

Contract Management

Microsoft Government engaged Information Strategies to automate its process for preparing and executing contracts for government customers. Information Strategies implemented the application using the .NET Platform and development tools. The resulting solution, deployed in March 2002, features an intuitive and attractive user interface, high-performance and scalability, and seamless integration with Windows 2000 security and directory services, Microsoft Office XP, and Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server

BACKGROUND

Government partners sell software through government contracts and are therefore subject to many unique requirements concerning how they engage in and manage the revenue from these contracts.

Prior to this solution, it is likely that contracts are created manually using Excel and Word. The Contract Administrators copy and paste sections between the various documents but there is no central repository where all contract information is stored. The process needs improvement in order to handle the increasing workload and to do a better job at managing contract status.

PROBLEM

The process of constructing proposals manually using spreadsheets and documents is cumbersome and prone to errors and inconsistencies. Furthermore, management has difficulty getting a high level view of which contracts were in the pipeline and at what stage they are at.

The Government proposal preparation process many times does not take advantage of the company's own workflow and collaboration products. Team members manually route proposals through multiple revisions and approvals with no version tracking or rollback capabilities.

Contract execution requires multiple manual steps. Licensing specialists create contract agreements and other standard documentation by cutting and pasting language from approved proposal agreements into non-version controlled document templates. This error-prone process could require 4 to 6 hours of work for each contract or contract amendment.

Business Profile

Microsoft Government
Contracts Management System

Solution at a Glance

Created a web-based application for Microsoft users to direct and monitor the contracts process for government software sales

Technologies involved

.NET Framework
ASP.NET
Visual Basic.NET
Microsoft Office XP (Office automation)
SQL Server 2000
SQL Server Analysis Server
Sharepoint Portal Server
XML/XSL
Crystal Reports 9 (.NET)

SOLUTION

The Government Contract Management System completely automates proposal development, contract execution, and sales tracking for the Microsoft Government Licensing Team.

Team members access the application over an intranet using Internet Explorer. Users select Contract type and the customer and the application populates the Contract with existing data and prompts the user for missing information. After users customize the Contract's product quantities, pricing, terms and payment schedule, the system creates the draft contract and stores it under version control in Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server. The system also allows users to manage a chronology of changes allowing users to view notes made either by themselves or other users throughout the life-cycle of the contract. The system creates the final contract document for customer review and approval.

Once the customer has approved the proposal, users execute the contract and the system automatically generates the contract documents from a set of version-controlled contract templates. The system also automates the tasks of proposing, approving, and executing an amendment to an existing contract.

The system uses SQL Server 2000 Analysis Services to track sales from contracts. Scheduled Maintenance Tasks update a SQL Server 2000 Data mart each night. Managers have immediate access to current sales information by customer, product, salesperson, or any desired level of aggregation.

Windows 2000 Integrated Security and Active Directory Services define and enforce role-based permissions for the application. The system tightly protects the archive of executed contract and data about realized sales, for example, while allowing a large number of authorized users to view the data.

