



CASE STUDY

Dentsply Streamlines Change Management Across Multiple Locations

Industry

Manufacturing

Challenge

The IT team required a more effective way to maintain numerous application sets and RPG libraries across multiple sites.

Results

- Automated software development throughout production
- Established and enforced a structured change management process
- Improved efficiency and code quality

Products

- Rocket® Aldon Lifecycle Manager (IBM i Edition)

Application

- Software Change Management

Company

Dentsply International Inc. is a leading designer, developer, manufacturer, and distributor of products for the dental market. Founded as Dentists' Supply Company in 1899 in New York City, Dentsply distributes products in more than 100 countries under some of the most well established brand names in the industry. The company has maintained a strong tradition of research, innovation, new product development, and clinical education, and is at the forefront of driving innovation in dentistry.

Challenge

Keeping up with Dentsply's volume of application development and change control needs in a timely manner was becoming increasingly difficult. The lack of a structured code process, combined with an inability to quickly identify which programmers were working on which tasks, was compromising efficiency. Poor visibility into the process also increased the potential for generating multiple versions of source code, further straining the company's valuable programming resources.

The Dentsply IT shop consisted of 10 programmers with three IBM i systems spread across different geographic locations. Its "BPCS/Asset/RPG" shop supported 13 midrange BPCS environments, which translated to 13 application sets and RPG libraries. The IT team was required to develop custom software for each of the company's sites.

In addition to synchronizing development and deployment across its dispersed systems, it was vital for the Dentsply IT team to have a more effective way to collaborate and manage development and change control processes. Programmers also needed to be able to continue to work with their preferred tools and methodologies.

Solution

After evaluating several change management products, Dentsply selected Rocket® Aldon Lifecycle Manager (IBM i Edition). According to Tim Keys, senior programmer



and analyst at Dentsply, the company chose Aldon Lifecycle Manager on the IBM i platform (LMI) because of the software's ability to distribute objects across multiple machines by interfacing to a Remote Software Facility (RSF) ensuring the installed package at each target was complete and the same.

Results

Members of Dentsply's IT organization quickly began relying on LMI to create a structured process for all code processes, from development to testing to production.

Once Dentsply implemented the solution, IT management and personnel could take advantage of newfound end-to-end visibility to collaborate, coordinate, and control development across Dentsply's environment of distributed systems, teams, and tools.

Stated Tim Keys, "The enhanced visibility into processes created new opportunities for the organization to increase productivity and maximize development resources. For example, programmers gained a view of any and all program objects using user-controlled filters. This made it simple for them to determine who was working on what code at any given time, to prevent costly duplication of efforts."

While LMI automated promotion and deployment workflows, Dentsply developers also evolved the Rocket solution to become their preferred change methodology standard of record. The software automated the movement of program components (source and objects) to the appropriate environments and libraries. This automation of source code during the development cycle helped the team eliminate the possibility of generating multiple versions of that code. In addition, IT members could accelerate development efforts by taking advantage of the software's archive function to quickly and easily recall previous versions from a menu to compare source code from a previous release if needed.

Overall, using LMI to create a structured development and change control process helped the IT organization achieve control of development, testing, and production across multiple locations; gain essential visibility into key processes; and utilize programming resources more efficiently. Ultimately, LMI's automated change management processes allowed the Dentsply team to focus on delivering the highest quality code.

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