



“Data Manager enabled us to meet specific data retention rules while cost effectively reducing requirements for additional disk space.”

Mr. Brett Hart, Application Manager – Finance & Business Reporting,
Australian Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.

Business Profile

Company Name:
Australian Pharmaceutical Industries
Limited (API)

Headquarters:
Sydney, Australia

Industry:
Pharmacy, Health and Beauty

Business Environment:

- Established 1910
- Australia's largest pharmaceuticals distributor
- Integrated manufacturing and retail businesses
- Distribution through its 150+ Priceline Pharmacy stores and 4000+ independent pharmacies

Implementation Team:

- Vision Solutions
- Mid-Comp International
- API IT Team

Vision Solutions Product:
Vision Data Manager

Critical Issue

API's business runs 24 x7, servicing and processing orders, requests and enquiries from pharmacists, agents, suppliers and customers. However, this “Always On” business environment began to take a toll on its ability to manage and archive its data. Operational changes were needed to meet supply chain and legal obligations while still ensuring uninterrupted business continuity.

Results

- Disk usage reduced by 400 percent
- Automated archiving process enhanced IT team efficiency and productivity
- Significant cost savings and better management of disk space

Technologies

- Vision Data Manager
- IBM® Model i570 server
- Java™ based Movex® application

Business Challenge

Due to its huge transaction volumes, API had gained recognition as one of the largest Movex environments in the world. Demand from its internal users, customers, dealers, suppliers and retailers created a constant and ever increasing flow of new data into its database. Although generating nearly 30 Gigabytes of new data on a weekly basis was a very positive business development, it made the data archiving process unwieldy, time consuming and cumbersome.

Managing and archiving data was absolutely essential because government regulations demand that all financial records be kept for five years. Furthermore, the huge volume of transactions was beginning to slow down their turnaround rate, and impairing the IT department's ability to ensure minimal downtime. The cost of ever increasing investments in disk and tape back-up capacity became increasingly uneconomical. Indeed, API was placed between a rock and a hard place. To move forward, an effective solution was needed.



Solution

Prior to deploying Vision Data Manager, API relied on an in-house program to back up its data. But that program did not meet internal expectations and often left orphan records. The native Movex filing solution was not optimal either, because archive file format specifications were hard-coded and API's IT team struggled to append additional specific files needed for the archive set. Because it lacked an effective archiving process, routine computing processes were rapidly consuming storage despite diligent housekeeping activities.

The team tried to resolve the issue by deploying an SQL solution, but that too proved to be a cumbersome choice. The situation was further aggravated because the combined Movex and SQL archiving processes took enormous CPU cycles to perform and could only run with hours and hours of user downtime.

After a detailed four-day "proof of concept," API chose to deploy Vision Data Manager. Not only was it effective and efficient to run, it was flexible, modular, and easy to configure and install. Data Manager's modeling, testing and archiving capabilities allowed API to control and manage data growth and free up disk space, even as it preserved mission critical data. As a result, system response time improved and costly disk and processor upgrades rapidly diminished. Moreover, maintenance activities can now be performed while users remain online. And Data Manager also complements API's Data Mining and Reporting solution and helps them to comply with important regulatory requirements.

"The beauty of the proof of concept is that, upon completion, we had a number of active archives in place and running off the production database," said Mr. Brett Hart, API's Application Manager – Finance & Business Reporting.

Because Vision Data Manager is a true modular, plug-and-play archiving system, API saved hundreds of hours of program creation and testing. Minimal programming skills are required for Data Manager updates, changes and upgrades. The team brought down the day-to-day management of the database to "minimum effort," which translates to considerable cost savings.

The modularity of Data Manager allowed API and Vision to jointly create customized archive models for different parts of the Movex database. Data Manager's archiving ability was even extended to the development of on-line and off-line reference and media databases. The easy-to-maintain solution also gives users the option to easily access data at any point based on its value and importance.

Ultimately, Vision Data Manager made it possible for API to reduce the overall disk space consumed by its database by 400 per cent. "Without Data Manager, our database would now exceed 3.5 Terabytes," said Hart, adding that weekly archives have helped keep the day-to-day disk usage of the production library to around the 1Tb mark.

"Vision and Mid-Comp supplied a high level of support and we at API have benefited tremendously from it. We are now very self-sufficient with using Data Manager and can handle any operational issues."

Hart concluded, "Most importantly, we now control our data, rather than it controlling us. We're confident that with Data Manger, we can continue to grow our business without suffering because of the data volumes that our success generates."



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