

PharMerica

Micro Focus® Verastream® Host Integrator is key to PharMerica's new web-enabled cash-posting system.

Overview

PharMerica is a Kentucky-based pharmaceutical services company focused on hospital and long-term care settings. With some 5,000 employees and more than 120 pharmacies providing national reach, PharMerica offers services that include drug packaging and distribution technologies. The company's 2007 revenues were US\$1.8 billion.

When PharMerica needed a way to reduce the time it took for staff to post cash earnings to the general ledger system, Verastream Host Integrator proved to be the right solution.

Challenge

PharMerica's 30 cash-posting clerks were grappling with a home-grown System i application built solely for drug-dispensing. Accounting functions were added on the back end at a later

time, leaving clerks with an unwieldy process for cash posting.

Here's how a typical transaction got posted: First, clerks had to find the correct pharmacy—from a field of 83 pharmacies and six different AS/400 boxes. Once at the right location, clerks had to get to the correct cash-posting screen, create a batch file, input the financial data (which took them to another screen), and enter the prescription. Then they would go to several other screens to verify that the amount they were posting actually equaled the amount to be applied. They would then return to the original screen, where they would finally post the cash entry before moving to the next line.

It would often require as many as 13 screens to gather the necessary data to post one line of cash. According to application development manager Dan Baylor, this system was inefficient and unacceptable. In the course of seeking a solution, Baylor got a suggestion from the PharMerica application development director, who had prior success in using Verastream for application integration.

Solution

Verastream Host Integrator encapsulates business data and logic via the screen interface to enable mainframe modernization. You get rapid results because you can use existing development skills, familiar IT tools, and proven



At a Glance

■ Industry

Healthcare

■ Location

United States

■ Challenge

The process of posting cash earnings to the general ledger system required too many steps and too much time.

■ Solution

Use Verastream Host Integrator to provide an integrated web interface for simplicity and ease of use.

■ Results

- + Reduced cash-posting staff from 30 to 22.
- + Reduced training time from two weeks to less than one day.
- + Reduced cash-posting process from 13 green screens to one web screen.
- + Reduced overtime to an end-of-month occurrence.

“One of the nice things about Verastream is its ease of use. Because different developers had to be involved in the project at various times, the quick Verastream learning curve became very important to us!”

DAN BAYLOR

Application Development Manager
PharMerica

“Thanks to Verastream, our new employees can now do cash posting the same day they start.”

PATRICK DAUGHERTY

Director of Cash Processing & Medicare Part D Billing
PharMerica

mainframe investments. Whether your environment is IBM System z (S/390), IBM System i (AS/400), UNIX, OpenVMS, or HP e3000, Verastream can give users a new look and feel, without disturbing mainframe-application code.

Baylor reported that this noninvasive capability was essential to any prospective solution on his list. After walking through a Verastream WebEx presentation, which demonstrated how companies can web- or service-enable their mainframe functionality in less than an hour, Baylor and Patrick Daugherty, PharMerica's director of cash processing & Medicare Part D billing, knew they were on the right track with Verastream.

Baylor's development team worked closely with the business unit and subject matter experts to arrive at the right solution. After the workflows of the AS/400 application were pinned down, Verastream allowed PharMerica developers to make modifications using their existing skills and their platforms of choice, without having to learn new technologies. They isolated the necessary information on the AS/400 applications and created a front end that would directly pull that data for posting.

“One of the nice things about Verastream is its ease of use,” Baylor said. “Because different developers had to be involved in the project at various times, the quick Verastream learning curve became very important to us.”

Now, data-entry clerks use a new web interface to accomplish their tasks in real time. A single easy-to-use screen provides an updated graphical environment and a streamlined workflow. The Verastream solution is working behind

the scenes to make it all happen; no changes to the original AS/400 application were made.

When they come to the web site, users log in with their AS/400 credentials, so each step taken is linked to the appropriate user. This enables managers like Baylor and Daugherty to comply with the company's auditing procedures, which dictate a one-to-one match with a valid user I.D. for each activity. Furthermore, the Verastream logging feature allows after-the-fact verification of the process for auditing purposes.

Results

One result of the streamlined system is that Baylor has reduced the staff of cash-posting workers from 30 to 22. The remaining eight employees are now freed up for other assignments within PharMerica. And before, data-entry clerks had to work overtime throughout the month to keep up with a labor-intensive process. Now overtime, if needed, can be limited to the end of the month, when additional payments are received.

Training time has also been reduced by the Verastream solution. Daugherty reported that training used to take up to two weeks for each new clerk. “Thanks to Verastream, our new employees can now do cash posting the same day they start,” he said.

About Micro Focus

The Micro Focus product portfolios enable enterprise customers to unlock the value in their business data and logic to improve their competitive advantage through innovation.

www.microfocus.com



Micro Focus

UK Headquarters

United Kingdom
+44 (0) 1635 565200

U.S. Headquarters

Seattle, Washington
206 217 7100
800 872 2829

Additional contact information and office locations:
www.attachmate.com