



Microsoft Customer Solution

Case study

Yallourn Energy Moves From ‘Jurassic Park To Starship Enterprise’ – in 270 days

“In line with our strategy to take advantage of the latest technology and make the most of our existing investments, we decided the best solution would be an integrated knowledge portal running on the Microsoft platform.”

Joe Locandro

Former Chief Information Officer
Yallourn Energy



Nothing short of an IT metamorphosis has occurred at Yallourn Energy in the past two years. The power company, one of Australia’s largest, conducted a complete technology refresh via a series of three 90-day projects. Yallourn Energy’s mantra was to apply technology as innovation. One of those projects was a centralized 24x7 information portal called *Knowledge Central* developed by Microsoft® Gold Partners OBS and Strategic Data Management. This portal includes business intelligence and reporting functions that extract data from 20 different sources for delivery to just about anyone at Yallourn Energy on any device. It has given individuals and teams throughout the company the ability to access vital business data whenever it is needed, helping Yallourn Energy to become an information-driven company.

CUSTOMER PROFILE	BUSINESS SITUATION	SOLUTION	BENEFITS
Yallourn Energy is one of Australia’s biggest power companies. It comprises a 1480 megawatt power station and mine that operates 24x7 to supply about 22% of Victoria’s power and 8% of the National Electricity Market, which takes in Australia’s five most populated states. Yallourn employs about 300 people at two sites in Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley.	A lack of integrated information architecture and ageing IT systems resulted in ineffective collaboration and poor business reporting and communication at Yallourn Energy. The company wanted to increase the value of its existing technology and maximize any future IT investments. It especially wanted to improve its knowledge management.	Yallourn Energy, and partners OBS and SDM, developed an enterprise portal that connects people and information across the organization. Built on Microsoft® Office® SharePoint Portal Server 2003, it integrates the range of Microsoft Office System products. It is supported by a data warehouse on Microsoft Windows® 2000 with Microsoft SQL Server databases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Major productivity improvements. ▪ Simplified business processes. ▪ Real-time reporting. ▪ A single version of the truth. ▪ Timely access to information. ▪ Leverages existing technology. ▪ Rationalizes database systems and applications. ▪ Minimizes cost of future work.

“Our goal was a central point of collaboration and knowledge that would bring together all the elements of the enterprise. Microsoft and OBS expertise helped us realize our goal.”

Joe Locandro

Former Chief Information Officer
Yallourn Energy

Situation

Formerly a State government operation, Yallourn Energy was privatized in 1996. It is now owned by CLP Power Asia, based in Hong Kong.

Having completed a strategic review of its IT investment, based on the principle of adding value to its business, Yallourn Energy created quite a wish list. It wanted to align IT to the business plan, simplify and automate business processes, reduce long-term running costs, provide staff with better access to quality information and improve productivity. It also wanted to create new marketing opportunities, reduce risk, establish a platform for future growth and improve IT management and governance.

Overall, the aim was to increase the value of technology to the company and maximise its existing Microsoft IT investments.

Like many organizations its size, knowledge management, or collaboration, was a major issue for Yallourn Energy, according to its former CIO, Joe Locandro, who has since moved to the position of CIO of Yallourn Energy’s parent company in Hong Kong.

“Most organizations suffer from staff churn, and we all want to know how to capture intellectual property through systems,” Locandro says. “That’s the next frontier. We also have to keep demonstrating value, and of course, there’s the perennial of managing costs.”

Yallourn Energy’s previous CEO had his own demands. He wanted to give everyone in the organization – down to the shop floor – more opportunity to work with information. With a workforce where people of 30 years service could walk their knowledge out the door, the challenge was to harness that intellectual property and at the same time allow people to get on with their job.

“We want to be an information-driven company,” says Locandro. “To achieve this, we have to capture all our IP. We want a philosophy of computing anywhere, anytime on any device. You have to remember that people in the middle of a mine or a power station didn’t always have PCs readily available.”

Solution

Following a strategic review of its technology with its integration partners OBS, Strategic Data Management (SDM) Consulting and Microsoft, Yallourn Energy decided its future IT investment would focus on unifying the business, capturing and delivering relevant knowledge and ensuring a flexible IT platform. This included establishing a robust, scalable infrastructure capable of integrating disparate elements of its operations, as well as the ability to incorporate future mergers and acquisitions and facilitate new marketing opportunities.

Yallourn Energy, OBS and SDM did not want Yallourn Energy’s IT plan to be a collection of isolated initiatives, but a program of cohesive projects. It was imperative to reduce long-term costs and deliver greater efficiency by providing employees access to mission-critical information, wherever they might be. The solution also had to generate competitive advantage and flexibility for future variations in the company’s size and business requirements.

“In line with our strategy to take advantage of the benefits of the latest technology, and make the most of our existing investments, we decided the best solution would be a totally integrated knowledge portal running on the Microsoft platform,” says Locandro.

“Our goal was a central point of collaboration and knowledge that would bring together all the elements of the enterprise. OBS and SDM expertise helped

us realize our goal, designing and customizing our solution within the tight timeframe of 90 days.”

The enterprise portal now in place at Yallourn Energy is built on an award-winning solution developed by OBS, a Microsoft Gold Partner and specialist in portal technology and collaboration solutions. Called *Knowledge Central*, the portal connects people with information across the organization, anywhere and anytime.

Built on Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003, *Knowledge Central* integrates the range of Microsoft Office System products to provide a secure, scalable enterprise portal that leverages Yallourn Energy’s existing investment in Microsoft technologies.

Knowledge Central includes a Web-based portal, enterprise search, collaborative team sites, real time collaboration, Web-based email, project management and advanced document management – all accessed securely through a familiar browser environment.

OBS provided services and solutions for the integrated knowledge architecture behind the portal. This included platform design for Microsoft Active Directory and Microsoft Windows Server 2003; portal and collaboration tools for Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server; and messaging and scheduling for Microsoft Exchange 2003 Server. At the same time, the other Microsoft Gold Partner involved in the project, SDM Consulting, built the data warehouse and integrated business intelligence reporting tools.

“The Yallourn implementation was a great example of getting the best from two local experts to deliver a full knowledge solution,” says OBS Director, Brett Campbell.

In 90 days Locandro’s team built an enterprise portal, a management

information warehouse that takes real-time data from Australia’s electricity grid every five minutes and a document management system that holds more than 250,000 engineering drawings. It also developed collaborative databases so that when technicians strip down a power plant, for example, they can take digital photos and report on the wear and tear of its parts.

Yallourn Energy migrated its Microsoft Exchange 5.5 messaging system to Microsoft Exchange 2003. It now employs Microsoft Outlook Web Access for remote access to Microsoft Outlook via the web. Senior executives and mobile staff access their email real time on either Ericsson Smartphones or BlackBerry phones using Microsoft Outlook Mobile Access.

The one-stop-shop of information is stored on Yallourn Energy’s enterprise portal site called “Fingertips”, which uses Microsoft’s SharePoint Server and Portal version 2. Underpinning this portal – which Locandro describes as “awesome” – is a fully-fledged warehouse on Windows 2000 with Microsoft SQL Server databases. It has Microsoft Outlook integrated, with reporting suites and real time information displayed at five-minute intervals.

The Microsoft account team was surprised that a customer could deploy all of its tool sets in such a rapid time and achieve so much. Locandro says the change was like “moving from Jurassic Park to Starship Enterprise”.

“We’ve done three sets of 90 days and we have the capability to maintain that pace because everything is designed for rapid deployment,” Locandro says. “We have no constraints now. Our infrastructure allows us to deliver whatever the business wants.”

Benefits

In October 2003, *Knowledge Central* won the Microsoft Office System Solution

“Built on the Microsoft Office System, the appeal of *Knowledge Central* is that it is a complete proven solution. It provides faster time-to-benefit, rich features and great value.”

Brett Campbell

Director
OBS

Builder Program for the Asia/Pacific (Australia) region. This program was established to showcase revolutionary ways of using the Microsoft Office System to solve technical and business related issues. For Yallourn Energy *Knowledge Central* now means so much more.

Cost Savings

Knowledge Central has helped Yallourn Energy rationalize its database systems and applications, leading to substantial cost savings in maintenance. And by laying the foundations for knowledge management, the portal will allow Yallourn Energy to minimize the cost of future work.

Quality Information

Consistent output and a 'single version of the truth' have given Yallourn Energy more visibility into its business. They have also made planning easier.

The advanced document management and workflow, as well as the business forms and approval process, means more people at Yallourn Energy have a better grasp of how the business operates.

Secure Access

Information at Yallourn Energy is now secured via a managed process that incorporates individual access rights. With a single corporate directory of people and a single sign-on for users, Yallourn knows who is accessing what information and when.

A Culture of Productivity

Centralizing information from across the enterprise has led to significant reductions in both the time and effort required to produce a monthly report at Yallourn Energy. In some cases this has saved four days per month. *Knowledge Central* leverages existing IT tools and allows easy Web-based collaboration between teams, customers and business partners.

The portal also allows real time reporting from the National Electricity Market Management Company (NEMMCO), the organization responsible for the day-to-day operation of Australia's power system and its market for trading electricity.

From an internal perspective the productivity benefits are even greater.

"We now have wireless GPRS connectivity using PDAs and smart phones," Locandro says. "We also use Web-based access tools. This means executives can go to any location where there is a PC and they can access their system or use their smart phone.

"There wouldn't be much we couldn't do now. We can ask internal customers what they want knowing we can deliver. They are already reading emails on their smart phones while on the train or standing in queues – everyone from a personal assistant or a shift manager at a plant to a travelling executive or an accountant. They all love the new mobility."

Software and Services

Microsoft® Windows® 2000
Microsoft Office 2003
Microsoft SQL Server™
Microsoft® Windows® Server™ 2003
Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server
2003
Microsoft Internet Security and
Acceleration Server
Microsoft Active Directory

Hardware

IBM BladeCenter server
Ericsson Smartphones
Blackberry phones

Partners

OBS
<http://www.obs.com.au/>

Strategic Data Management
<http://www.sdm.com.au/>



Software for the Agile Business

For More Information

For more information in Australia, call the Microsoft Information Centre on 13 20 58. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/resources/casestudies/>

For more information about Yallourn Energy services, call (03) 5128-2000 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.yallournenergy.com.au/>

For more information about OBS services, call 1300 733-627 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.obs.com.au/>

For more information about SDM Consulting services, call (03) 9686-2332 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.sdm.com.au/>

© 2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

This case study is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY.

Microsoft, SQL Server, Windows, Windows Server and Microsoft Business Solutions are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.