



Oracle Partner, Explorer (UK) Ltd, Implements Oracle Portal at Bridon International Ltd to Bring ERP Data Online

Customer Profile

Bridon International Ltd,
Doncaster, UK
www.bridon.com

The Bridon Group was established in 1924 as a wire rope manufacturer and today offers world-class capability in the design, manufacture, distribution and servicing of lifting and other equipment for industrial use. The company engineers and manufactures specialised wire and high-performance wire rope from raw materials. Bridon operates a global network of agents and distributors to ensure a fast and efficient localised response to its customers.

Industry:

Steel rope, wire and lifting services

Annual Revenue

Bridon Group: £150 million

Employees:

Bridon Group: 1,500

Oracle Products & Services

- Oracle9i Database (Standard Edition)
- Oracle9i Application Server (Standard Edition)
- Oracle Portal

Key Benefits

- Availability of online ordering for customers
- Real-time stock information (levels, price, availability) for customers and sales reps

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Andrew Snowdon, IT Manager, Bridon International Ltd, UK

Viewing ERP data on the web

Bridon International Ltd, a leading manufacturer and supplier of steel rope, was using an e-business system based on Active Server Pages written to a Microsoft Access database. The database could only support a handful of users at a time and was slow and unreliable.

Bridon's IT manager, Andrew Snowdon, explains: "We had no way of getting our existing Oracle ERP solution onto the web. Uploading and downloading data took time, so information such as stock availability was out of date before it reached the relevant people. We wanted to replace faxed progress sheets with online versions; meanwhile, customers were becoming increasingly familiar with the concept of Internet access to product information, and increasingly frustrated with anything less. We needed a fast way to satisfy our users, but without having to learn Java or develop full-blown web skills."

Bridon wanted a resilient and scalable architecture that would be quick to develop and deploy. A key requirement was the ability to deploy the system to many more users, to provide better tracking of orders, and to reduce the cost of telephone ordering. Bridon was especially keen to retain ownership of the new system, avoid significant staff retraining, and avoid outsourced support contracts.

Snowdon says: "We approached Explorer and they came back with Oracle Portal. We wanted it immediately because we saw that we could use our existing Oracle and HTML skills to satisfy our users straight away."

High-Level Project Goals

- To provide instant, online access to ERP data
- To deploy the system to many more users
- To track orders in real time
- To avoid web development and significant staff training

Why Oracle?

Bridon was already using an Oracle ERP solution. Snowdon says: "Oracle is key to our developmental systems. They put a huge amount of development time and money into the Internet side of their products, and we are using Oracle systems successfully throughout our organisation – it made no sense for us to go with anyone else." He adds: "One of the best decisions we ever made was to move to an Oracle platform. There's no risk

- Improved order-tracking processes, including instant anticipated delivery times
- A scalable core infrastructure to which other applications can be added over time

Partner Profile



Explorer (UK) Ltd

Leeds, UK

www.explor.co.uk

Explorer (UK) Ltd, an Oracle Certified Solution Partner, is a value-added reseller specialising in selling and supporting high-quality technical computer software. Explorer focuses on building long-term relationships with its clients, matching innovative but realistic software solutions with clients' individual requirements, and providing development, implementation and consultancy support. For the project with Bridon International Ltd, Explorer's key services were:

- 'Expert Install' for Oracle Application Server and Oracle 8i/9i Database
- 'Kick Start' development for Oracle Portal.

of the legacy trap, and their migration programme keeps us up with the latest technology."

Why Explorer?

Bridon has been working with Explorer since spring 2000. In this case, Explorer carried the project from design and coding through to installation and handover. Snowdon says: "We are very pleased with Explorer. All our management information systems are based around the Oracle products they have provided and installed."

Oracle Portal provides real-time order processing

The new e-business system was built using Oracle9i Database, Oracle9i AS and Oracle Portal. The system sits on Dell hardware operating NT2000 and links back through the existing Oracle ERP databases, enabling the portal server to give a web view of normal corporate data. The portal database remains small because it is accessing data at the back end.

Explorer wrote the coding over 20 days while Bridon wrote the back-end triggers that insert the new Internet orders directly into the ERP system. The out-of-the-box installation then took two days. Snowdon says: "Oracle Portal requires a single sign-on and is very easy to develop and deploy with."

Customers can now go online and see real-time stock and manufacturing plans, get online quotes, and place orders. As customers check stock out, the system inserts the order into the ERP database and instantly generates a customer order number; stock-level information is automatically adjusted.

Snowdon says: "We were surprised by how easy it was. It has taken off so fast that we have rapidly moved it into other business areas." This includes an application that instantly notifies shipping agents of orders that have been placed, allowing them to plan ahead. Agents can see when goods are ready, and can then enter pick-up details onto the system. Snowdon explains: "We used to handle this by telephone and fax but now it's all done much faster by Internet. And this application took only half a day to write – it's unbelievable."

Future plans

The next stage is to enable customers to upload their purchase orders straight into Bridon's system, where Oracle Portal will convert them into sales orders. Bridon also has future plans to get ERP data onto palm screens via the portal server. Explorer is working on both projects.

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