



Xicon at Work Enabling Mobile Working

“Xicon are into skills transfer rather than project ownership. We have a very good working relationship with them.”

Chris Berry, Computer Manager
AssiDoman

AssiDoman were looking to consolidate their position and grow if possible. One of the key factors in this has been the decision to empower the sales force with the tools to do their job more effectively and to improve customer service; the company wanted to introduce mobile computing for its sales force. Xicon helped deploy mobile sales force automation using Oracle web-enabled applications. The result was increased sales from more customer visits, reduced administration effort and the provision of a more detailed business analysis.



Packaging is often taken for granted by consumers but for those in the supply chain, good transit protection is essential. AssiDoman Packaging UK Limited helps package many successful products. To improve customer service, the company wanted to introduce mobile computing for its sales force.

AssiDoman Packaging UK Limited is part of the Swedish forest products and packaging group AssiDoman AB. The UK company has a number of corrugated packaging plants including Northampton, Stalybridge and Yate.

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Company Computer Manager Chris Berry has seen significant change over recent years. Business systems written in COBOL on DEC VAX platforms were enhanced by an Oracle data warehouse in 1996. A new sales analysis system was then developed for daily reporting. User access was provided through Oracle Discoverer across corporate Intranet. Putting together successful packaging contracts using inflexible VAX-based pricing software was increasingly time-consuming. For each new enquiry, Account Managers had come into the office to enter data. But winning more business meant responding quickly while giving them additional time on the road.

Introduction of Mobile Computing for the Sales Force

Berry says that the answer was mobile computing for the sales force including e-mail, enquiry forms and quotations. Back in the office, business managers wanted to learn from the results something the VAX system couldn't do. The objectives were increased flexibility, faster customer response and, most importantly, winning more business.



Senior management set a deadline of August 2000 for the new solution. The project was called ANEQA (AssiDoman New Enquiry to Quote Application) and involved equipping the sales force with Toshiba laptops. Oracle database technology was already proven for the data warehouse and was an AssiDoman Group standard too.

“It was easy to see that the solution was to use our Intranet across GSM to talk to the Oracle database”
said Berry

The logic was straightforward. Web-enabled database applications would reduce data traffic compared to spreadsheets while Oracle database technology kept development options open. Another deciding factor was Oracle partner Xicon who had previously provided skills transfer, consultancy, training and support.

“Xicon's services with our Oracle data warehouse had been excellent so we talked to them about the proposed new project. They were the obvious experts and the obvious choice”
said Berry

Business Profile

AssiDoman Packaging UK Limited employs 900 people and has a turnover of over 100 million. It produces plain and printed corrugated packaging. Customers include many household names.

Solution Summary

Mobile sales force automation using Oracle web-enabled applications

Key Benefits

- Increased sales from more customer visits
- Reduced administration effort
- Provides detailed Business analysis

Xicon: Enabling Mobile Working

Deploying the Oracle-based Solution

By Spring 2000, the deployment work for ANEQUA was underway. AssiDoman personnel wrote design and costing application using Oracle development tools and Microsoft Visual Basic. Xicon provided the expertise to web-enable the remote enquiry input and quotation delivery functions.

“Xicon provided backup to the design of our system and gave us the right training. They also put in the effort to complete the project on time.”

The new mobile system has proved highly effective for all concerned. GSM PCMCIA cards provide remote connectivity to the AssinDoman network wild Brand communications software ensures minimal call costs through spoofing and automatic resilience. ANEQA also relies on the Oracle Application Server with PL/SQL Cartridge for the HTML applications support. Account managers use an enquiry template with extensive validation, updated automatically from a new Oracle costing database. They can recall previously entered enquiries, check design or costing progress plus review and print quotations remotely.



While repeat business quotations are available in minutes, new packaging designs take a little longer. Once in the system, the enquiry is taken through the appropriate design, costing and quotation personnel using e-mail prompts. Visual basic applications interfaced to the Oracle database assist with design and costing using a spreadsheet-like approach. A powerful Oracle-based costing routine has also proved simpler to use and maintain. And despite the slow GSM connection, the browser-based solution gives excellent performance.

AssiDoman Enquiry to Quote

Customer details

CSN: AIRSAU Territory: 22 Market Segment: Consumer Durables

Sales Person: Alan Smith Customer Service: Anne Doe

GKN Agreement: One 4 One Transfer Hire Other OR White None

Origination Policy: Customer Cost AssiDoman Cost 50 : 50 Other

Packing Information: Standard Special

Customer Name: Air Saunders

Address: AnyPlace

Any Street

Town: Any Town

County: Any County

Telephone: 01925 240342

Grade Details

Only complete this form if you have no grade or material make-up details from the customer and you wish BDU to recommend a grade

Weight per Pk/Case: [] KGs Lbs

Layer per Pallet ; []

or

Max. Stacking height: []

Number of Pallets High: []

Pallet Size / Type: None

Yes No

ght Carton: []

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No

i% Very Dry: []

ort: []

ain: []

Design & Pricing

Quote Sample Machine trial Re-quote Original Spec No. [] Is this a mat/dims/style change

Reason for request: []

Sample completed by: 17-NOV-2003 Time: Am Pm Send to: [] Method of Transmission: Courier

Quote completed by: 17-NOV-2003 Time: Am Pm Send to: [] Method of Transmission: Email



Winning More Business in a Competitive Market

AssiDoman has achieved its goals. Statistics over the first few months show that the company is “processing more quotations and seeing more customers”. Administration has been reduced with less paperwork required from the Intranet-based system. Time taken to respond to simple enquiries has decreased by around 50 percent with more of them answered on time. Most significantly, the number of enquiries has increased sharply.

“We are now winning more business. Our increased sales figures are the tip-of-the-iceberg as more people learn how to use the system”

A key factor in the project's success has been the assistance provided by Xicon. Berry says that Xicon specialises in employing “exceptional people supporting a highly professional approach”.

Enthusiasm is also “rippling right through the company” while customers are particularly impressed with the fast responses. By storing enquiries and quotations in a database, managers are generating business intelligence too. The key has been the right technology.

“Oracle database technology has proved excellent for our new mobile sales enquiry to quotation system. By using Oracle Discoverer, we are also finding out why we are winning or losing certain types of business,” commented Berry

AssiDoman doesn't intend to leave it there. For example, it's investigating a new database application for storing packaging product definitions and manufacturing steps. By bringing disparate systems and information into a central Oracle database, the company is optimising costings and production efficiency. Where corrugated packaging is concerned, AssiDoman has the future well wrapped up.



About Xicon

Xicon was founded in 1991 as an IT solutions company. Since our first mobile project over 5 years ago we have been working with customers on mobile and 'flexi-working' programmes.

Xicon is also an accredited Oracle Collaboration Suite Implementation Partner and has been working with customers using the mobile capabilities of OCS.

For more information on Xicon's Mobile and Flexible working solutions, or to arrange a meeting with one of Xicon's Principal Consultants please contact Nancy Handley on 01925 248224 or email nancy.handley@xicon.com

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