Tight as a Drum®
Heineken Case Study

Tight as a Drum chosen for reliability & service

Planning is great, but sometimes things change quicker than expected. Or much slower. However, business must go on, even during “construction.” At Heineken, the dedication and flexibility of the software provider has contributed to continuation of the processes. Whatever the circumstances.

Hans Huttinga is the engineer for infrastructure at Heineken’s head office in Zoeterwoude. He is responsible for the technical management of the iSeries. In addition to this he offers solicited and unsolicited help and advice to the application managers. Huttinga recalls using the iSeries since 1991, then named AS400. At that time twelve colleagues worked on programming customized software. They provided the commercial organization and a part of the supply chain with software that fitted their specific needs.

Tight as a Drum was implemented in 1992. Huttinga remembers the resistance against this change. “Programmers had to follow procedures. That took some adjusting to. But the benefits of Tight as a Drum quickly became clear. Messing around wasn’t possible anymore. The system simply disallows you doing things that disturb your colleagues. The ultimate proof was provided a few years later at the Y2K-conversion and the currency change to the euro. These happened almost simultaneously. A gigantic job that, with the help of Tight as a Drum, ran smoothly.”

Colleague Richard Ober, application-manager, is also impressed by this solution. “The first word that comes to mind is ‘robust’”, he said. “The solution does what you expect. It shows malfunctions and mistakes before the items are in production and can lead to any consequences.”

New situations, same demands

Huttinga shares the opinion of Ober: Tight as a Drum “stands head and shoulders above others. The solution is extremely reliable and the service is excellent.” It isn’t surprising that this object management solution dating back from 2006 is still being used to our satisfaction. True, it being in a different situation than the first years.

"The number of programmers has been reduced and for years there have been plans to completely phase out the iSeries and replace them by Window-servers", explains Huttinga, a little melancholic. "That doesn’t take away the fact that essential applications, in the meantime, are still running on this aging iSeries, under an outdated OS400 system. However, these applications must keep running while we secure its functionality. Besides, regular maintenance is needed to adapt the software to new legal standards, or made useful for distribution to the outside world. A good example of this is the wish to synchronize sales and CRM systems with laptops and PDAs."

So the need for support by the Tight as a Drum is still present as IBM moves to a higher level of their operating system. Heineken didn’t want to invest in new hard or software for the iSeries, considering the phasing out path they were on.

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New situations, same demands, continued …

“Luckily the installation team turned out to be very cooperative and flexible again, Huttinga explained. “In one day they compiled all objects of 240 programs under the old version. And one day later, me and someone from the installation team realized the upgrade of a version 3.0 to a version 5.0. For this, two steps were needed to convert the data correctly. We worked on this from ten in the morning until four o’clock in the afternoon non-stop. But the job was done.”

Enjoying the new Tight as a Drum functionality

With the upgrade Huttinga and his colleagues not only retained the old functionality but they also had all the new Tight as a Drum options. To get used to this, they held a training day, after which Tight as a Drum could be used again in the daily routine.

Ober is very proud of the new version of Tight as a Drum. He sums up a few improvements: “There are new options concerning the area of monitoring, since transfer between the different iSeries-systems is now easier. The way in which relations between objects are handled has been expanded and improved. With one look at a chart you can now see the related objects of a fix. And the options that Tight as a Drum offers for object managing on other platforms also sounds very useful. In short, all functionality that makes object management even more reliable and easier.”

About Heineken

Heineken is one of the largest brewery groups in the world and is active in over 170 countries. Carrying brands such as Heineken and Amstel and in addition to that, approximately 120 local and regional brands. In the USA, Heineken is the second largest imported brand and in Europe the largest beer brand.

In addition to the premium beers, the Heineken group carries a few brands from the lower segment, special beers and light and alcohol-free beers. For some markets Heineken also produces soft drinks.

Questions ?

It would be a privilege to answer any questions about Tight as a Drum software. Here’s Unbeaten Path International’s contact information:

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