

Redwood Business Solutions

Making web-based report distribution a reality.

At A Glance

Industry

- Direct Sales and Marketing

Environment

- SAP R/3®, Sales and Distribution, Financial Accounting, Controlling, Materials Management, Warehouse Management
- IBM System i5
- In-house Windows Applications

Key Challenges

- Rising report distribution costs
- Delays in report delivery

The Solution

- Report2Web for SAP solutions
- Automatic bursting, bundling and electronic distribution of reports
- Automatic notification of new reports

Key Benefits

- Over 50 percent reduction in printing and distribution costs
- Improved access to critical revenue related information
- Improved customer service



Report2Web for SAP® solutions at Southwestern / Great American

Southwestern/Great American, Inc. (SWGA) needed to avoid increasing costs and delivery delays associated with printing, separating and distributing reports. By integrating Report2Web for SAP solutions into their application environment and Sales Portal they achieved significant cost reductions and improved service to their business users and customers.



Founded in Nashville, Tennessee in 1855, Southwestern/Great American, Inc. is the oldest direct selling company in the United States. Today the company is a diversified international organization with more than 1,000 employee-shareholders and business interests that include direct sales, customized publishing, educational fundraising, direct marketing and financial services. The company is diversified into a variety of entities including the original Southwestern Company which focuses on direct selling and Great American Opportunities, Inc. which focuses on school fundraising.

Enabling the Fundraising Sales Force in the US

In the late 1990's SWGA began using SAP R/3 ERP to track sales, control distribution and manage accounting operations. SWGA's Shared Corporate Support Services runs a variety of SAP R/3 modules, including Sales and Distribution,

Financials, Controlling, Materials Management, Warehouse Management and Basis on an IBM System i5 server.

Expanding operations, new worldwide markets and business growth demanded that SWGA take a close look at its IT requirements. Ed Solima, Director of IT at Southwestern/Great American comments, "We needed to improve our information

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**Ed Solima, Director of IT
Southwestern / Great American, Inc.**



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management capabilities to better support our evolving business objectives of sales force enablement, cost containment and increasing employee productivity”,

The immediate need was to cut costs and reduce the delays in distribution of reports for the 300-strong sales force of Great American Opportunities. About 100 different report types had to be distributed throughout the U.S. including standard and custom ABAP reports produced by SAP Sales and Distribution and Financials applications, customer invoices, Excel spreadsheets and other documents produced by in-house built applications.

At the time SWGA managed this business-critical information in an inefficient, costly and labor-intensive way. “Paper and printing costs were skyrocketing, and four people worked Saturdays to collate, sort and mail reports to the various staff that used them daily to serve customers, manage the business and generate revenue,” says Ed Solima. “Not only was preparation and distribution of reports costly, but much of the content was obsolete by the time they were received, which could take 3 or 4 days in some cases.”

Selecting and Implementing Report2Web for SAP solutions

After researching solutions for electronic report distribution from SAP and other vendors, SWGA chose Report2Web for SAP solutions from Redwood. “Report2Web for SAP solutions was selected for its ability to manage output and documents produced by all of SWGA’s SAP and Windows applications,” Ed Solima continues. “It was important that these documents be made immediately available to users through

an intuitive browser interface, without dedicated client software or end user training. Also, distribution should be automated so that employees would be notified of new reports by email.”

Ease of integration with existing and future environments was a further key reason to choose Report2Web for SAP solutions. It not only integrated well with their platforms, SAP and other applications, but also with the existing Microsoft Windows Active Directory security infrastructure and the SWGA Sales Portal. Integration with the Great American Sales Portal is so seamless that users are not aware that Report2Web for SAP solutions is working in the background to provide access to reports.

It took SWGA only 2 weeks to install and configure the solution, receiving training from a Redwood consultant who assisted in implementing only the first two reports. Three weeks later the system was fully functional and went live to the first group of users. Over a period of 3 months about 100 reports were made available to the user community, comprising of about 450 staff.

Exploiting the Functionality

Southwestern/Great American, Inc. has used Report2Web for SAP solutions to craft a high value solution for archiving and distributing documents. “The Report2Web Burster enables automatic distribution of information without having to modify existing SAP reports. It detects and scans defined reports and separates them into the appropriate pages for a given distribution list,” says Ed Solima. “What was previously a manual process of dividing paper reports into the pages intended for specific Divisions, Regions, Districts and individuals, is now completely automated so that each group or individual receives precisely the information that they need.”

Another key feature exploited is email notification. By “subscribing” to a particular report, users can be

automatically alerted by email whenever new versions are published. Subscribed reports can be sent by Report2Web as email attachments, as HTML links, or both, providing an extra layer of security for document access.

Because Report2Web enables SWGA to import the same management hierarchy that they use for their SAP system, reports are delivered to the people with the appropriate roles and responsibilities and are easy to find by those individuals. Especially appreciated is the ability to consolidate documents produced by different applications into logical folders, eliminating the time required to search and retrieve information from various sources.

The Benefits are Clear

“Report2Web for SAP solutions has been well received by the user community. Sales Management uses it daily to communicate with Account Representatives, react to customer issues, and pursue revenue opportunities,” says Ed Solima. “Account Representatives find that they can better support their customers because they can quickly access any current or archived invoices, enabling a wider perspective on a particular customer situation.”

In addition to the improved flow of information, SWGA has achieved the goal of saving significant operational costs. “These savings include paper costs, printer maintenance, Saturday labor and mailing. Printing and mailing costs alone were cut by 52 percent during the first year of operation, and this savings is expected to rise significantly in subsequent years,” Ed Solima concludes. “The Redwood product is so easy to use, we have incurred zero expense for end user training and the solution requires minimum IT staff to implement and maintain. Our sales people love it!”

