

Information Builders enables agile information solutions with business intelligence (BI) and integration technologies. WebFOCUS – the most widely utilized business intelligence platform – connects to any enterprise system or application and enables simple and intuitive interaction with information.

GlaxoSmithKline

Snapshot

Organization

GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare division of one of the world's leading pharmaceutical and healthcare companies.

The Challenge

Provide employees with sophisticated, yet easy-to-use reporting capabilities.

The Results

A user-friendly decision support system that delivers exactly the information users need, when they need it.

Information Builders Solution

FOCUS for UNIX.



The Perfect Prescription for Sophisticated Enterprise Reporting

WebFOCUS Enhances Information Access at GlaxoSmithKline

GlaxoSmithKline is one of the world's leading healthcare companies, encompassing pharmaceutical and consumer healthcare businesses. With corporate headquarters in the U.K., GlaxoSmithKline employs approximately 58,000 people in 160 countries. The U.S. branch of its Consumer Healthcare division, headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is spread across six locations around the country. Their top-selling products include Aquafresh toothpaste and the NicoDerm CQ smoking-cessation patch.

The same dedication to quality that has made GlaxoSmithKline a leader in the healthcare industry extends to the company's own internal operations – that includes information resources. In fact, GlaxoSmithKline's company-wide Information Resources operation has received several honors for excellence, including two consecutive years on Computerworld's "Network 25" list and recognition from PC Week.

Given these exacting standards, it was only natural that the company had the highest expectations when its Consumer Healthcare division migrated from mainframe

“Even though many of our programs have reporting functions, we don’t use them. We find FOCUS so much more versatile and powerful.”

FOCUS to the UNIX platform in 1995. “Our vice president at the time decided that the cross charges for continuing to use FOCUS on the mainframe were too high,” recalls Sarah Harrison, senior programmer analyst at GlaxoSmithKline. Consequently, a third-party reporting package that would run on the RS/6000 system and Sybase database was implemented.

An Unexpected Setback

GlaxoSmithKline converted all its users’ databases to the new package and attempted to make the reporting application work. However, users found it difficult to learn and use. To the company’s dismay – and after nearly three years of frustration and struggle – these problems proved intractable. Moreover, users started rebelling, and Harrison started hearing requests for the company to go back to FOCUS.

The Cure: A Return to the Tried and True

After considering all its options, GlaxoSmithKline felt a return to FOCUS was the best remedy – this time, though, FOCUS for UNIX. “It made a lot of sense, since so many users were already familiar with FOCUS in a mainframe environment,” says Harrison. This would minimize any learning curve. In fact, there was virtually none. “There are a few differences between mainframe FOCUS and FOCUS for UNIX that users had to get used to, but they were up to speed very quickly,” Harrison adds.

To GlaxoSmithKline’s delight, the conversion back to FOCUS in 1998 was extremely fast and easy. It was completed in just a few short months, despite the fact that Harrison and her team decided to convert every master file on the mainframe into a FOCUS database. “We had a mixture of a lot of different kinds of files: flat files, VSAM, DB21, and FOCUS databases,” explains Harrison. “Now, every file on the RS/6000 is a FOCUS database. And we were up and running in only three months.”

The FOCUS users at GlaxoSmithKline come in all varieties. “We have very experienced ones who use FOCUS constantly, and others who aren’t technically savvy but who really do well with it.” Harrison remarks. “We have minimal problems.” And all the users have one thing in common: They are very happy with FOCUS. “Today, we have well over a hundred users, and more wanting to be added all the time,” Harrison says. “We offer FOCUS training sessions every three months.”

The Outcome: Powerful, Robust Reporting

FOCUS for UNIX is used throughout GlaxoSmithKline as a valuable companion to all the applications used to run the organization: the order entry system in customer service, accounts receivable, sales force automation, distribution, manufacturing, and planning.

“Even though many of our programs have reporting functions,” Harrison explains, “we don’t use them. We find FOCUS so much more versatile and powerful.” For example, the Accounts Receivable package in use already has a report writer built in. But the staff finds it complicated and hard to use. “And it doesn’t offer anything beyond standard reports,” adds Harrison. “On the other hand, FOCUS lets us customize reports. It can get all the information out of the system in the way we need it. It fills in all the gaps. And it’s much easier to set up and use.

“SmartStream just didn’t meet our users’ needs,” Harrison relates. “You can’t do as much with it as you can with FOCUS. In the conversion process, we came across many things in FOCUS that we couldn’t convert to SmartStream because it’s nowhere near as flexible. Plus, SmartStream is very slow and our work is very data heavy. For example, we have a table that’s more than 2 million rows.”

Find Out More

To find out how our solutions can help your company succeed, talk to an Information Builders representative today. Contact your local Information Builders office, visit us at informationbuilders.com, or in the U.S. and Canada, call (800) 969-4636.

"FOCUS lets us customize reports. It can get all the information out of the system in the way we need it."

According to Harrison, a really big advantage of FOCUS for UNIX is the ability to schedule jobs. "Now, all of our FOCUS reports are scheduled for overnight and everything's done by 7 am," she says. "When users come in, their reports are on their desks. They don't have to wait for anyone to run their jobs. And they really like that!"

Fiscal Health and Competitive Success

Significantly, Harrison feels that FOCUS gives GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare a competitive advantage. "Our staff is always negotiating contracts and deals, and FOCUS ad hoc reporting is invaluable," Harrison explains. "If we have to research anything, it's so much faster and easier doing it with FOCUS."

The only drawback – a minor one, as Harrison sees it – of UNIX versus mainframe FOCUS is that upgrades and new features are available for the mainframe version first. "We have to wait a little while for ours," she says. But she feels that the wait is more than offset by the enormous cost savings. "By bringing FOCUS in-house on the RS/6000, we saved half a million dollars in computer cross charges."

"I don't know why management didn't look at FOCUS for UNIX initially," Harrison adds. "FOCUS is truly portable. There aren't many products out there that can do what we need to do. FOCUS is really it."

Added Benefit: Attentive Service

Another reason Harrison is so happy about their return to FOCUS is the high level of customer service from Information Builders. Harrison reports that she's experienced very few problems with FOCUS for UNIX. "And it's very easy to fix if we ever do," she says. "If I have to call with a problem, they take care of it in a flash."

"Information Builders has been a huge help," Harrison continues. "They came in and helped us get the environment set up. Then, once we got onto the system, they worked closely with us to make sure everything was running smoothly."

The Prognosis: Continued Success With FOCUS

It's never easy for a company to scrap a system it's invested heavily in, but GlaxoSmithKline feels the switch back to FOCUS was well worth it. "We haven't looked back since," says Harrison. "In fact, we just keep adding to it. When we started out, we had 52 FOCUS databases. Now we have 100. It's constantly growing and our users are constantly asking for new things."

And what does the future hold for Harrison and her team? "We'd like to be able to use some of our AS/400 data in FOCUS, so we'll probably be transferring files from our AS/400 systems to the RS/6000 in the near future," says Harrison. "I would love to go to WebFOCUS, since we have so many new users and the system is growing all the time. It would be great." Once they're ready to make that move, it should proceed as smoothly as the switch from mainframe FOCUS to FOCUS for UNIX. As Harrison learned firsthand, the common language used by Information Builders products makes porting FOCUS applications across various platforms and environments relatively fast and easy.

Worldwide Offices

North America

United States

- **Atlanta,*** GA (770) 395-9913
- **Baltimore,** MD Professional Services: (703) 247-5565
- **Boston,*** MA (781) 224-7660
- **Channels,** (800) 969-4636
- **Chicago,*** IL (630) 971-6700
- **Cincinnati,*** OH (513) 891-2338
- **Dallas,*** TX (972) 490-1300
- **Denver,*** CO (303) 770-4440
- **Detroit,*** MI (248) 641-8820
- **Federal Systems,*** DC (703) 276-9006
- **Hartford,** CT (860) 249-7229
- **Houston,*** TX (713) 952-4800
- **Los Angeles,*** CA (310) 615-0735
- **Minneapolis,*** MN (651) 602-9100
- **New Jersey*** Sales: (973) 593-0022
- **New York,*** NY Sales: (212) 736-7928
Professional Services: (212) 736-4433, ext. 4443
- **Orlando,*** FL (407) 804-8000
- **Philadelphia,*** PA Sales: (610) 940-0790
- **Phoenix,** AZ (480) 346-1095
- **Pittsburgh,** PA Sales: (412) 494-9699
- **St. Louis,*** MO (636) 519-1411
- **San Jose,*** CA (408) 453-7600
- **Seattle,** WA (206) 624-9055
- **Washington,*** DC Sales: (703) 276-9006
Professional Services: (703) 247-5565

Canada

Information Builders (Canada) Inc.

- **Montreal*** (514) 421-1555
- **Ottawa** (613) 233-7647
- **Toronto*** (416) 364-2760
- **Vancouver** (604) 688-2499

Mexico

Information Builders Mexico

- **Mexico City** 52-55-5062-0660

Australia

Information Builders Pty. Ltd.

- **Melbourne*** 61-3-9631-7900
- **Sydney*** 61-2-8223-0600

Toll-Free Number

- **Sales, ISV, VAR, and SI Partner Information**
(800) 969-4636

Europe

- **Belgium*** Information Builders Belgium
Brussels 32-2-7430240
- **France*** Information Builders France S.A.
Paris 33-14-507-6600
- **Germany** Information Builders (Deutschland)
Eschborn* 49-6196-77576-0
- **Netherlands*** Information Builders
(Netherlands) B.V.
Amsterdam 31-20-4563333
- **Portugal** Information Builders Portugal
Lisbon 351-217-217-400
- **Spain** Information Builders Iberica S.A.
Barcelona 34-93-344-32-70
Bilbao 34-94-452-50-15
Madrid* 34-91-710-22-75
- **Switzerland** Information Builders Switzerland AG
Dietlikon 41-44-839-49-49
- **United Kingdom*** Information Builders (UK) Ltd.
London 44-845-658-8484

Representatives

- **Austria** Raiffeisen Informatik Consulting GmbH
Vienna 43-12-1136-3870
- **Bahrain** InfoBuild Middle East
Dubai 973-17-536-222, ext. 312
- **Brazil** InfoBuild Brazil Ltda.
São Paulo 55-11-3285-1050
- **China**
InfoBuild China, Inc.
Shanghai 86-21-5080-5432
Beijing Xinrong Software Technology Co., Ltd.
Beijing 86-10-5873-2031
- **Denmark** InfoBuild AB
Kista, SE 46-735-23-34-97
- **Egypt** InfoBuild Middle East
Abu Dhabi 971-2-627-5911
Dubai 971-4-3914391
- **Ethiopia** MKTY IT Services Plc
Addis Ababa 251-11-5501933
- **Finland** InfoBuild Oy
Vantaa 358-207-580-840
- **Greece** Applied Science
Athens 30-210-699-8225
- **Guatemala** IDS de Centroamerica
Guatemala City 502-2412-4212
- **India*** InfoBuild India
Chennai 91-44-42177082
- **Israel** SRL Group Ltd.
Tel Aviv 972-3-7662030
- **Italy** NessPRO Italy S.p.A.
Genoa 39-010-64201-224
Milan 39-02-2515181
Turin 39-011-5513-211
- **Japan** K.K. Ashisuto
Osaka 81-6-6373-7113
Tokyo 81-3-5276-5863
- **Jordan** InfoBuild Middle East
Abu Dhabi 971-2-627-5911
Dubai 971-4-3914391
- **Korea**
UVANSYS
Seoul 82-2-832-0705
- **Kuwait** InfoBuild Middle East
Dubai 965-22322926
- **Lebanon** InfoBuild Middle East
Dubai 961-4-533162
- **Norway** InfoBuild Norway
Oslo 47-48-20-40-30
- **Oman** InfoBuild Middle East
Abu Dhabi 971-2-627-5911
Dubai 971-4-3914391
- **Poland/Central and Eastern Europe** InfoBuild SP.J.
Warsaw 48-22-657-00-14
- **Qatar** InfoBuild Middle East
Dubai 974-467-7311
- **Russian Federation** FOBOS Plus Co., Ltd.
Moscow 7-495-926-3358
- **Saudi Arabia** InfoBuild Middle East
Riyadh 996-1-2180280
- **Singapore**
Automatic Identification Technology Ltd.
Singapore 65-6286-2922
- **South Africa**
InfoBuild South Africa (Pty.) Ltd.
Gauteng 27-83-4600800
Fujitsu Services (Pty.) Ltd.
Johannesburg 27-11-2335911
- **Sweden** InfoBuild AB
Kista 46-735-23-34-97
- **Taiwan** Galaxy Software Services
Taipei 886-2-2586-7890
- **Thailand** Datapro Computer Systems Co. Ltd.
Bangkok 662-679-1927, ext. 200
- **Turkey** InfoBuild Middle East
Ankara 90-312-266-33-00
Istanbul 90-212-325-4114
- **United Arab Emirates** InfoBuild Middle East
Abu Dhabi 971-2-627-5911
Dubai 971-4-3914391
- **Venezuela** InfoServices Consulting
Caracas 58-212-763-1653

* Training facilities are located at these branches.



Corporate Headquarters

Two Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121-2898 (212) 736-4433 Fax (212) 967-6406 DN7502945.0504-JK
informationbuilders.com askinfo@informationbuilders.com

Canadian Headquarters

150 York St., Suite 1000, Toronto, ON M5H 3S5 (416) 364-2760 Fax (416) 364-6552

For International Inquiries

+1(212) 736-4433

Copyright © 2009 by Information Builders. All rights reserved. [87] All products and product names mentioned in this publication are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.



Printed in the U.S.A.
on recycled paper