

CRODA

The background

Croda International Plc is one of the world's most successful and innovative speciality chemical companies. Supplying naturally-derived chemicals to a wide range of industries for over 80 years, Croda's products form an integral part of other people's products, helping to make them work, to make them successful and to make them become 'household names'. In 2006 Croda acquired Uniqema, an international company, specialising in oleochemicals. The combined group now has sales, technical and manufacturing facilities throughout Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Far East and annual sales of around £900 million.

The problem

With all acquisitions and mergers, a variety of integration issues need to be addressed. To minimise disruption and cope with the increased appetite for detailed information from the enlarged business; Croda were faced with a dilemma of how best to satisfy their ongoing reporting requirements - with minimal impact on the business operations. "The acquisition obviously led to a complete step change in operations, additional complexities arose from a reporting perspective as Uniqema did not use the same group reporting system as Croda," says Paul Newton, VP Finance at Croda Industrial Specialities. Newton continues, "Prior to the acquisition of Uniqema, having a distributed system meant that software was installed at each of our subsidiaries.

We had been thinking about a centralised solution to avoid the obvious pitfalls of multiple databases and copies of software. However, the substantial increase in size of the company due to the acquisition accelerated the need to explore this in more detail."

The requirements

Croda did consider rolling out their existing group reporting system to the Uniqema locations. However, this would have required physical site visits to install the software and application, in addition to conducting local training. They also explored the possibility of adopting a brand new product altogether. Yet, with the pressure to integrate the businesses as quickly and efficiently as possible, neither of these two options were viable. After examining various options, Croda decided to engage Rinedata. "We assisted Croda in the initial implementation of their group reporting system in 1996 and have continued to provide support on an ad-hoc basis.

However, with the acquisition of Uniqema, it was clear that a solution was needed that would be of low cost, involve minimal effort, would capitalise on existing technology within the group and be quick to implement," comments Kirit Patel, Partner at Rinedata.

The solution

After brainstorming various options it was decided to utilize Uniqema's existing Citrix platform, a technology that would allow Croda to deploy their existing system to all current and new users from a central location. This solution would prove to have several immediate and tangible benefits.

Firstly, it would avoid the investment in a new product at a time when other more material and pressing priorities took precedence. Secondly, as there would be a single instance of the software and application, pending updates could be incorporated quickly and made instantly available to the user community.

Finally, utilising the knowledge of the infrastructure and technology that already existed within the group; this solution would result in a relatively seamless and efficient transition. This therefore would allow the group to concentrate on the other areas of integration.

The benefits

"Rinedata's contribution to the success of this project was paramount; not only did they recommend the solution but they were our 'eyes and ears' to guide us through the whole process," says Newton. He continues, "Within a matter of days, we were able to install, deploy and train all our users. This would not have been possible, had we opted to start with a new product."

About Rinedata

Established in 1996, Rinedata is dedicated to providing full project life cycle services across Financial Consolidation, Budgeting, Forecasting and Business Intelligence initiatives. Since our inception we have solely focused on delivering improved performance management systems across a wide range of businesses and in a multitude of differing infrastructure landscapes. We can demonstrably help our clients unlock the value of their IT investment, no matter where they may be in their financial systems evolution.

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