

Richardson International

Micro Focus® solutions support continued drive for innovation and business efficiency at Richardson.

Overview

A global leader in agriculture and food processing, Richardson International is Canada's largest privately owned agribusiness and has served its customers across the country for more than 150 years.

Challenge

Richardson is a highly decentralized organization with 2,500 employees over 90 different sites across Canada. Its seed selection, crop planning, and agronomic support throughout a growing season is regarded as highly innovative. Richardson actively participates in 'Canada's best managed companies' program and is very clear that technology is the key to business innovation.

“Being able to collaborate so effectively with our partners and customers has lowered our operational costs, improved efficiencies, and ultimately increased revenues.”

PAUL BEAUDRY

Assistant Vice-President,
Management Information Services
Richardson International

Paul Beaudry, Assistant Vice-President, Management Information Services for Richardson, explains the challenges: “Working in a decentralized environment, it was important to us to foster a self-service culture amongst our employees. This makes it easier to on-board new employees and as Richardson has an acquisition growth strategy, this is a regular occurrence. Web-based applications are the norm in Richardson, and we used Plone, an open source content management system, to deliver those applications as well as provide our Web-based document management system. Plone wasn't very flexible, required a lot of system administration, and wasn't integrated with GroupWise®, our email system. We were looking for a lightweight solution which would enable secure file sharing without placing a burden on our email system.”

Richardson used FTP to file share with its employees, partners, and customers, but it wasn't very user-friendly and needed an FTP server set-up. Beaudry was looking for a DropBox-like solution, but wanted an on-premise option subject to Richardson security rules.

Solution

After seeing a demo of Micro Focus Vibe, Beaudry realized it had the features he needed for the Richardson International intranet—and the right price point as well. He comments: “We



At a Glance

■ Industry

Other

■ Location

Canada

■ Challenge

An aging open-source content management system presented design and administration challenges and Richardson wanted to improve its collaboration with partners and customers.

■ Solution

Micro Focus Vibe was deployed and integrated with an existing GroupWise implementation to deliver secure file sharing across a highly decentralized organization.

■ Results

- + Reduced operational costs and improved efficiencies
- + Enhanced partner and customer collaboration
- + Easier on-boarding process
- + Improved user experience

“GroupWise is such a mature and stable solution for us that it requires almost no overhead or effort on our part. We have never found another solution which would be cheaper to maintain and offers more features.”

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didn't want to be in the intranet delivery business; we wanted a self-service, self-provisioning solution. It's what users expect today. They don't want to call IT anymore to create a folder where people can securely share files.”

Vibe was quickly implemented, and known as “Connect” it was soon in use across the organization; for time management; printer deployment; all Web-based applications including GroupWise access; and sharing information via global workspaces. Beaudry made the decision to open Vibe up to Richardson partners and customers, via the Connect portal: “Using Vibe instead of thousands of project-related emails flying back and forth makes life so much easier for us. Instead of sending electronic documents to 20 people, we simply place it in a Vibe folder with a “new file” alert. By extending Vibe to these new audiences, we're saving resources and increasing our collaboration.”

The integration with GroupWise makes file dissemination and access so much easier. Beaudry comments on why GroupWise is still the right email solution for Richardson, even after 20 years: “I guess the question is ‘why have we stayed with GroupWise?’. We have obviously kept up-to-date with new developments, but every time we look at a competitive email solution, we find that the costs to convert to a new system and then maintain this are far higher than what we currently spend on GroupWise. GroupWise is such a mature and stable solution for us that it requires almost no overhead or

effort on our part. We have never found another solution which would be cheaper to maintain and offers more features.”

Richardson is also a long-time user of ZENworks® Configuration Management. It is used to support the Windows patch and upgrade process, application deployments, and to centralize the management of all devices used within Richardson within a single, unified, and easy-to-use, Web-based console. Recently Beaudry has used the ZENworks Full Disk Encryption function. This allows Richardson to deploy encryption to devices, manage access, turn encryption on and off, and troubleshoot problems—all without having to leave the office.

Results

Using Micro Focus solutions helps Richardson keep IT costs down, as Beaudry says: “Micro Focus provides us with a platform so that we can focus on our business.”

He concludes: “Our Vibe and GroupWise implementation has proved a great asset in times when we needed to quickly on-board many new employees. Getting new people up and running with virtually no training has been invaluable to us and a testimony to our continued productivity. Being able to collaborate so effectively with our partners and customers has lowered our operational costs, improved efficiencies, and ultimately increased revenues. We love Micro Focus' customer-driven approach and look to the future with confidence.”



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