



*Until Every One Comes Home.™*

## Overview

**Country:** United States

**Industry:** Non-profit

## Customer Profile

The United Service Organizations (USO) is a non-profit charitable corporation chartered by Congress and provides entertainment, support, and services to U.S. military personnel around the world.

## Business Situation

An unconnected accounting infrastructure hindered the USO's ability to access timely financial data from 20 remote offices, and required time and effort to consolidate information.

## Solution

The USO connected remote centers to its back office by using Microsoft® Business Solutions Business Portal as a gateway to its Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains® accounting system.

## Benefits

- Connect remote workforce
- Consolidate information
- Increase business insight
- Streamline operations
- Improve communications

## USO Adopts Microsoft Business Portal to Deliver “Touch of Home” to Outposts

“We’ve eliminated manual tasks, streamlined processes, and gained timely access to information ...With Microsoft Business Portal, we’ve improved decision-making capabilities and increased productivity.”

*Bruce Townsend, Vice President of Finance, United Service Organizations (USO)*

The United Service Organizations’ (USO) 20 remote posts around the world were “far from home” in more ways than one. Without a coordinated accounting system, financial results from the field could take months to consolidate and report back, by which time the analytical value of the information was largely lost. Regional field offices couldn’t see day-to-day information, such as vendor payment or contact information that wasn’t stored in their local system. They also lacked any coordinated way to share common policy and training information between offices and with headquarters. What the USO needed was a cost-effective way to connect its business information systems with offices around the world. They found that solution in Microsoft Business Solutions Business Portal, creating a “Touch of Home” with quick access to consolidated, real-time business information throughout the world.

“[Business Portal] benefits all levels of users by enabling better access to data and increased business insight due to the powerful KPI feature and robust integration capabilities.”

Barry Wilson, Senior Business Consultant, EYT

## Situation

The USO was formed in 1941 in response to President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s request for a private entity to handle on-leave recreation for the rapidly growing U.S. armed forces. Entertainers, from Bob Hope and Marilyn Monroe, to Bruce Willis and Arnold Schwarzenegger, have joined the USO Tours to share a laugh and a smile with our servicemen and women away from home.

Through the years, the USO has expanded and diversified its centers and services to accommodate the constantly changing needs and efforts of the U.S. military—all the while relying on donations from the public to fund its many programs. But through these changes, its mission has remained steadfast: to bring a “Touch of Home” to uniformed military personnel and their families by providing services and entertainment such as family programs, e-mail and Internet access, and overseas celebrity tours.

The USO is a global organization with offices in Iceland, Germany, Italy, Bosnia, Japan, Korea, the Middle East and elsewhere. USO World Headquarters in Washington, D.C. is the enabling body for all USO programs and is responsible for establishing policies and strategies, and providing training and technical services to employees.

Tracking, analyzing, and maintaining financial insight of worldwide operations also is the responsibility of World Headquarters.

However, acquiring timely financial data from each center and consolidating this information into spreadsheets and reports has been time consuming and challenging, given the disconnected layout of the USO’s accounting infrastructure.

“Our remote offices were quite autonomous, running independent small business software that did not automatically share information or integrate with the World Headquarters’

accounting system,” explains Bruce Townsend, Vice President of Finance for the USO. “At month’s end, financials first were reviewed locally, then sent to the regional offices for review and consolidation before being forwarded to World Headquarters, where they were finally re-keyed and consolidated into spreadsheets. As a result, three months could pass before we had a solid view of our worldwide consolidated financial position.”

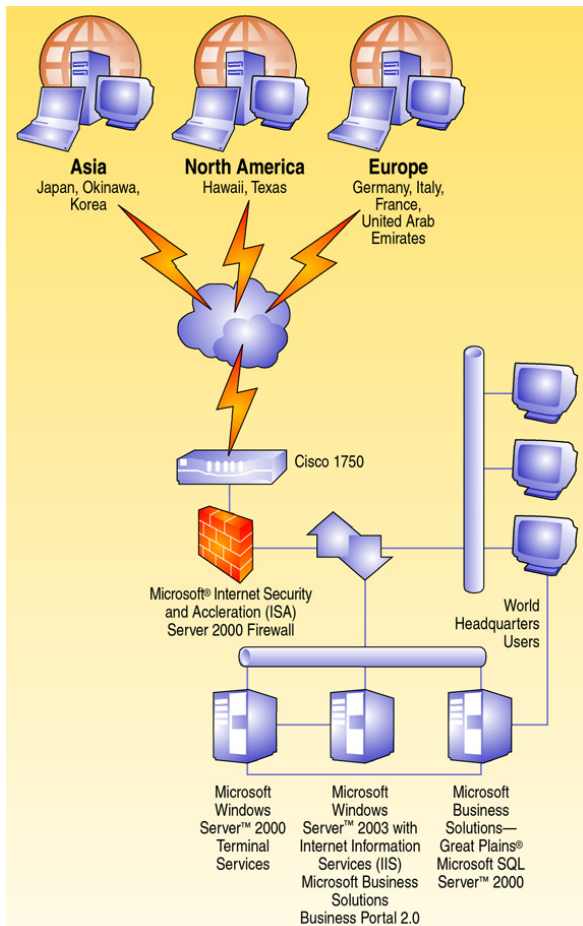
All in all, the USO needed better, faster access to financial data, and sought a solution that would consolidate the financial information for its worldwide centers. With a coordinated, connected infrastructure, the USO could reduce the number of systems it supported, eliminate manual re-entry of data, and increase the availability of useful business information throughout the organization.

## Solution

The USO World Headquarters already had experience using Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® as its financial management solution, and determined that using this software in its remote offices would help address some of its infrastructure problems. However, to achieve the appropriate level of connectivity and information access, the USO wanted the solution to reside entirely at World Headquarters.

By implementing Microsoft Business Portal, the USO is able to deliver access to the Microsoft Great Plains applications residing at World Headquarters, with the portal providing the gateway to the applications and associated information. To deploy its new system, the USO partnered with EYT (originally formed as Ernst & Young Technologies)—a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner for Microsoft Business Solutions that provides mid-market segment clients with

## USO Solution Architecture



business applications and technology solution expertise.

Twenty remote offices were set up in Microsoft Great Plains, which uses Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000 as its database management system and is installed on a Dell PowerEdge 2050 computer. Microsoft Business Portal—installed on a Dell PowerEdge 2050 computer running Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system with Internet Information Services (IIS) 6.0—provides access to the business information in the SQL Server databases, as well as the documents and other data USO shares through the portal. Microsoft Windows®

SharePoint™ Services enables Microsoft Business Portal to serve up the portal's Web Parts, including queries, document libraries and key performance indicators (KPIs). And Windows Terminal Services—installed on a Compaq DL 380 computer running Microsoft Windows Server 2000—is used to deliver access to the Microsoft Great Plains applications to the remote offices.

With a connected financial system in place, the USO has started to take advantage of the powerful features of Microsoft Business Portal, extending the solution far beyond its initial objective. For example, the USO executives can access KPIs, which provide high-level overviews of financial data, directly from the Microsoft Business Portal. In addition, regional executives use the portal to access online reports from Microsoft Business Solutions for Analytics—FRx®.

“Business Portal does more than just provide a gateway to the Great Plains application. It benefits all levels of users by enabling better access to data and increased business insight due to the powerful KPI feature and robust integration capabilities,” explains Barry Wilson, Senior Business Consultant for EYT.

## Benefits

The USO is in the early phases of deploying Microsoft Business Portal, but already has accomplished its primary goal of creating a connected accounting infrastructure that consolidates information automatically.

Says Townsend, “We've eliminated manual tasks, streamlined processes, and gained timely access to information. If necessary, I can view up-to-date financials for each office on a daily basis. With Microsoft Business Portal, we've improved decision-making capabilities and increased productivity all at once.”

## Consolidated Information Increases Business Insight

Business information is now entered directly into World Headquarters' system, reducing accounting and IT overhead and giving users access to real-time business information they can use to make better decisions, faster. For example, regional executives can access Microsoft Business Portal to obtain access to financial reports that contain timely, accurate analysis of profits, losses, and budget performance.

With Microsoft Business Portal's KPIs, users don't have to scour pages of reports to understand the financial health of an individual office, a region, or the entire organization. For example, the USO currently has a KPI that graphically depicts the financial status of each remote office. Executives get a quick, high-level look at this key business metric, and can drill down into

“These new tools help us achieve our goals of providing greater accountability and transparency for everything we do.”

Edward A. Powell, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), USO

each office to obtain more detailed information. KPIs are set to be refreshed as often as necessary, so decision makers are assured they always are working with the most current information.

"These new tools help us achieve our goals of providing greater accountability and transparency for everything we do," says Edward A. Powell, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for USO.

#### **Connected Business Streamlines Operations**

Remote access to Microsoft Great Plains through Business Portal means the USO's 20 worldwide offices are connected, and financial data flows through a common system that creates an efficient and productive workforce.

“Collecting and consolidating information from our overseas centers once required a huge manual effort and a significant amount of time,” says Townsend. “But now everyone accesses and inputs data into a common accounting program, eliminating manual processes. Just a few clicks of my mouse is all it takes to generate a comprehensive financial report that is available to directors throughout the world by using Microsoft Business Portal.”

#### **Portal Access Delivers Communications Infrastructure**

The USO has only begun to realize the potential of its Microsoft Business Portal solution. By integrating additional applications and programs with the portal interface, the solution will soon become a powerful medium for information sharing, communication, and collaboration. For example, integration with Microsoft FRx provides access to financial reports. In addition, the USO recently integrated Microsoft Great Plains Payroll with its portal, bringing the payroll function in house and

providing employees with online access to payroll information such as pay and benefit information—reducing the burden on the human resources department. Moving forward, the Microsoft Business Portal also will be used to access SharePoint document libraries for company policies and procedures, a tour photo gallery, and other documents so employees always know where to look for additional information or to answer questions.

Communication and collaboration efforts will also be enhanced as the USO completes an upgrade to Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003.

“With Microsoft Business Solutions, we’re providing employees with an abundance of information, right at their fingertips,” says Townsend. “With unending capabilities to integrate applications and share information through the portal, there’s nothing preventing this solution from eventually evolving into the USO’s intranet.”

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: <http://www.microsoft.com/>

For more information about EYT (Ernst & Young Technologies) products and services, visit the Web site at: <http://www.eyt.com/>

For more information about United Service Organizations (USO) products and services, visit the Web site at: <http://www.uso.org/>

## Microsoft Business Solutions Business Portal

**Microsoft Business Portal** integrates seamlessly with Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® to deliver information, applications, and business processes through a single access point—your user's Web browser. It offers a personalized gateway to business performance views that speed executive decision-making, a self-service portal for employees and managers, and a managed-access interface for your suppliers, partners, and customers. Built on Microsoft Windows® SharePoint Services™, this powerful solution makes it easy to build team sites and extranets that give your organization a framework for information sharing and collaboration.

### Software and Services

- Products
  - Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2000
  - Microsoft Windows® 2000 Server Terminal Services
  - Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 Enterprise Edition
  - Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003
- Solutions
  - Microsoft Business Solutions Analytics
  - Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains®

- Technologies
  - Microsoft SharePoint™ Team Services

### Hardware

- Dell PowerEdge 2650
- Compaq DL 380

### Partners

- EYT

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