

SEQUEL^{Helps} Monrovia^{Keep} Customer Relationships Smooth

SEQUEL MANAGES HARRISDATA AND ENTERPRISEONE INFORMATION FOR GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT, or CRM, describes all aspects of the sales- and service-related interactions a company has with its customers. Over the years, technology has changed the way companies approach CRM because it has also changed consumer buying behavior. With each technological advance, more of the relationship is managed electronically. Therefore, modern companies like Monrovia Nursery are always looking for ways to personalize the experience as much as possible and handle any issues quickly and proactively.

Monrovia was established in 1926 and is headquartered in Azusa, California, just east of Los Angeles. Today it operates nurseries encompassing 4,724 acres in Oregon, California, Ohio, North Carolina, and Georgia. Monrovia produces more than 2,200 varieties of perennials, conifers, woody ornamentals, shrubs, trees, citrus, camellias, rhododendrons, vines, ferns, grasses, and topiaries. They use refrigerated trucks to deliver premium plants to more than 5,000 fine garden centers nationwide. Human hands touch every one of the 22 million plants produced each year, with the result that Monrovia plants not only survive—they thrive.

John Hauser, a Senior Data and Systems Analyst at Monrovia, describes their software and hardware setup. “Our ERP application is HarrisData and our financial application is J.D. Edwards EnterpriseOne, both of which reside on our IBM® System i™ machine. We’ve been using SEQUEL™ for several years now and SEQUEL is a great tool for getting data from the HarrisData and EnterpriseOne databases. SEQUEL seamlessly converts the different date formats used in these databases into i5/OS date data types.”

Monrovia also relies upon SEQUEL’s J.D. Edwards data conversion function, which automatically links field attribute information from J.D. Edwards data dictionary files to transaction files and creates new logical files. This allows end users to see field descriptions and use EnterpriseOne decimal offsets when querying data.

Great Reporting Options

SEQUEL’s reporting features are especially valuable to Monrovia, as John explains. “We do a lot of reporting with SEQUEL. Besides standard SEQUEL views, a lot of our users work with the SEQUEL tabling function, which summarizes information quickly within categories of data. Rather than hiding or un-hiding columns in a view, users simply choose the fields they want to see as a row or column, much like a table in Excel. This data can be saved in Excel or another PC file format, saved in a physical file on the System i, or e-mailed to any number of recipients using ESEND™.”

John illustrates how SEQUEL views allow users to specify run-time parameters or use variable values for dynamic data selection of items like date ranges



or customer numbers. “SEQUEL lets users choose dates from a calendar or select parameters from a drop-down list based on familiar descriptions, rather than just field names. We also use SEQUEL and ESEND to run e-mail broadcasts that distribute Excel files to a list of recipients. We use variable values based on object authority to ensure that each person receives the appropriate data.”

Dashboards And Views That Make Life Easy

John especially likes the SEQUEL executive dashboards and dynamic views. “We found that SEQUEL dashboards are pretty easy to set up. And, unlike other business intelligence products, SEQUEL’s dynamic views don’t require pre-defined drill paths. We just build a view and our users can drill anywhere they want—just by clicking a box next to a field from a list. It’s really straightforward to put dynamic views on dashboards—a really great feature.”



Simple Date Arithmetic To Spot Problems Quickly

John reveals how SEQUEL flags problem areas. “We combine SEQUEL’s dynamic views with date arithmetic to color-code results above or below a critical threshold. For example, we calculate the difference in days between a customer’s required shipment date, the date we invoiced them, and the date we actually shipped the plants. We find the average days difference and compare it to a maximum acceptable limit. If a location exceeds this average, we highlight the result in red. That way, we can drill down to a particular sales region and

see which customers are affected. That lets us be proactive about damage control while we fix a problem.

“As we move further into customer relationship management, we will be using dynamic views even more frequently. Date handling also comes in handy when we have to determine whether orders are coming in on Sundays. SEQUEL made it easy.”

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Powerful, Yet Easy To Use— No Consultants Needed

John sums up the reasons SEQUEL has been such a hit. “SEQUEL has the functionality that we need at a price that is extremely competitive. The beauty of SEQUEL is that it is so easy to use—it is very intuitive. If you’re somewhat familiar with SQL or Access, you can easily be running, slicing, and dicing your data in 20 minutes. And, if your file joins are good, performance is exceptional. There’s no need to hire consultants to develop custom reports or queries, and the SEQUEL technical support team is always willing and ready to help us out. In short, SEQUEL is a superb value.”