

Automated Job Scheduling Enables Fast Response Down Under

At Australia's CSBP, Cisco Tidal Enterprise Scheduler Gives Management Timely Access to Business-Critical Information

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CSBP LIMITED

- Chemicals for farming and mining
- Perth, Western Australia
- 780 employees
- 25 IT group employees

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Narrow and automate the processing window to allow IT to focus on strategic business challenges
- Centralize job scheduling and management
- Ensure that management reports are ready by the beginning of the business day

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Deploy Cisco Tidal Enterprise Scheduler to manage all ERP processes, SQL jobs, and database jobs that modify CRM data

BUSINESS RESULTS

- Enables efficient job scheduling across a number of enterprise applications
- Significantly reduces scheduling errors and job failures through robust alerting
- Supports timely delivery of accurate management reports
- Provides increased visibility into mission-critical end-of-day business processes
- Improves speed and efficiency of development efforts

Business Challenge

Headquartered in Perth, Western Australia, CSBP Limited has been a leader in fertilizer manufacturing since 1910. Today, with 780 full-time employees, the company sells a range of quality fertilizers to thousands of farmers throughout the state's agricultural regions. The company also manufactures chemicals for the mining industry in Australia, South America, and Africa.

CSBP produces chemicals used in the manufacture of liquid and granular fertilizers. For the mining industry, the company produces nitric acid, ammonia, ammonia nitrate used in explosives and sodium cyanide used in gold mining. Approximately two years ago, CSBP acquired Australian Vinyls, eastern Australia's primary manufacturer of polyvinyl chlorides.

Network Solution

In 2001, CSBP upgraded its ERP system from JDE World A6.2 to Oneworld Xe 7.333, which the company installed on an AS400 I-series platform. This core system's functionality included a third party enterprise job scheduler to manage the overnight batch processing jobs running within the application.

In 2008, CSBP upgraded its ERP system from JDE Oneworld Xe 7333 to ERP 8.12. To complicate matters, CSBP was migrating from the AS400 I-series platform to a Windows Intel environment and SQL Server at the same time. This required a replacement of the existing AS400-based job scheduling system with a Windows equivalent. Due to project time and resource constraints, a suitable Windows-based scheduler could not be implemented in time. IT reverted to the use of the integrated JDE Job scheduler as an interim solution, which required extensive workarounds and script processes that were external to the J.D. Edwards system. Exception scheduling around holidays and alerting were non-existent. In addition, end-of-day processing—including invoicing—would continue to fail on occasion.

Adopting a New Scheduling Solution

In February 2009, with upgrade and platform migration activities completed, IT began to look at enterprise scheduling solutions in earnest. The IT team, including application developers and operations staff, viewed demonstrations of two different solutions. Based on the ability of Enterprise Scheduler to meet specific criteria around pricing, invoicing, and dependency management, the company moved ahead with a rigorous proof-of-concept.

CSBP currently uses Enterprise Scheduler to manage all J.D. Edwards processes, SQL jobs, and database jobs that modify J.D. Edwards data. The scheduler manages the following five primary job streams:

- Re-pricing and invoicing for the chemicals business
- Re-pricing and invoicing for the fertilizer business
- Accounting processes that run after invoicing for the two businesses is complete
- An invoicing / finance stream that runs GL postings and updates
- End-of-day jobs involving maintenance and supply operations

With Enterprise Scheduler, CSBP has been able to assert control over complex scheduling dependencies and automate a variety of processes that formerly required time-consuming manual intervention. Prior to implementing Enterprise Scheduler, IT would estimate the time involved in each process, building in a cushion to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. This approach typically resulted in an approximately four-hour processing window for end-of-day jobs. Enterprise Scheduler has reduced that window to 90 minutes, or nearly 38 percent.

“Tidal Enterprise Scheduler has enabled us to be more proactive. This is particularly important in an environment where job dependencies are complex and so tied to the bottom line.”

Business Results

Enterprise Scheduler is delivering vital business results to CSBP. Using this powerful product, the IT organization is able to:

- Improve decision making by delivering accurate, timely management reports
- Increase efficiency by standardizing on one product to schedule jobs across applications
- Improve response times by reducing scheduling errors and job failures
- Provide enhanced visibility into mission-critical end-of-day business processes

Perhaps the most important result of deploying Enterprise Scheduler has been IT's ability to deliver timely and accurate management reports. The company puts a high value on detailed business information, and managers have been pleased to have reports waiting when they arrive at work.

Scheduling efficiency and visibility are closely tied to reporting timeliness and accuracy. Because IT staff members can now pinpoint when jobs will be finished and are alerted to processing problems well in advance, they have the added comfort level that they can deliver to expectations. Staff members have also commented favorably on the scheduler's single point of control and easy-to-use dashboard.

Finally, CSBP undertakes ongoing software development efforts. The ability to schedule and manage all jobs in its development environment has made it significantly simpler for application specialists to implement jobs into production.

The ability of Enterprise Scheduler to schedule diverse jobs, prevent processing errors through alerts, and provide visibility into all of its jobs has provided CSBP with significant business results that directly help improve the day-to-day functioning of the business itself.

Next Steps

CSBP is currently adding scheduling functionality to its development prototype environment. In addition, the company plans to integrate its Cognos business intelligence environment into daily operations.

For More Information

For more information about Cisco Tidal Enterprise Scheduler, go to www.cisco.com.



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