

CASE STUDY – ARTHURS FUEL INC.



The organization

The Arthurs family began working in the fuel business nearly 50 years ago. Today, the company serves over 3,000 customers scattered over a two-hour driving radius from its depot. The family-owned business provides fuel oil, propane and lubricants for residential, commercial and agricultural customers, as well as the sale, installation and service of HVAC systems and hot water heaters. The company also operates a fleet of nine deliver trucks and 11 technical service vehicles.

The challenge

Arthurs was managing a large, diverse customer base using a Unix-based application that utilized “green screen” technology, which employees deemed “not user-friendly.” Further key problems were:

- Delivery tickets were entered manually, which was time-consuming and susceptible to data entry errors
- Difficulty accessing critical data for reporting and analysis purposes
- Time-consuming to update individual customer files based on daily changes to the Rack price
- A complete view of inventory was not always available, hindering quality customer service

The solution

In 2008, Arthurs Fuel implemented Fuelsoft, a Windows-based application software designed specifically for fuel distributors that satisfied employee requirements for a “user-friendly system.” It integrates seamlessly with the company’s on-board truck computers, and has the capability to help manage its HVAC business. Additional features include:

- Electronic data feed from the company’s MID:COM truck board computers
- All delivery data automatically imported to the necessary client files and invoicing system with no risk of error
- Transaction data from the card lock is imported electronically
- Customer billing cycle and payment method are now unique to each customer

SECTOR

Fuel services

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“We now have multiple windows open at the same time, enabling us to perform a multitude of tasks simultaneously... What used to take all day now takes a couple of hours”

Bev Arkema, Controller for Arthurs

The solution continued

- Daily RACK price is entered into one location and automatically updates individual client files
- Periodic analysis confirms or suggests changes to the client price based on the cost of servicing the account, ensuring profitability across the customer base
- Delivery tickets for clients with outstanding balances are marked so the driver can collect payment at the time of delivery
- System provides various predefined reports and queries, as well as the ability for the end user to build his/her own
- Data can be exported easily to other applications, like Excel, for further analysis
- Inventory system provides accurate real-time perpetual inventory so company can make alternative suggestions to client while taking order, if it is short of a particular product

The results

- All necessary items or data are available in one user-friendly system
- The information remains in the system for users to consult and retract
- The invoicing process has been reduced from one day to only a couple of hours
- The reporting capability helps predict and plan for season demand, so Arthurs can order the right amount of propane to satisfy its agricultural customers who use driers in the fall

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