

Energy – Oil & Gas



Valero Energy Corporation

Quote

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Barrar explains "We replaced all the fax machines where these documents were coming in with separate lines on the TOPCALL server"

Texas-based Valero Energy Corporation currently owns and operates twelve petroleum refineries and are recognized as a leader in the production of premium, environmentally clean products such as reformulated gasoline (RFG), CARB Phase II gasoline, low-sulfur diesel and oxygenates. Valero distributes product through business-to-business relationships, including wholesalers in 38 states, as well as business-to-consumer through retail locations in the Western and Mid-Western United States.

The Challenge

Bob Barrar, project manager within the IS department at Valero, was looking for a document management solution that would speed up payment on invoices and minimize interest payments on all bulk materials in-transit between refineries and customers. These materials, such as crude oil, diesel fuel and intermediate products incurred inventory and carrying costs on a daily basis.

The proliferation of documentation slowed down the payment process and was a major bottleneck for the company. Any item that moved in and out of Valero's inventory in a bulk manner often generated multiple copies of the same documents because of the number of individuals that wanted the information. Faxes were an intricate part of this information delivery, but they were coming into individual fax machines in different departments. Once that happened, people would then re-fax it to other people in the company, creating a snowball effect of paper.

The daily cost for five refineries when the project was initiated was approximately \$1.5 million. The ROI rationale was simple; if Valero could improve the process by one day per year then it would have a \$1.5 million benefit. Therefore, the company was willing to commit up to that amount for a technology solution that would generate a one-year ROI to improve the whole process.

The Solution

"We replaced all the fax machines where these documents were coming in with separate lines on the TOPCALL server," explained Bob Barrar. "Then, we wrote a separate front end application to manage the documents and make them viewable to the appropriate groups where they could then move them into the image archive."

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The Solution (cont.)

By using the TOPCALL server, Valero was able to consolidate these critical documents received as incoming faxes. TOPCALL worked with the IS team and wrote the management program that would meet their business function requirements. Using the IXOS imaging system because of its tight integration with SAP as the image archive, documents were scanned or received from TOPCALL and associated with the appropriate material management and accounting identifiers so that traders and schedulers and people at the plants could see the same document along with the accountants on the billing side.

It was advantageous that documents be captured at the source and put in a place where every department could see them from the same place and still approach the information in a manner similar to what they were used to doing in terms of their day-to-day business. By having everything on the IXOS image archive, where the data resided, and using TOPCALL's integration into SAP, items could be faxed and retrieved by knowing the purchase order, invoice number, customer name or internal shipping order number.

Valero's director of cash operations noted that the company noticeably improved the cash flow after implementing the system. The TOPCALL server aided in consolidating and coordinating receipts of documentation, as well as providing a means for sending out invoicing. “The TOPCALL server was an integral part of improving and streamlining the business process,” noted Bob Barrar.

Benefits and Results

Apart from the powerful organizational tool the TOPCALL server provides, Bob appreciates the ability to expand the feature set to provide different functionality to different areas in the company. Plus:

- ▲ The TOPCALL server enabled the company to speed up invoicing and receipt of payments
- ▲ Less paper created an environment of less confusion while eliminating duplication
- ▲ Interest costs were minimized because invoicing and the transfer of goods happened on a more timely basis
- ▲ The company realized over \$2 million a year in savings

Bob said that the TOPCALL server is “definitely a critical application for the company” and noted that the TOPCALL server helped to improve cash flow as well as general business processes. Valero plans to continue expanding the feature set on the TOPCALL server to increase employee productivity with options such as outbound faxing.

Contact TOPCALL

Telephone:

U.S.A. 1-888-4-TOPCALL

Canada 1-877-8-TOPCALL

Email:

sales@topcallamericas.com

Web:

www.topcall.com/info