

Oracle *at* Work

with Sargent & Lundy

"Oracle technology allows us to make administrative and internal systems management decisions that we couldn't have made otherwise ... it's really made a substantial difference."

—John Molinaro, Principal Manager, Sargent & Lundy



Sargent & Lundy knows that remaining competitive means never resting on its laurels. The international, private firm has provided consulting, engineering, and project design services to the power industry for 105 years. To keep its services high quality, on schedule, and within budget, Sargent & Lundy continuously evaluates its business processes and data systems, and relies on Oracle software for most of its information management and software development needs. From the Oracle7 database, to Oracle development tools, to Oracle financial applications, Oracle technology supports the company's key operations and helps it maintain an edge over the competition.

A Winning Application

Using Oracle's second-generation software design and development tools—Designer/2000 and Developer/2000—Sargent & Lundy completed an integrated project management, engineering, and

design automation system. Called PLADES2000, the system supports the entire life cycle of power plant development, from analysis and design to construction and build management. Using PLADES2000, Sargent & Lundy can complete projects sooner and at a lower cost, while maintaining its quality standards.

"With PLADES2000, we've been able to reduce the person hours required for power plant construction by 60 percent," explains Principal Manager John Molinaro. "That has a big impact on our competitive position—and is one of the key reasons why we were rated the number one contractor in 1995 for public projects worldwide by *Infrastructure Finance* magazine."

The Technology Foundation

In addition to using Oracle development tools, Sargent & Lundy uses Oracle software as the backbone for many of its daily operations. Molinaro explains that Oracle technology plays a role in the company's project management, costing, and tracking. It also helps Sargent & Lundy comply with Nuclear Regulatory Commission reporting requirements for power plant projects. And, Oracle7 is the back-end storage mechanism for the company's CAD systems. "Basically," Molinaro says, "we're using just about everything from Oracle in some capacity."

Business Profile

Sargent & Lundy is a private international engineering firm based in Chicago, Illinois. Founded in 1891, the company provides engineering design, construction management, equipment procurement, software development, and consulting services to the power industry. Sargent & Lundy employs approximately 1,700 people and operates 13 offices around the world.

Solution Snapshot

Primary use

Financial management, data warehousing, application development

Hardware

Unisys 6000 series servers, Intergraph servers, Sun SPARC servers, PCs, laptops

Oracle products

Oracle7™, Designer/2000™, Developer/2000™, Oracle General Ledger™, Oracle Payables™, Oracle Purchasing™, Oracle Inventory™

Benefits

- Supports the continual integration of new technologies and new business processes
- Speeds power plant construction
- Positions Sargent and Lundy more competitively for power station development projects
- Provides management with better information for more accurate "what-if" projections
- Reduces internal administrative costs

For its accounting needs, Sargent & Lundy uses Oracle Financials® applications, including Oracle General Ledger, Oracle Purchasing, Oracle Payables, and Oracle Inventory. Molinaro notes the improvements the applications provide: "We now close our books in five days instead of 25. And our accounts payable staff is 40 percent smaller than before."

Sargent & Lundy also deploys a 100-giga-byte data warehouse based on Oracle7. The warehouse contains all the administrative and accounting information necessary for the company to demonstrate compliance with government regulations. "Because we develop nuclear sites for public utilities, we maintain all pertinent information for audit purposes," Molinaro says. "The data warehouse makes that information online and available."

Exploring New Solutions

The portability of the Oracle products is a must in Sargent & Lundy's heterogeneous computing environment, which consists of Unisys 6000 series servers, Sun SPARC servers, Intergraph servers, and various PCs and laptops. At the same time, Oracle's openness allows the company to easily integrate non-Oracle software with its Oracle systems, and thereby explore new solutions. "We're always looking for

best-of-breed products," Molinaro says. "The open Oracle environment gives us the flexibility to do so."

As a way to improve support for remote sites, Sargent & Lundy is evaluating Oracle's software infrastructure for mobile computing—Oracle Mobile Agents™. Currently, the company employs a variety of access mechanisms and feeder applications that download into an Oracle7 database so that international teams can access corporate data.

Sargent & Lundy is also assessing environmental and human resources applications from Oracle. The company is considering Oracle Manufacturing applications for its procurement needs, such as acquiring building materials and tracking inventory supplies.

Also under evaluation are the data analysis capabilities of Oracle OLAP products. Molinaro estimates that by giving its staff faster access to data for better decision making, Sargent & Lundy can reduce administrative costs even further. The Oracle systems currently in place have already increased efficiency. "Our project managers get information in real time, so they know how much time is being spent on fixed-cost projects," Molinaro explains. As a result, management can make adjustments to maintain costs.

Finally, the company is exploring Oracle's Internet products—Oracle WebServer™ and Oracle PowerBrowser™. Sargent & Lundy is exploring the possibility of capturing information about users who browse the company's Web site. The plan is to store, in an Oracle7 database, what and when users browse, and where they're from. Such information could help the company build a more attractive Web site.

Decision for the Future

Sargent & Lundy's decision to purchase Oracle software five years ago was based on Oracle's product and market strengths. Molinaro lists the strengths that the company found persuasive: Oracle's performance and scalability, the number of third-party solutions available, and Oracle's market share indicating global acceptance. The decision to go with Oracle has turned out to be one that Sargent & Lundy can bank on. "Oracle technology allows us to make administrative and internal systems management decisions that we couldn't have made otherwise," Molinaro notes. "And on the engineering side, it's really made a substantial difference."

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