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How Windward Studios Saved a Government Agency 90%

The Company

Alcohol is state-regulated in 18 U.S. states. In these states, the agency in charge oversees everything having to do with alcoholic beverages.

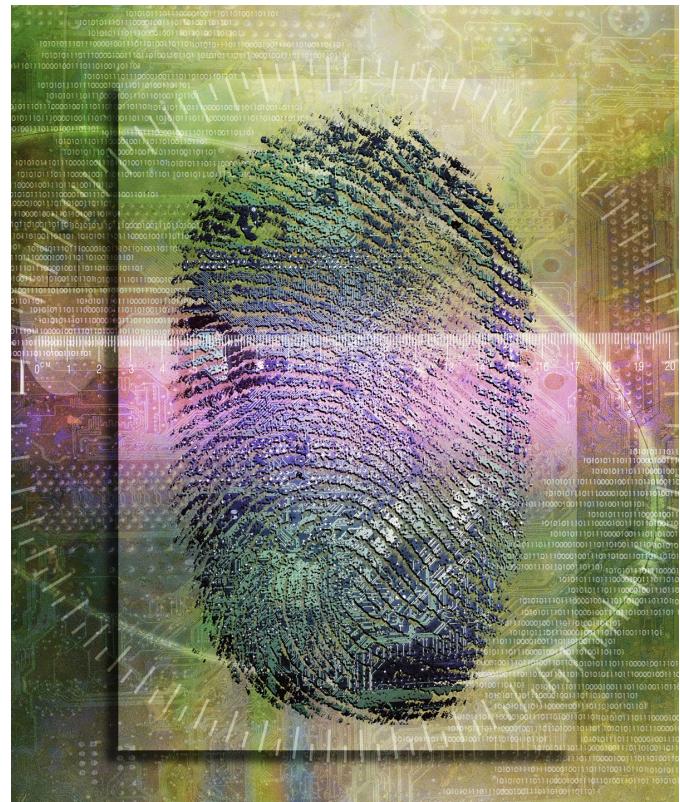
One particular agency, which we could not name because of governmental policy, has been around since 1934 and is one of the largest public agencies in its state, with more than 280 locations and 3,000 employees. The agency generates more than \$40 million in revenue and \$130 million in taxes on alcohol sold each year.

In addition to managing the distribution of alcoholic beverages, the agency acts as an administrative hearing agency and manages educational and prevention programs.

The Challenge

The information technology infrastructure required to support the agency is enormous. Numerous departments, including Education, Enforcement, Records Management, Human Resources, Retail Outlets, and Warehousing and Distribution, all have disparate reporting needs.

Not only is the content of each report unique, but the format in which the reports are generated varies by department. Some departments require RTF documents while others require PDF or HTML



documents, or even a combination of these three. In addition, many of the Human Resources reports require landscape formatting. Plus, the agency is accountable to the state's citizens, so it makes sales reports available to the public through its Web site.

The agency's IT group was faced with the challenge of quickly rolling out reports for multiple divisions.

More than 130 employees needed access to the reports from field offices and home offices, and the agency needed a solution that would not require software installation or technical support on the client side.

In addition, the agency wanted to deploy a tool quickly with minimal development time. Developers were spending significant amounts of time creating custom reports for the Human Resources department, and the organization was looking for a way to cut back on development time.

High-priced license fees were also an issue for the agency. Like many state agencies, this agency has a limited budget and a complicated approval process for big-ticket purchases.



The Solution

The IT project manager evaluated several report writing packages. During his evaluation process, he found Windward.

With Windward, users create report templates in Microsoft® Word, Excel or PowerPoint®, which makes it quicker and simpler than with other commercial packages. The user can create a wide variety of reports simply by choosing what data to include and when to run the report. Plus, the Windward solution includes a powerful reporting engine.

Implementing Windward was quick and straightforward. After the development team reviewed the documentation, team members integrated and tested Windward in less than 48 hours. The developers had only a few questions, and the Windward technical support center quickly addressed them.

The project manager estimates that it took less than a week to create the reports once the team identified all the reporting elements, and he noted Windward significantly reduced the time needed to design additional reports.

Another benefit of using Windward is that it allows the agency to avoid a multi-step report development process. Because business users use Microsoft Office to design reports, they don't rely on developers to edit or run future reports.

Reports can be displayed in a variety of outputs. The Human Resources department had been creating custom reports using HTML, but the reports needed to be in landscape format, a format HTML couldn't handle. The group tried to use Apache's Formatting Objects Processor to format PDF documents, but the process was too time-consuming to be effective. With Windward, the department created just the reports it needed, and

the developers didn't have to write any additional code.

The Achievements

The IT project manager estimates that his group now spends only about a tenth of the development time formerly spent on reporting. This has freed them to focus on other agency priorities. In addition, after the agency's development staff deployed Windward, end users could format, edit and generate subsequent reports, saving the agency both time and money.

The documents now have a more professional look and feel. Each department is able to get the data it needs in the proper format:

- The Records Management division uses Windward to generate alcohol licenses.
- Enforcement agents save PDF documents on their computers; they no longer have to request old reports from others.
- Retail outlets rely on HTML reports to view reports detailing the sale of alcohol.
- The Warehousing and Distribution department uses HTML reports to monitor traffic flow.
- The Training Department uses a PDF document generated from Windward as a training certificate that the manager can sign and give to an employee who has completed training. The data in the training certificate can't be manipulated, nor can the manager's

About Windward

For businesses in document-intensive industries, Windward Studios is the document generation and reporting software company that empowers business professionals to create beautiful, professional reports. Create custom reports with Microsoft Office as your design tool and a Java or .NET engine that connects to virtually any data source. Windward has been delighting customers since 2004.

signature be forged, which provides a high level of security.

- The Human Resources Department uses Windward to generate separation reports, turnover checklists, and timesheets. Prior to implementing Windward, these documents flowed over multiple pages and contained awkward or confusing page breaks. With Windward, the timesheets and reports are pre-formatted to have just the right look.

There were measurable cost savings, as well. The agency estimates that Windward is about a tenth of the initial cost of its competition.

In addition, because Windward can generate PDFs, the agency did not have to purchase proprietary Adobe® software for creating PDF files. Not only did the agency find Windward to be an excellent value, but its low price point helped the bureaucracy reduce the decision-making time for purchase approval.

Add Reporting and Document Generation to Your Software Application

[Download a free, 14-day trial of Windward's products or request a live demonstration.](#)