

Blumenthal Print Works, Inc. Uses SEQUEL™ To Win The Information Game

Blumenthal Print Works, Inc. is a premier knitter, printer, and weaver of Jacquard damask (quality fabrics of wool, silk, or linen) that focuses on the home furnishings and decorative fabrics industries. Founded in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1924, the company is currently in its third generation of family management under the direction of Harry J. Blumenthal Jr. Today, Blumenthal Print Works, Inc. consists of three manufacturing divisions that produce products for Blumenthal Mills, one of the largest Jacquard weaving mills in the United States. It enjoys a wide range of production capabilities, as well as a state-of-the-art design studio that combines the latest CAD technology with the Old World craftsmanship of hand-painted artistry.

Their software setup includes SEQUEL, the business intelligence solution that delivers IBM® System i™ data through graphical queries, reports, and executive dashboards. Ted Baer, Executive Vice President of Information Technology, explains, “Most of our applications are written in-house, but we’ve been using SEQUEL for awhile now. Our basic philosophy is to give our users the tools they need and let them do their own retrieval and analysis. We currently have forty users (including our president) using SEQUEL to summarize transaction data and analyze the underlying detail. We even added SEQUEL shortcuts to the Integrated File System (IFS) to help distribute new SEQUEL views to users.”

David Bourgeois, Manager of Systems Development and Programming, describes the important role SEQUEL plays in analysis. “SEQUEL’s dynamic regroup and drill-down ability is great. When you build a summary view, you can automatically summarize using any of the underlying fields, such as division, product type, salesman, year, or month. You can also drill down to any of these fields. This makes SEQUEL an extremely flexible and powerful analysis tool. With all the possible combinations, it’s impossible for us to manually define all drill-down paths. SEQUEL lets our users summarize and drill down in ways we couldn’t anticipate.”

David explains how their president uses SEQUEL to track the pulse of the company. “Our president uses several SEQUEL views in executive dashboards to find out what’s really going on. He tracks key performance indicators using dashboards containing graphs and spreadsheets. From there, he can right-click on a line item and see a list of fields. Then, he just checks the field(s) he wants to summarize and clicks OK. For example, he can see revenue and margin by product, by customer type, by division, and so on. He can summarize any combination of fields, so he really loves the flexibility. And, he’s looking at real-time data.”

SEQUEL is also great for production, inventory, and manufacturing analysis, including spotting trends and patterns. As David explains, “SEQUEL lets us manipulate dates easily so it’s easy to do different aging reports and quickly see trends. Our folks at the mill facility use SEQUEL to analyze production defects. During final inspection, if our inspectors find a product defect, they enter a unique code to categorize the defect type and correct the problem before it becomes a customer issue.”

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David sums up the core power and beauty of SEQUEL, “Everyone wants information right away, but they can’t always tell you what they want until they see it. That’s the game that SEQUEL helps us play and win.”