EFCO Corporation
A Pella Company
CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

AT A GLANCE

INDUSTRY
Manufacturing

EMPLOYEES
1,750

HEADQUARTERS
Monett, Missouri

WEBSITE
www.efcocorp.com

HIT SOFTWARE SOLUTION
DBMoto™

"We mostly run Mirroring operations on DBMoto™, sourcing data from the applications that run on the AS/400 and feeding it to SQL Server. We have approximately 200 active mirroring operations that run continuously. Many of these we run at 10 times the design speed, i.e., we read the IBM i logs on a 3-second interval (instead of a typical 30-second interval). We have been doing this for years now and it runs fine!"

Larry Romireo
Application Systems Analyst
EFCO Corporation

Data Integration

OVERVIEW

EFCO, where windows are just the beginning.

EFCO Corporation, a Pella Company, is well known for its glass windows, sliding doors and curtain wall systems. The company also manufactures aluminum window units, entrances and storefronts for commercial architectural applications. EFCO's projects have included historical replication work, custom design work, as well as new construction. The company is headquartered and operates its manufacturing facilities in Monett, Missouri. It has service centers in Springfield, Missouri; Bolingbrook, Illinois; Verona, Virginia; and Henderson, Nevada. George Eberle and William Terry Fuldner founded the company as EFCO Product Company in 1951; it was incorporated as EFCO Corporation in 1953. In 2007, it became a subsidiary of Pella Corporation.

Scope:
- Data integration between operational and business systems
- Headquarters, Monett, MO
- 90 IT staff
- USA

KEY CHALLENGES

- EFCO Corporation needed the ability to access data quickly
- Much of the reporting required direct access to manufacturing systems, which affected the processing power of the systems
- Communicating directly with the production systems increased overhead, slowing down manufacturing processes, hampering inventory availability and reducing sales

WHY DBMOTO™ WAS SELECTED

- Price
- Functionality
- Ease of Installation
- Maintainability

IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Process several hundred thousand mirrored transactions daily
- Ability to easily replicate and transfer data between different databases and platforms

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

EFCO Corporation's headquarters in Monett, Missouri support an IT staff of nearly 90 people. EFCO's IT department is responsible for the company's major technology systems including software, hardware, network and telephone systems. Part of this responsibility includes managing data traffic between different systems that support EFCO's analytics, manufacturing/finance and product information. EFCO established various database silos — systems and applications that ran on one particular database — but discovered that there were instances where they needed to source data from a different system in order to answer queries, run reports and still be able to support various business applications involved in their fenestration manufacturing process. In addition, they needed to do this in real-time to support sales, customers and executive management.

WHY DBMOTO™ WAS SELECTED

In 2007, EFCO Corporation decided that they needed to seek a solution that would help them access data quickly yet relieve the overhead from directly communicating with their production systems. Much of the reporting required direct access to these manufacturing systems, and this affected the processing power of the systems. Adding overhead to the production systems meant that manufacturing processes slowed down, and hence hampered down inventory availability and reduced sales. With this overhead, both the production system and the reporting applications took a long time to process, making IT staff and business users frustrated and concerned with the lack of timely updates to data.

"We evaluated virtually every other data replication product on the market and DBMoto™ came up as the winner on price, functionality and usability."

Larry Romireo
Application Systems Analyst
EFCO Corporation

EFCO decided to establish a system that would move data (replicate it) from their AS/400 to a SQL Server database, and access the data from the remote system for reporting.

EFCO went on a hunt to find a data replication solution, searching for products that would support replications between their AS/400 and MS SQL Server. "We evaluated virtually every other data replication product on the market and DBMoto™ came up as the winner on price, functionality and usability," explained Larry Romireo. "As well, we repeated our evaluation again a year ago, comparing DBMoto against every other replication product on the market. Price, functionality, ease of installation and maintainability were compared.

DBMoto was the clear winner in the re-evaluation as well." EFCO appreciates DBMoto's ease of implementation and ongoing maintenance and are impressed by DBMoto's methods to handle replications from the AS/400 to SQL Server.

EFCO downloaded DBMoto over the Internet and installed it using their internal IT staff. "Without any prior experience with data replication, we had DBMoto installed and working in less than four hours by simply reading the installation documentation," said Romireo. "We have been able to do all but the most complex tasks by simply reading the documentation."

DBMoto was connected to the AS/400 and established continuous, real-time data replications to MS SQL Server, where reporting and BI could take place without impacting the production system. With DBMoto's Change Data Capture functionality, data could be updated in real-time 24 hours a day, at a very fast pace. In addition, with DBMoto's ability to read the transaction logs (journals) of the AS/400, there was little-to-no impact on the AS/400, while delivering updates to MS SQL Server as they happened.

EFCO Corporation uses DBMoto to replicate IBM DB2 for i data on an IBM i to Microsoft SQL Server databases running on Windows 2008. The data replication process supports the data requirements demanded from applications such as Cognos (Reporting and Analytics), KBM (ERP) and proprietary EFCO applications that support manufacturing and inventory.

RESULTS

DBMoto™ takes the processing load off EFCO's manufacturing system on the AS/400 and effectively distributes access to the database. Reports and applications have returned data much faster, reducing processing time from hours to minutes. User satisfaction has improved due to the large decrease in system response and processing time.

EFCO is now able to access real-time data for Business Intelligence, ERP and configuration applications, making them all more effective at a faster pace.

"DBMoto has largely minimized our data replication tasks to 'drag-and-drop' quick set-up so our programmers can now spend more time writing and maintaining applications and less time trying to get data transferred between different platforms," explained Romireo. "We were most pleased with the ease with which data replications could be set up and understood, as well as the product's cost and reliability," he added. "We would overwhelmingly recommend DBMoto to anyone."

"DBMoto was the first and is still the only data replication product in use at EFCO."

Larry Romireo
Application Systems Analyst
EFCO Corporation

EFCO appreciated the support from HiT Software® as well. According to Romireo, "Technical support has always been excellent. We use it as a comparison to other vendors' tech support services, e.g. 'I wish the support was as good as we get from DBMoto's Customer Support.'"

"Before using DBMoto we had no means to easily transfer and replicate data between our dissimilar computer platforms. DBMoto allows us to easily and cost-effectively replicate data between these platforms. DBMoto was the first and is still the only data replication product in use at EFCO."

EFCO Corporation says DBMoto excelled in all comparisons to other data integration software solutions for their needs, not just once — but again, after a second complete evaluation 4 years later!