



# Helping Rotary Corp. lift productivity while trimming desktop hassles.

Rotary Corporation, one of the world's leading suppliers of aftermarket outdoor power equipment parts and accessories, has a proud history of providing superior products and services. Started in 1956 by a salesman literally selling from the trunk of his car, the Glennville, GA-based company maintains its personalized focus while delivering parts to 20,000 customers in more than 54 countries.

When Rotary recently began looking at ways to upgrade its customer service representatives' outdated 5250 terminals, what mattered most was having software and hardware that would further its mission of providing quality service. Specifically, the company was seeking "point-and-click" access to a wealth of customer information, exceptional reliability and low maintenance.

According to Charles Morgan, Rotary's director of information technology, the company was already saddled with managing a variety of PCs and network installations. "We had to deal with the headaches of trying to keep everything configured and running in a PC network," he says. "We had to fix problems where hard drives had been corrupted or configuration changes had been made in the operating system or the network card was gone. We also had to clean up some PCs that were infected with viruses."

## Best of PCs and terminals

Based on his experiences with PC manageability, Morgan says, "We wanted something with the features of a PC but that we could manage like a dumb terminal. In the final analysis, the IBM Network Station™ seemed to be the best alternative."

A thin-client network computer, the IBM Network Station accesses current graphical applications as well as legacy applications with far less maintenance, support and ongoing cost than a PC. It can connect to virtually any IBM server over any network.

Rotary is using all three models of the Network Station (Series 100, Series 300 and Series 1000), with 20 Network Stations in customer service and an additional

## Application

Improve access to customer information, graphical client/server ERP, manufacturing and legacy applications

## Hardware

IBM AS/400, IBM RS/6000, IBM Network Station Series 100/300/1000

## Software

Lawson Enterprise/400, WinCenter Pro, Symix SyteLine, IBM Network Station Manager



*With IBM Network Stations, Rotary Corp. spends more time managing its inventory of parts instead of its computers.*

12 Network Stations in manufacturing, credit and personnel. All are managed using IBM's Network Station Manager software. Soon, the company also plans to install Network Stations in its shipping department.

The Network Stations used in customer service primarily access a graphical version of Lawson Enterprise/400 software, a client/server-based application that helps the company deliver better, faster service by providing users with a tremendous amount of readily accessible information. The graphical screens are delivered using WinCenter Pro, a program from Network Computing Devices, Inc. that enables multi-user access to Windows NT®.

"A customer asks a question about inventory and instead of closing a program and opening a new one ... Boom! You are there," says Mark Grinstead, Rotary sales administration manager. "There's a tremendous increase in productivity over our old green screen terminals."

The customer service staff also accesses legacy applications from the company's AS/400® using the Network Station's built-in 5250 terminal emulation. "With the Network Station, we get both a green screen and graphical user look on the same machine," says Morgan. "It's an excellent terminal emulator."

### **More reliability, easy administration**

Rotary has also started using Network Stations in conjunction with PCs to access an RS/6000®-based manufacturing ERP package called SyteLine® from Columbus, Ohio-based Symix Systems, Inc. When SyteLine is run on PCs, Morgan says, "It's a typical fat client application. But with the Network Station, we're loading the package on a Windows NT server and accessing that using WinCenter."

Morgan notes that the Network Station has proven to be extremely reliable. "We haven't had any problems at all," he says. "That's one reason I expect to be putting Network Station on the plant floor very soon.

"But the best thing about Network Station," Morgan says, "is that it is centrally managed and you deploy applications centrally, which reduces maintenance and administration costs." With the Network Station, all applications and data are stored on servers. So, instead of having to install software on individual PCs, you install it just once on the server.

Rotary also needs fewer technicians to manage Network Stations than it would with PCs. "We're saving at least one computer technician," Morgan says. Another plus: Rotary doesn't worry about losing vital data because someone forgot to backup information. File backups on the Network Station are automatically handled on the servers.

### **The plan: graphics, remote access and Java**

Over time, Rotary plans to arm its customer service representatives with even more capabilities, such as fax images and graphic displays of parts. "Our people will be able to key off a fax image to order entry where they can see a picture of a part. They can answer customer questions about what the part looks like," says Morgan.

The company is also considering placing remote Network Station access throughout its U.S. and foreign distribution centers. "Remote users would see the same screens as we do here," says Morgan. "They will be able to boot up at their own location as a cluster using a special card that makes the booting process quicker."

Overall, the IBM Network Station is helping Rotary continue to stake out its role as a market leader. According to Morgan: "We're laying the infrastructure for the future in terms of being able to exploit graphic capabilities of Network Stations and the ability to run Java and Java applets."

### **For more information**

To find out more about how network computing with the IBM Network Station and the IBM family of servers can help you make the most of your business

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