

Clemson University

deploys Infor EAM capabilities to integrate financial and asset management data and streamline operations

QUICK FACTS:

- > University Facilities maintains over 500 acres of property and 3.8 million square feet of building area.
- > Following the success of its MP5 implementation, Clemson decided to upgrade to Datastream 7i.
- > Datastream 7i and its support for electronic signatures helped reduce the number of paperbased requisitions.
- > Clemson reduced its inventory discrepancy by almost 80%.

Background

Founded in 1889, Clemson University is a public land-grant institution spread across 1,400 acres in Clemson, South Carolina. This world-class organization is made up of five distinct colleges with more than 17,000 student enrollments each year. In 2001, Clemson was named TIME Magazine's "Public College of the Year." And in 2003, U.S. News and World Report ranked Clemson 39th among the top national public universities.

Complementing the university's academic excellence is the meticulous maintenance of its campus and facilities—an achievement that is no small feat. The university supports its own facilities department—University Facilities—a group of 400 employees responsible for maintaining over 500 acres of property and 3.8 million square feet of building area. This department—comprised of custodians, landscapers, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, HVAC mechanics, painters, utilities service staff, storeroom staff, engineers, and administrators—operates and maintains the university's major utility systems, including electrical, lighting, steam distribution, and water systems.

Objective

In a public institution, departments such as University Facilities are under ever-increasing pressure to do more with less, as budgets are constantly being slashed or re-evaluated. This holds true for Clemson as well—cost containment and an increase in efficiency were key drivers in the department's decision to implement a new asset management solution. Also playing a role was the department's desire to bring itself more in line with the direction of the university. Clemson had set forth to become a more modernized organization, one that is completely paperless and technology-driven. A heavy emphasis was placed on "going wireless," with most of the university's core business functions moving to a wireless environment.

This mantra even made its way to the student body, with freshmen being required to report to school with laptops outfitted for the school's wireless network. As a result, University Facilities was also looking to create a more automated, technology-driven operation—one that would ultimately eliminate the need for cumbersome and inefficient paper-based processes and equip workers with wireless computing capabilities.

Challenges

Unfortunately, University Facilities was running on a DOSbased asset management system that was ill-equipped to provide the department with the level of support that it needed. Nor could it be easily configured to meet the specific requirements of the facilities staff. The system had been hard-coded in preparation for Y2K, which meant that any further changes would require significant and costly alternations to the code itself. That's when University Facilities decided to change to a Web-architected asset performance management solution.



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The team reviewed a number of software packages, imposing demanding requirements from both a feature and system Architecture perspective. The solution needed to be completely flexible and configurable, and it had to be readily deployable, so the department could get its users up and running as soon as possible.

Solution

Datastream was the only vendor that could provide the unique combination of asset performance management solutions and professional implementation services that could meet Clemson’s demanding requirements. According to system administrator Michelle Hutchings, “I had worked with Datastream at a previous company, and not only is its technology fantastic, the technical support is wonderful as well. That combination is exactly what we needed at Clemson.”

University Facilities initially implemented Datastream’s MP5 enterprise asset management application. Because of the team’s success with Datastream and MP5, Clemson ultimately decided to upgrade to Datastream’s flagship Asset Performance Management solution, Datastream 7i, as soon as it became available. “Upgrading to Datastream 7i was a great move for our organization,” said Hutchings. “Besides being incredibly simple from a technical-upgrade standpoint, it gave us a host of new capabilities that helped us transform our business processes in ways we never imagined.”

In fact, while the technical upgrade for Datastream 7i took Clemson only a matter of days, Hutchings and her organization opted to move more slowly and actually re-architect their business processes to take advantage of the application’s rich functionality. “Datastream helped us develop a set of business processes that was more in line with the end goals of our organization. They walked us through everything that each module could do, and then we incorporated the capabilities that were most applicable for our operation.”

University Facilities took full advantage of the ability of Datastream 7i to automate virtually every aspect of its asset management processes. Hutchings explained, “Datastream 7i fits very nicely with the direction the campus is going. It lets us achieve that ‘paperless’ environment.” For example, Datastream 7i supports electronic signatures, an important capability for the University Facilities team. “With Datastream 7i, we’ve been able to greatly reduce the number of paper-based requisitions. And that is important on many fronts – it cuts costs, eliminates the possibility that something could get lost in the shuffle, and allows us to perform our services more quickly.”

With Datastream 7i, the department could also take better advantage of its integration with the university’s PeopleSoft-based financial system – allowing both systems to share data. Datastream 7i supports PeopleSoft’s 27-digit-long account numbers, giving the department the ability to report on new types of information.

Then there is the rich set of key performance indicators (KPIs) of Datastream 7i. According to Hutchings, “Our supervisors now have the tools they need, right at their fingertips, to manage the university’s operations and facilities more efficiently and effectively. They can gain a full understanding of what is going on within the operation



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at any given moment.” And, that same intuitive front end that management enjoys also benefits the maintenance staff. “Datastream 7i saves our users an incredible amount of time—they no longer have to run complex queries to get the information they need. It’s all right there,” Hutchings said.

Results

University Facilities has already reaped significant cost savings using Datastream 7i. One example of this comes from its use of the Datastream 7i inventory module. The team uses this module to track its entire maintenance inventory—including automotive parts, janitorial supplies, and roofing materials, to name a few. According to Hutchings, “This is like having our very own Home Depot; it serves as the single source of materials for all of the work we do.” In total, the department annually maintains almost 4,000 items, which totals approximately \$420,000 in inventory. Before Datastream 7i, the department routinely ran into problems when it came to annual audits. For organizations like Clemson, a 5% inventory discrepancy is considered acceptable. Clemson was averaging discrepancies of over 10%. Once Datastream 7i was implemented, those numbers decreased dramatically. The discrepancy shrunk to just 2%, a difference of almost 80%. “It’s fantastic,” stated Hutchings. “The savings we’ve realized through inventory-management improvements alone have been incredible. And, we have gone through four audits in a row with absolutely no findings.”

The University Facilities team has also benefited from the Datastream 7i mobile solutions module, which enables workers to access the application through their Nextel handheld devices. This is a critical capability, since almost all members of the department spend their days roaming the university from job to job. Through the cellular network, technicians can make updates to the system or access information—whether they are recording maintenance updates, logging hours, or viewing historical data—in less than six seconds. This capability will be expanded in the coming year as the department utilizes Datastream 7i Web services capabilities to create new types of user interfaces. “We couldn’t be happier,” Hutchings said. “From the Web-based architecture, to the feature set, to the ease-of-use, the system has delivered on all of its promises.”



13560 Morris Rd.
Suite 4100
Alpharetta, GA 30004
1-800-260-2640



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