



MetoKote – Monitoring the Productivity of 29 Coating Plants



With over 800 customers and 29 plants around the world, MetoKote is the largest company in the coating industry. MetoKote offers a full range of high technology custom coating services, including electrocoating (e-coat), powder coating, liquid paint and other custom coatings. The company is also a leader in providing additional value added services, such as aftermarket sheet metal labeling, packaging, and logistics, light assembly services, masking development and utilization, and direct shipment of coated parts to the final point of assembly.

MetoKote markets:

- Agriculture
- Computer
- Furniture
- Lawn and Garden
- Appliance
- Truck and Bus
- Electronics
- Consumer Products
- Automotive
- Recreational
- Construction Equipment
- Industrial Equipment

With their broad market support and volume of production, it is very likely that you own a product that they've processed.

The management of quality and productivity across their sites is of paramount importance to drive their reputation and enable them to win in this competitive market. MetoKote has been quite innovative in this area and all process and production data from all of their remote sites, is aggregated in their Lima, Ohio headquarters. The data is stored in an array of Microsoft SQL Servers.

The IT staff at MetoKote are responsible for the technology, the data and the generation of reports and dashboards needed by both production staff and upper management.

The problem, as management put it, "we're swimming in data and are just unable to turn it into information." To be fair, they are able to turn data into information through the use of Business Intelligence tools like Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS), Crystal Reports or even Microsoft Excel. The real problem is that those tools are just not easy enough to apply. Thus they fall under the responsibility of domain experts. Projects must now be justified. Schedules must be determined. The creation of a production report is now an iterative one that will take weeks and months before it meets the final customer (upper management) approval.

MetoKote heard about an alternative solution that promised that ANYONE could generate reports quickly and easily. That solution came in the form of a software product called Dream Report, by Ocean Data Systems (ODS). "So you can turn an ocean of data into information", said Brent Schwartz – VP of Engineering. "If you can prove that, you've got an order."

That was the challenge. They assigned the reporting task to Nikki Meienburg, their corporate Chemical Engineer. Nikki downloaded Dream Report from www.DreamReport.com and installed it. ODS provided an evaluation license (rather than just using demo mode) and Nikki was off. The first hurdle was to connect to their corporate database. The database is made up of many tables with data descriptors in one, data in another, plants and lines in others... While Dream Report has the ability to map to a database, automatically recognize tags for

information and interpret date and timestamps appropriately, it did require the one-time development of a database “View”, the creation of a virtual table that pulled the relevant fields together for Dream Report to access. Once that was done, Dream Report was able to query the database and expose their data for reporting.

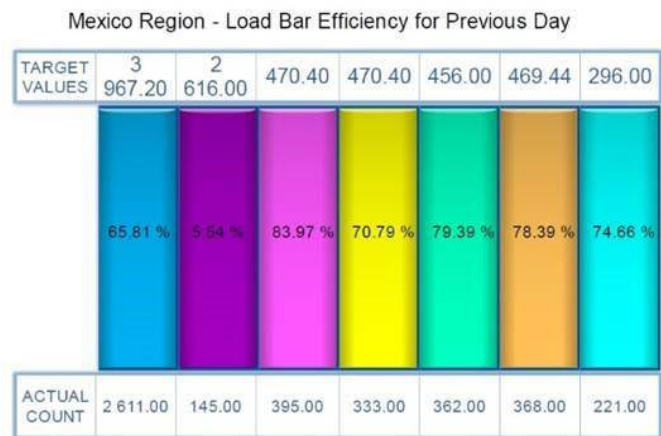
The rest was easy. Dream Report delivers a total of 17 very flexible reporting objects that have the ability to perform queries of data, perform statistics and then format results. Other than some basic architectural concepts, those 17 objects make up the majority of the learning curve for a new user.

The process of configuration is an easy one. You select to create a new report, drag a report object onto the page, double click and set the data tag, date/time of interest, statistic to perform and how the result should be displayed. Run the report to test it and make changes to suit your taste.

Nikki’s first report was a trend of oven temperatures from their various plants. One plant with various parameters is shown below. This data is automatically extracted from their SQL database, without any need to understand SQL queries. Dream Report simply maps to the database, understands the structure and will retrieve the data for display.



Nikki’s second report was a comparison of the production of plants using bar graphs for each and showing actual against goal.



Dream Report will become an integral part of production management within MetoKote. They will be leveraging the Dream Report Web Portal to enable managers and engineers from their various plants to log in and review the reports that have been developed for them.

Where in the past, reports took weeks and even months to develop and deploy, today, the process only takes hours to days. Management will be able to view up-to-date information and react to conditions to improve throughput, increase quality and reduce downtime. The end result will clearly be increased revenue and reduced costs.

When Nikki was asked about her favorite aspect of the experience, she responded with “The Service”. “The folks at ODS are friendly and responsive and were ready to help with any little question I brought up. Some of the support staff was half way around the world, and they would just set up a WebEx session and give me the guidance I needed. I would recommend Dream Report to anyone that wants to put report development and generation back in the hands of those that need them. Ocean Data Systems makes a great product and we highly recommend it.”

www.MetoKote.com