

# CODA is the catalyst to refine systems at U.S. Oil

*State-of-the-art technology for the Finance team with new accounting, transaction handling and analysis solutions from CODA.*



*Transaction handling*

*Analysis tools*

*Smarter processes*

*Expert services*

## A SUCCESSFUL COMPANY...

U.S. Oil & Refining Co. is a member of the Transcor Astra Group. Based in Tacoma, Washington, U.S. Oil & Refining Co. supplies high quality asphalt and motor, aviation and marine fuels in the Puget Sound market. With refining capacity in excess of 39,000 barrels per day and storage capacity exceeding 2.8 million barrels, the company is well positioned to help meet the region's growing energy needs.

## ...WITH CHANGING NEEDS...

U.S. Oil's old systems and technology had become outdated and it was felt that a migration to Microsoft SQL Server 2005 and the introduction of more sophisticated, modern technology would meet the business' future requirements and help it to meet new reporting regimes under both US GAAP and European IFRS requirements.

## ...MOVING FORWARD WITH CODA!

Over the past year, U.S. Oil has revamped its entire systems infrastructure including migration to Microsoft SQL Server 2005, a new finance system from CODA, including a redesign of its chart of accounts, and full integration between systems using web-based interfaces.

## SEAMLESS IMPLEMENTATION

The finance team are confident they have a state-of-the-art infrastructure now. With CODA's Financials software at the heart of operations, integrated with web-based Automated Billing System (ABS) and Terminal Management System (TMS), business processes are automated extensively. "It was a nail-biting time, when all three systems went live at the same time in January," says Dennis W. Sennert, Financial Accounting Manager & Assistant Controller at U.S. Oil. "In the end, it was almost a non-event. In a management meeting shortly afterwards, the CFO said that the implementation had given new definition to the word seamless."

## FUTURE-PROOFING SYSTEMS

CODA's browser-based Financials application – integrated with its online assets and e-Pay software – enables sophisticated accounting and analysis, and it supports financial reporting for multiple companies within the Astra group. The e-Pay software is used to both collect monies and pay supplier invoices – improving cash flow, and customers and suppliers are updated automatically – making the process more efficient and less costly.

"We are confident that we now have the infrastructure in place to meet future company requirements," adds Mr. Sennert. "Despite the complexity of the project, CODA worked closely with us to meet the go-live deadline. CODA's browser-based software offers ease of implementation, along with intuitive web services functionality making integration with other business systems more straightforward. This helped us to successfully redesign the Billing and Terminal Management systems. The result is end-to-end connected IT systems servicing the business. Through these systems, the level of automation we have achieved, compared to what was in place before, is saving us a lot of time and money. And our users found it incredibly easy to pick up."

### SMARTER, "JOINED-UP" WORKING

"The difficult part of the project was that all the work, including design and testing of programs and interfaces, had to be done while the old systems continued operating and supporting the business," adds Mr. Sennert. "In such a competitive, volatile, and heavily taxed commodity-based market, the ABS has to perform many complicated calculations which are date, time, customer and location sensitive. The new systems ensure that the TMS requests an online credit check from the ABS, as trucks arrive to receive products. ABS in turn makes an inquiry against the CODA database to determine the customer's available credit and then issues or denies authority for the TMS to allow product loading. Once loading has completed, the TMS delivers product shipment information to ABS for processing of invoices, and posting the billing documents into the CODA database.

U.S. Oil has also implemented CODA's XL software for generating reports and securely uploading and extracting data from the CODA system. With full CODA security and validation, users only need to create one version of the reports for instant online distribution – safe in the knowledge that each recipient will only be able to see the data for which they already have permission in Financials. It also means that you can refresh an entire report pack with the latest figures from the books – at a single click.

### ENHANCED REPORTING AND ANALYSIS

CODA's Analytic Explorer application is also delivering significant benefits to U.S. Oil, by way of further enhancements to reporting capabilities, replacing some very detailed sales reports that took a lot of time and effort to produce. Previously, the company was reliant on Cognos software for one large application, which was an analytic cube relating to sales activity. Because of its disparate nature, it was difficult to maintain system knowledge within the finance group.

"It became clear to us that we would be able to accomplish the same things with Analytic Explorer," explains Mr. Sennert. "It is tied more closely with what we are doing elsewhere and it is updated automatically from our Financials software. This means that very little maintenance is required, and we can report on anything – well beyond purely sales metrics. We create reports

regularly: the sales cube is used twice a week but I expect that to increase to at least once a day soon. The sales teams have access to insightful information on a regular basis now, which makes their job easier. Overall, CODA has given us greater ability to analyze current data, without going through a lot of steps to get it, and reliance on unsecured spreadsheets has been reduced significantly across the business."

### MORE RELIABLE, SECURE AND EFFICIENT

Risk of producing accounting errors is greatly reduced in the business because information is always up to date, and secure XL reports generated from the Financials system are being used. In addition, an automated invoicing process has reduced time spent on checking data. A special system now stores PDF invoices which can be viewed via CODA. It means that users can run a quick search in the CODA system and then click on an invoice attachment and see a visual representation. Facts can be checked in a few seconds and paper storage has been eliminated – a far cry from when the finance team had to reprint invoices to see them.

"We have created an automated process for the generation of customer invoices, which allows them to be posted straight to CODA for review by the finance team. PDF invoices are automatically created and routed to customers, while at the same time updating the billing information in the CODA system. The finance team can now drill down to the detail of the transaction and PDF copy of the invoice, without having to refer back to a hard copy – which has never been possible in the past. We are a sophisticated business and we are confident CODA has helped us deliver a sophisticated solution to meet our requirements."

### ABOUT CODA

**CODA is the choice for finance professionals who need business software and services they can count on.**



We provide award-winning solutions that help organizations to streamline and automate their finance processes (from accounting and procurement to reporting and analysis) and to achieve better compliance and corporate governance. CODA applications work seamlessly with each other or independently and they integrate with other leading operational systems to maximize the return on your broader IT investment too. And our products are all underpinned by expert consultancy, training and support services, delivered by teams of experienced accountants, business analysts and technology specialists.

Founded in the UK in 1979, the CODA Group now employs around 600 and has offices around the world to deliver easy, local access to sales, service and support. Around 2600 medium and large organizations, across all sectors, use CODA solutions to control costs, drive performance and ensure compliance, while remaining agile and responsive.

CODA is part of Unit 4 Agresso NV. Headquartered in the Netherlands, the group provides business software solutions to its customers internationally.