SEQUEL
Meets Users Needs at
Civil Service Employees Insurance Group

K now your users—you may be familiar with this concept if you've ever tried to sell a product, design a Web site, or develop software. Only by thoroughly understanding customers and their specific needs can you create a successful solution. Civil Service Employees (CSE) Insurance Group, of San Francisco, California, has experienced this firsthand in providing service for both civil servants and the general public for over half a century. Founded in 1949, their initial vision was to provide affordable insurance to firefighters, police officers, postal workers, and other government employees, and the company name still reflects those customers. Today, CSE has extended its offerings to the general public, offering affordable auto, home, boat, liability, and commercial insurance in several western states.

During its day-to-day operations, CSE uses an IBM® System i™ to manage customer and claim information. To deliver this information, CSE uses SEQUEL,™ Help/Systems' business intelligence solution, to meet the needs of users with a wide range of technical knowledge. For example, power users want to create reports or applications and present them on an executive dashboard for managers or analysts, while non-technical users prefer to use predefined queries with run-time prompts that make it easy to select exactly the information they need. Gordon Ching, Manager of Reporting Systems, says, "Before we found SEQUEL, we used a reporting and business intelligence package for the System i from another company. Our users never accepted the package and the cost for maintenance was steep. We needed to

workload. "The package we used before SEQUEL required IT to develop all the production system queries because our non-technical users refused to use the software. Now, we've converted all those queries into SEQUEL views.

"SEQUEL has saved time in IT because users don't have to come to us for help as much as they used to. The software is easy to use and the graphical interface has been great to work with. Users can design and access what they want, quickly and easily."

find something more cost-effective and user friendly. When we tried SEQUEL, all our users, including executives, loved it. Only six months after implementing it, our non-technical users were using SEQUEL. We discovered that it had all of the function we needed, as well as being user-friendly.

"We implemented SEQUEL by offering a 3-day training class, attended by about 30 users. The attendees had various back-grounds: technical, non-technical, executive, and non-executive. Our underwriters are non-technical, and at the other end of the spectrum, our actuarial department consists of mathematicians and power users. SEQUEL offered a solution for everybody."

Technical users at CSE have found that they can get the detailed information they need. Gordon explains, "The actuarial people really love SEQUEL's dynamic regroup and drill functions. They can write a query in SEQUEL and automatically drill anywhere with no setup beforehand. They can summarize on any fields— ad hoc—with no prior setup. In this business, our actuaries have to deal with insurance examiners from many states. They have to be able to show the underlying detail that supports the report totals. I've heard them say that there's nothing they've needed to do that they couldn't do with SEQUEL. They think SEQUEL is great."

Non-technical users at CSE also are satisfied with SEQUEL. According to Gordon, SEQUEL has saved time by reducing IT's

One of the things CSE users needed was a clean and simple way to output to Excel. Says Gordon, "Before SEQUEL, our old process of getting data into Excel was very cumbersome and could become complicated. Most of the users who wanted to download System i data to Excel had to come to IT for help. With SEQUEL, it's very easy, just a click of a button. It has saved us a lot of time."

With such a broad customer base, CSE users handle a lot of data. According to Gordon, even with large files that contain 40 to 50 million records, SEQUEL's performance has been outstanding. "With our previous package, we had to first extract the data into a datamart because the tool just didn't have the performance. Since implementing SEQUEL, we can access data directly, in real time. SEQUEL lets us respond to ad hoc requests, usually within five to ten minutes. And, SEQUEL's report formatting lets us present it in a nice formatted output. Because SEQUEL has been so successful here, we plan to expand SEQUEL's use beyond the 30 initial users."

For Civil Service Employees Insurance Group, a company that has always focused on clients' needs as its number one priority, understanding the user is crucial to providing quality service. Implementing SEQUEL has given CSE the ability to apply this idea to its System i users. Whether an expert needs to drill down into a detailed view, or a novice needs to format data into a report, SEQUEL provides features to meet everyone's needs.