

## Management Science Associates, Inc. remodels and expands with the help of IFS Applications™

**Management Science Associates, Inc. (MSA), headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA, is a leader in the development of analytical software and information-based systems. Founded in 1963, the company provides information-based solutions for more than 300 clients worldwide. MSA's Computer/Communications Management (C/CM) division sells, installs and maintains systems that automate business processes to clients in North America, Europe, Southeast Asia, and South America. With more than 700 employees and offices around the world, MSA provides clients with creative, innovative solutions based on marketing, sales, and financial data. The company is now geared for further growth and efficiency thanks to the flexibility and scalability of its business solution, IFS Applications.**



### **The problem**

One of MSA's legacy systems was unable to handle projects adequately. For instance, it could take a month to close, reports often took up to six weeks to complete, and it was unable to reconcile data. Another problem was the fact that the system was not scalable and therefore could not keep pace with the very rapid rate of growth within the enterprise. MSA was also in the process of remodeling itself, looking to extend its services in the enterprise resource planning (ERP) arena. The need for flexible, scalable business applications that would meet present and future requirements was urgent.

### **The solution**

MSA invited tenders from a number of suppliers of business applications, including SAP, JD Edwards, and IFS. After carefully scrutinizing the various offerings, MSA opted for IFS Applications.

"Mind you, we almost dismissed the IFS bid initially because the implementation time for the solution seemed unrealistically short," recalls Tom Whalen, Vice President of MSA. "But excellent references from other IFS users encouraged us to include them in our final short list," Mr. Whalen said.

The component architecture of IFS Applications was a very attractive feature of the offering, guaranteeing easy implementation and a scalability that would suit the needs of MSA. It was also easy to interface MSA products with IFS' systems.

Jim Doucet, Director, Information Systems at MSA, adds: "IFS was a very open, supportive, and flexible organization. We were also looking for a potential business partner, and IFS seemed ideal."

**Implementation**

Following typical IFS implementation methodology, the work was divided into phases. Phase 1, due to go live in July 2000, is on target. Much of the work involves change management issues. These include introducing new processes as well as best practice processes to clarify the business. One reason for the short period of implementation is the fact that IFS typically bases its methodology on the customer's learning the product. Thus rather than merely installing a system, IFS encourages and enables technology transfer to its customers.

"We were impressed by the honesty of IFS. There were no hidden items whatsoever, and they were always available to listen to, and resolve, whatever issues that arose," Mr. Whalen said.

**Benefits**

Although the system has not yet gone live, MSA can foresee a number of benefits. The scope of information will improve as will the integrative capacity. Much more processing will be done on-line as a result of using IFS Applications.

Another perceived benefit is the capacity to reduce the time between deliverables and invoicing. With the old system, this could be counted in days, if not weeks.

With IFS Applications, invoicing can be done

immediately on-line. Receivables will be easier, with collection being done on time. Ultimately, fewer staff will be required to follow up accounts payable, freeing personnel to focus on improving service to MSA's clients.

The new solution will also enable more analysis from financial and administrative staff. For example, time sheets will come in immediately, again on-line, and expenses can be invoiced sooner. For an enterprise like MSA with so many consultants, this will result in significant financial gain. MSA will also be able to leverage the benefits of IFS' service management solution via its C/CM division to provide maintenance and support for its clients' hardware systems and networks.

**Software**

IFS/Project Reporting™, IFS Financials™, IFS Distribution™, IFS Applications™ for Service Management, IFS Human Resources™

**Hardware**

Production Database Server (+ standby Database Server at a second site for Business Continuity).  
Compaq Alpha ES40 Dual Processor, 2 GB RAM, 308 GB RAID Storage. Running Oracle 8.0.5.2.1 on Tru64 Unix Ver 5.0a with Oracle Replication

Production Web Server  
(+ standby Web Server at second site for business continuity)  
Compaq Proliant 6500 Dual 550 Mhz Processors with 512 MB RAM 72 GB Shared RAID Storage with the Production Event/Print Server

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