



Anthurium Exports – Software Development – Case Study

Anthurium Exports – Database-Driven Application for Centralized Process Management

Increased volume of operations made it difficult to synchronize data through a manual process for Anthurium Exports Pvt. Ltd. - a Mauritius based flower exporter. High rate of error and reduced performance due to redundant processes was a serious hindrance to business. Anthurium Exports was looking for a solution that would dynamically manage its data for growers, packers, and clients. In this effort, the company teamed with Icreon to develop the Anthurium Exports software. The application provides user-friendly modules for Growers and the Head Office, which in turn, is responsible for managing Grower and Client operations. Driven by a central database, these modules are used to generate reports, and invoices for clients along with the facility to process monthly sales data and pay growers, accordingly. Growers can store data for availability of flowers, while the Head Office can accept & allot client orders to growers. Apart from this, the system provides a whole range of security, backup, and data recovery features to ensure smooth management of business-critical data.

Customer Profile

Anthurium Exports is a leading exporter of flowers in Mauritius. Dealing with a vast variety of flowers, the company collaborates with Growers in Mauritius and supplies flowers to native and foreign clients.

Business Requirements

Anthurium Exports wanted to convert the entire data entry process from a manual ledger system to an automated and dynamic process. This implied that changes in data would be reflected throughout the system. The application was required to synchronize activities between the Head Office and the Growers through e-mails and alerts, which in turn would streamline processes right from receiving client orders to packaging and dispatching flowers.

Solution

Benefits

- Centralized data management
- Maximum process automation
- Automatic alerts and reminders to allow easier follow up of issues
- Multi level application security to eliminate data pilferage

Technologies Used

- Windows 2000 Advance Server with SMTP
- SQL SERVER 2000
- Visual Basic 6
- Crystal Reports
- Microsoft Transaction Server (MTS)
- Remote Access Server (RAS)

Requirements

Anthurium Exports Pvt. Ltd. was following a manual ledger based management system for keeping records of Growers who supplied flowers to the Anthurium Exports. The Anthurium Exports Head Office would receive client orders but information on the availability of flowers was confirmed through phone or fax from Growers. Due to lack of information at the right time, the Head Office was not able to allot orders judiciously to Growers. The entire process of



receiving and allotting client orders was extremely redundant. Operations such as, lists for Picking, Packing and Master Box Strapping were maintained manually. There was no synchronization of data between Head Office and Growers.

To streamline these activities, Anthurium Exports wanted to deploy an application that would manage data centrally, maintain records for growers, produce invoices for clients, and generate reports on availability of flowers, sales and other such information.

Icreon identified the key problem areas for Anthurium Exports and proposed the development of a database driven application that would synchronize data and assist in proactive management.

Managing Business-Critical Data to Enhance Business Continuity

The transactions at Anthurium Exports involve **Growers**, **Packers**, and the **Anthurium Exports Head Office**. A series of processes are followed to form a complete weekly cycle that starts every Thursday. The application has been designed to synchronize and manage these processes.

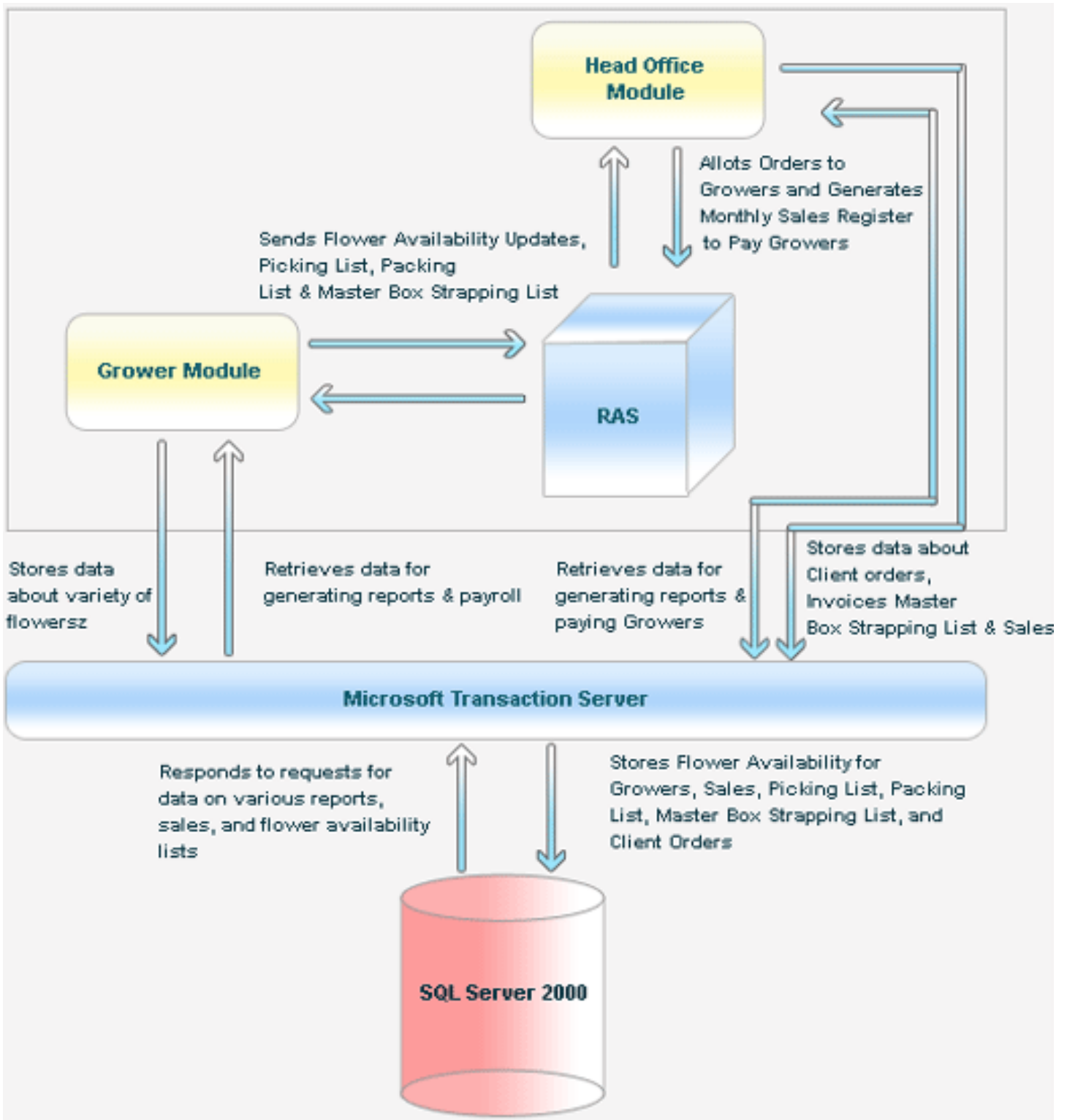
Suppliers of flowers known as **Growers** have one or more **Farms**. Each farm is divided into different **Sections** and each section is managed by **Gardeners**. A section can have a variety of flowers, which are segregated into various categories. The gardener counts the availability of each variety by size and the supervisor compiles a list of stems available. Once these lists are compiled, the grower sends a list of available varieties to the Head Office. The Head Office maintains the availability lists for various Growers. The Head Office updates this list every Thursday. From Thursday onwards, the Head Office starts taking orders from clients and allots these orders to a grower or group of growers depending on the availability of the ordered varieties. A packing list is prepared as per the client order. The client can define the size and color of the trays. Prices are charged according to these specifications. The Head Office then prepares and sends invoices to clients. At the end of the month, the growers need to be paid depending on the sales of each grower. Every month, the Head Office generates monthly sales register and sends the packing list to the growers with details of the varieties that were packed in different trays. A Master Box Strapping list defines the trays that make up a Container/Master Box. After packing, flowers are sent directly to the client or a driver from the Head Office collects the orders and takes it to the airport for shipping to clients. Packers at the farm get a bonus according to the number of trays they pack and this data is used while preparing the payroll data for packers.

The Anthurium Exports software has been designed to synchronize and manage all activities performed during this cycle. There are two basic modules for Anthurium Exports – **Grower** and **Head Office**.

The **Grower Module** is responsible for managing the list for available varieties of flowers in each section and paying packers according to the number of trays they pack. This module sends updated availability lists to the Head Office through the Remote Access Server (RAS). RAS is responsible for synchronizing activities between the Grower and the Head Office modules. Growers can generate various reports to view the summary of sales by variety, size, packing date, cutting date, and expedition date. They can also view revenue breakup by section and payment breakdown reports. The entire data remains in-sync with the operations performed at the Head Office.

The **Head Office Module** manages both Growers and Clients. It provides comprehensive and easy-to-use features to allow the Head Office administration to manage data dynamically. One of the major functions of this module is that it maintains the availability lists for different Growers. This facilitates the allotment of orders to Growers, depending on client specifications. Apart from this, the module provides features to generate invoices for clients, and maintain the inventory or availability list data, based on the new lists sent by the Growers and the orders that are shipped to the clients. To pay the Growers, the system provides the facility to generate the Monthly Sales Register. The Head Office Module monitors can monitor the availability status, by generating various reports. Growers and Head Office need to interact constantly to ensure that data retrieval and restoration takes minimum time.

To enable high performance, we suggested developing the application on a 3-tier architecture.





The Grower and Head Office modules have been developed using Visual Basic 6, and uses the RAS to synchronize operations. Microsoft Transaction Server (MTS) is the middle layer that manages the request/response speed between the backend - SQL Server 2000 database, and the front-end.

Summary

Shifting a manual process to an IT enabled process has streamlined the entire business lifecycle for Anthurium Exports Pvt. Ltd. Icreon worked on this project through a Mauritius based consultant, who was the liaison between Anthurium Exports and Icreon.

By eliminating the obvious glitches of a manual process, Icreon's Anthurium Exports solution has ensured complete automation of processes such as receiving orders from clients, authenticating product availability, and securing data through backup & recovery features. Automating the entire work process for Anthurium Exports, the application has enabled the organization to meet its objectives of synchronizing operations while maintaining data integrity and reliability over a distributed setup.

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