next to impossible to meet. And they were short a developer.

The Solution

After a week of training, an mrc developer arrived at BC's Boise headquarters to assist with developing the actual reporting applications. After a full week of development work, the first Web-based reporting applications had been hammered out, and m-Power was serving up Java servlet-powered HTML pages that gave BC's users the real-time access to the load data they needed.
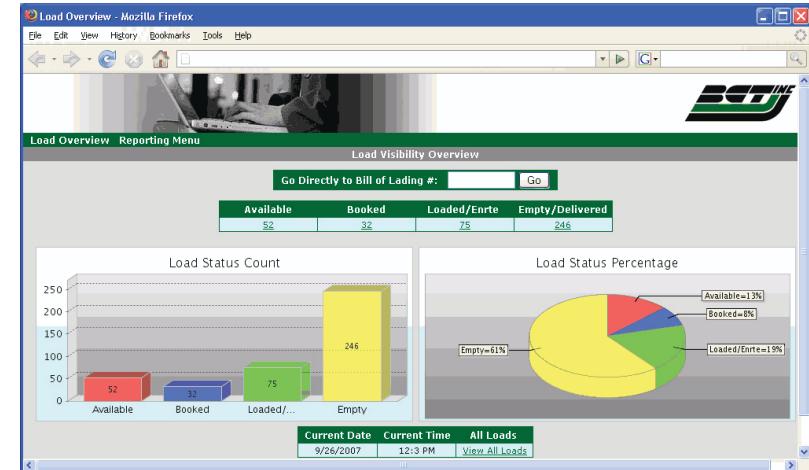
The Value

Boise met the three-week deadline, gaining applause from people in management. "They are very, very pleased. I've received numerous positive feedback from every manager involved, saying that it's just outstanding," says Stan Brewer, Boise's Application Development leader.

Brewer was also struck with m-Power's ease-of-use. "It's extremely intuitive," he says. "I did not have to learn Java to get this deployed. I'm an old RPG programmer, and all it requires is knowledge of your database. That was the big thing for me."

Example

Load Visibility Overview Application

This application tracks the loads on Boise Cascade's fleet of trucks, and does so by joining the data from SQL and DB2 systems in real-time. It then presents the results either graphically on a Web page, or textually in an Excel spreadsheet. In either case, users can drill down into the reports to get details on specific loads.

Boise Cascade's new application runs on a Windows box equipped with the open-source Tomcat Java application server (which mrc recommends running instead of WebSphere).

The application generates highly optimized SQL statements that are executed on the AS/400-based dispatching application located in Boise. Those SQL statements are also executed against a Windows-based SQL Server database handling pulp deliveries based in BC's DeRidder, Louisiana, pulp mill.

All told, these two systems track between 500 and 600 trucks delivering a variety of products across the continent every day.