

Consultant Selects BCD For Pharmaceutical ERP Project, Wins High Praise



by Robert Gast

Steve McEneaney is a consultant with a reputation for wholly accepting responsibility for a task and seeing it through to a positive outcome, even if it means going to extremes.

McEneaney is a Certified Management Consultant with over a decade's worth of private sector experience in strategic planning, business analysis, business process re-engineering and information technology planning. He attended the Royal College of Military Science, and for 22 years was attached to the Royal Logistics Corp. McEneaney managed an ordinance budget of over \$172,000,000 and moved 180,000 British troops and equipment out of East Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989.

He now runs a consulting firm in Vancouver, BC, called Steelnet Solutions, Inc. McEneaney, along with one partner and four associates use process analysis techniques to help organizations improve profitability. After flagging areas that need improvement, they roll up their sleeves and affect transformation. Says McEneaney, "Lots of consultants make recommendations and then move on. We

tell you how it should be done and then we'll actually do it."

In April, he hit a snag in an iSeries ERP implementation project that was almost finished. The project deadline and budget to which he had firmly committed were in jeopardy, and his client, a pharmacy wholesaler, was expecting successful completion of the project. Upon closely scrutinizing the web-based inventory inquiry, catalog, and order entry module supplied by the ERP system vendor they realized that it would not satisfy the requirements of the pharmacies they served. "We committed to project completion by July 1st and it was already April," says McEneaney adding, "I was running out of time and we needed help."



McEneaney focuses on improving processes. He believes that solutions come in many different forms and he therefore has no formal affiliations with any purveyor of technology, or anything else. "I am vendor agnostic. We do what's right for the client. We find the right solutions for the customer, whether it's a process, change management, or technology. Our approach is to look at the people, the processes, and then the technology. Technology is always last."

A Battle With Time

"We were in a jam, he says." Since the website had to be driven to a large extent by the foundation infrastructure and the decisions that had already been made, his options were limited, and time definitely was not on his side. As the deadline closed in he had two options: Either extensively modify the ERP vendor's shopping cart package or develop a new one. "I had a healthy level of skepticism about inviting other parties into the project. We had some interesting experiences dealing with vendors that promised much and deliver somewhat less. I didn't want to endanger this assignment."

Late one night McEneaney pointed his web browser to Google. The results of a search on the terms 'iSeries Portal' repeatedly turned up WebSmart, an iSeries-based web application development tool from **Business Computer Design (BCD)**.

The next morning he called BCD and was soon connected to the company's technical center located on Vancouver Island, about 40 minutes from his office. In a meeting at UniPHARM's headquarters a couple of days later, McEneaney laid out his requirements for two of BCD's visiting consultants and in less than a week he received a customized shopping cart prototype that he placed in a side-by-side comparison with the application provided by the ERP system vendor. "After the test there was no question in anyone's mind that the best decision for UniPHARM was to go with BCD's WebSmart and finalize the new shopping cart application."

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*Steve McEneaney, President,
Steelnet Solutions*

Then, given the snug time constraints, McEneaney asked BCD the best way to get the shopping cart done as quickly as possible. "They told me we should work on it together." After spending three days designing every single function of the new application, and mapping out all the iSeries files that needed to be accessed, McEneaney turned over his specifications to BCD's project manager, Kevin Cronin. "We threw it at them in a big blob," says McEneaney.

While it can sometimes be difficult to get consultants to march in the right direction, BCD's development project ran smoothly. "They understood the specifications and started developing programs within hours.

In just 43 days Web Orders, a 28 page Web application that accesses an iSeries based- ERP backend had been designed, developed, modified, documented, tested, deployed, and users had been trained. McEneaney says another large billion-dollar distributor that he worked with took three years to do the same thing. "We were extremely lucky and pleased to have found such a complete solution. From a consulting point of view it doesn't get any better than this-- partnering with an organization that is this professional and this responsive. To be honest, I have never come across this kind of service. I could call them late in the day with an issue and they would either get on the system right there and then and resolve it, or it would be resolved by the time I got in the next morning."

While BCD's consultants were writing the application, McEneaney had to find images for 20,000 different catalog items. "I had to provide a process for that to happen. I actually went to hundreds of vendors to get pictures of products and if they weren't available I'd go out to the warehouse and take the photo myself- not exactly my cup of tea but it had to be done."

When hiring consultants, organizations sometimes find it difficult to get accurate and timely reports on how billable time is documented. Out-of-scope and non-productive activities end up derailing well-conceived projects. BCD Consulting Services delivers weekly reports that break billable time into 15-minute intervals. These reports show who was working on the project, what they were doing, and how much time it took. "When BCD bills the customer, they knew exactly what they are paying for- it is crystal clear. It demonstrates that they work diligently, and doing absolutely the right things."

Once the first phase of the B2B catalog and order entry application was rolled out, uniPHARM customers began to use it heavily, and in doing so they established its viability and stability. According to McEneaney, "Real time availability was

something every pharmacy wanted and we gave it to them. For the first time in 20 years they could go on the web and find out what is available right now.”

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BCD consultants then shifted their focus to enhancements, which included a new return authorization function that automatically generates shipping documents on the pharmacy’s printer, and populates iSeries based return analysis reports for management.

McEneaney says his client was so pleased with the end result that they threw him a party. “It was a great experience and it was made even better because of BCD Consulting’s support, speed, and skill.”

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950 York Road, Hinsdale, IL 60521
(630) 986-0800 Fax: (630) 986-0926
www.BCDsoftware.com
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