

# Lab Logistics Group Protects IT Investment and Increases User Effectiveness with DBMoto

European Supplier Cooperation Applies DBMoto Data Replication to Improve Technical and Warehouse Responsiveness

### Background

Lab Logistics Group (LLG) brings together the combined strengths of more than 20 well-known, medium-sized laboratory supply companies across Europe. LLG acts as a collective resource, providing centralized services such as purchasing for more than 80 different suppliers. In addition, LLG provides warehousing, shipping, and IT services including online ordering and web-based applications, for partners and suppliers.

As a central resource for enterprise information, IT systems can be a source of significant ongoing cost to the enterprise as evolving technology calls for expansion and replacement of systems and software in increasingly shorter periods. Mid-size manufacturing companies can survive in today's tough competition by uniting to use common resources for sales and distribution.

This path has been successful for LLG and their affiliated partners over the years. For this cooperative of independent medium-sized laboratory product suppliers, IT continuity and investment protection are key factors that affect how the group achieves success using technology. By taking advantage of existing systems, the group members leverage their investment and expertise, enabling successful evolution of their common IT technologies. In addition, this approach meets the target of minimizing cost for each single partner.

Some years ago LLG realized that their IBM DB2/400 database was not able to serve partner application needs. Believing that expansion and adaptation to today's needs is easier to achieve on the PC server side, they began to develop extensions based on the easy-to-maintain Microsoft SQL Server database. SQL Server runs on Windows servers using programming languages, such as

Visual Basic, providing easy access for many developers. LLG realized that they could take advantage of existing inexpensive Windows technologies (i.e., ODBC) and readily available developer resources to build applications to access their DB2/400.

LLG group members and their employees appreciated these extensions because they made organizational processes more efficient. However, the number of requests for extensions grew to the point where the system had about 150 users. With additional requests piling up, their initial approach hit performance limits. Marcus Robichon, IT Manager of LLG, describes the situation, "Scheduled update requests issued via ODBC to the AS/400 became particularly time-critical and blocked the respective SQL Server tables. So business processes were repeatedly interrupted and this became intolerable to users."

Finally, all employees had to know exactly at which times certain processes were running in the background in order to avoid timeouts in their applications. Because of the blocking of the tables during updates, seamless processes were no longer possible.



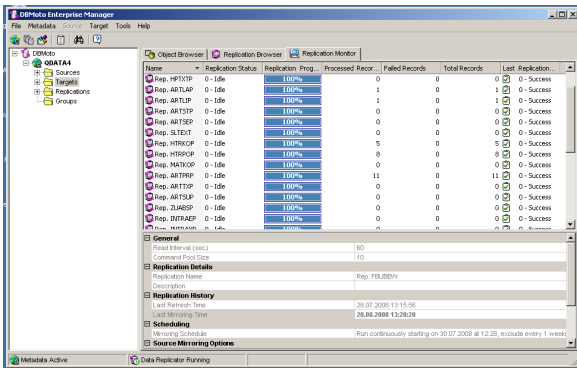
# HiT Software Case Study : Lab Logistics Group

## Case Problem and HiT Software Solution

The data transfer between DB2 and SQL Server had to be solved urgently in different ways. It was necessary to de-couple the two systems in order to avoid negative impact and, at the same time, link these systems so that the data on the AS/400 system was available on the SQL Server system in near real time. The solution was to establish a real-time replication between these two heterogeneous systems. Therefore LLG evaluated and finally bought DBMoto, a real-time data replication product from HiT Software, a leading data integration specialist.

## Real-time Replication

DBMoto's strength lies in its ability to perform real-time data exchange between heterogeneous database platforms. DBMoto grew over 7 years from a simple Windows replication tool to copy data between DB2/400 and Microsoft SQL Server, to its current state that supports nearly 20 different databases with enhanced features developed from requests by a fast growing number of customers and prospects.



LLG experienced HiT software's customer-centric approach firsthand. Although there was no similarly usable solution to be found on the market, it took almost a full year before LLG managers finally decided in favor of using DBMoto. "We had a very long evaluation phase," says Marcus Robichon. The reason lay in the amount of data, with tables measuring gigabytes, collected in the system through the company's comprehensive activities

and successful business operations. "Since we have very big tables on the AS/400, it was important for us to be able to synchronize only part of the content in real time. For instance, all statistical data is in one table, but only data from the current year is needed."

An important requirement was the capability to filter table contents: a single large table in DB2/400 becomes many small tables in SQL Server. The smaller tables are easier to maintain and to process. "We tested two consecutive versions of DBMoto," continues Marcus Robichon, "We were in close contact with HiT Software and told them our results and needs, which were then implemented in the new version. Filtering the results was possible from there on."

"Based on the positive cooperation and the remarkable interest of HiT Software to find a solution for our needs, we had a very good impression that we had found an engaged partner."

"With DBMoto, we are now in a position to implement new features in our business processes using our own .NET programming capabilities. For instance, the whole warehouse management and logistic processes were re-programmed. We can now react very quickly and efficiently to new challenges and adapt flexibly to the desires of our clients."

Consequently, during this process, significant shifts in technology were avoided. Users were gradually exposed to the new features in their business area. In addition, the DBMoto solution provided the continuity and stability that LLG required, adding to the decision to go with HiT Software's DBMoto.

Marcus Robichon states, "It was possible to establish new business processes without major training efforts. In addition, we have been able to avoid changing our ERP system for the last 5 years." He continues, "By using DBMoto, we were able to continue using our old AS/400 for two more years. And our processes run more smoothly as well, which certainly saves us a lot of time too."