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Case Study:

SSL International plc

SSL International is a focused consumer brand company employing around 4,500 people, with leading global brands **Durex** and **Scholl**. In 2009 the company's turnover exceeded £640 million, an increase of 20% over 2008. SSL also has a diverse portfolio of locally owned brands, Syndol and Meltus being UK examples. The company has manufacturing facilities in the UK, Thailand and China, a joint manufacturing venture in India and commercial offices in over 35 countries.

SSL sees the development of greater efficiency in business processes as a key business objective to support company growth, but a recent history of mergers and acquisitions had resulted in the company having a **large number of different and often obsolescent IT systems** throughout its business. This resulted in a lack of common business processes and data structures.

To overcome this problem, in 2006 SSL chose SAP as its preferred ERP system for the future and decided to standardise on Microsoft and SQL Server infrastructure. The programme's overall objective was to establish a platform for growth as SSL continue to grow, both organically and via an acquisitions strategy.

As part of this ambitious overall programme, SSL faced the problem of ensuring continuing access to the vast amounts of data held on their existing systems.

Solving the Legacy Data Problem

The applications concerned were mainly ERP systems from Infor – **BPCS** (originally SSA), **System21** (originally JBA) and **Data3** (originally KBM) - but also included ERP systems from other suppliers and bespoke systems written by SSL.

The legacy applications all ran on 11 IBM iSeries/AS400 platforms. The data held on these applications was still required by SSL's own users and **had to be preserved** for audit, tax and legal reasons.

Transferring all the data to the new system was rejected on the grounds of practicality and cost, so only orders up to 2 years old were migrated to SAP. The continuing use of the Infor systems and the AS400 platforms was also rejected, as this would involve the high cost of upgrading the AS400 platforms and software licenses plus keeping the relevant hardware and software skills on standby. The iseries/AS400 platform is regarded as obsolescent by SSL.

SSL looked for a solution to this problem for some time and were delighted to discover NSC and DataNovata.

Over 600Gb of data from all the legacy ERP systems was to be **consolidated onto a single SQL Server platform,** from which DataNovata would quickly generate all the necessary enquiry facilities to satisfy the users and statutory obligations.

Durex and Scholl are the two leading global brands of SSL International plc

DataNovata generates an enquiry system for an existing structured Relational Database, but all the legacy systems used non-relational file formats resulting in an initially unstructured database. SSL then used DataNovata's **Data Structuring Tool** to apply unique and foreign keys and user-friendly column headings, resulting in a **fully structured SQL Server database**.

The Project

After a successful Proof of Concept in May/June 2008, the real project started in September. **DataNovata is to be used worldwide** for all day-to-day enquiries, standardising access to the legacy data. The software was enhanced to include a **multi-language** capability for use in continental Europe.

More than 1500 database tables were required to hold the legacy data. While this did not present a technical problem for DataNovata, putting everything on one DataNovata model was viewed as impractical by SSL so separate views of the data were created such as Customer Care, Financial, Manufacturing etc.

One of the attractions of DataNovata was that **only one set of skills** would be required, rather than the several needed to run SSL's legacy systems.

After a one week training course in the use of DataNovata, the SSL IT staff created additional views themselves as and when required. DataNovata will be rolled out worldwide, starting with the SSL operation in Holland.

SSL has its **entire legacy data** consolidated onto **one low-cost SQL Server platform**, accessible by standard DataNovata applications in the user's **own local language**. DataNovata runs entirely under VMWare and **all necessary support software is free**, so the infrastructure costs attributable to DataNovata are negligible.

> DataNovata enabled us to decommission all our old legacy applications and provide easy access to all the data for years to come.
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> We wanted to move all our old data from our iseries/AS400 servers to Microsoft SQL Server, which is our strategic platform for the future, and enable it all to be accessed easily by our existing users. This would allow us to retire all the applications involved together with the obsolescent platform on which they run.
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> We searched the marketplace for a suitable tool to help us to achieve this. DataNovata from NSC appeared to be unique and seemed ideally suited to provide us with what we were looking for.
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> In the event DataNovata exceeded our expectations. NSC quickly understood what we were trying to achieve and we have found DataNovata to be robust and easy to use. The enquiry applications we have created are ideally suited to our requirements.
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> I would certainly recommend DataNovata to anyone wishing to decommission applications while retaining full access to the data.

Stewart Sawinski
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Further Information

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