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APPLICATION STUDY

M.I.S. Print Provides Safe Path for SAFECO's Print Center Transition

When SAFECO acquired Indianapolis-based American States Financial Corporation, more than just miles separated the newly joined organizations. For one thing, the Seattle-based SAFECO relied on one printer vendor for production printing; American States Financial Corporation relied on a different vendor for its printers. This meant that when SAFECO decided to close American States Financial Corporation's print center and migrate all its applications from Indianapolis to Seattle, SAFECO had to find a way to handle company files created exclusively in DJDE and Metacode formats.

Fortunately, SAFECO was prepared to take on the challenge. Founded in 1923 as the General Insurance Company of America, SAFECO now is among the nation's largest diversified financial corporations with 1999 revenues of \$6.9 billion and more than \$30 billion in assets. Through its network of independent agents, SAFECO offers a comprehensive mix of products including property and casualty insurance, life insurance, annuities, surety, commercial credit, asset management and financial services distribution operations.

Always highly successful on the West Coast, SAFECO took a major step in geographic and product diversification in 1997 with its \$2.8 billion acquisition of American States Financial Corporation. The combination doubled SAFECO's independent agency distribution force, increased its presence east of the Rockies and, through its American States Business Insurance product line, the company became a leading writer of business insurance for small-to medium businesses.

For this business growth to progress smoothly, SAFECO had to decide how best to handle its acquired company's data. One option: continue to run American States Financial Corporation's data stream in Metacode by bringing the LPS printers to Seattle. However, after talking with both vendors, SAFECO determined its most cost effective approach: consolidate on one printer vendor and generate the DJDE and Metacode applications—

including everything from policies to correspondence to on-demand forms.

M.I.S. Print provides critical "bridge"

For the tricky business of transforming Metacode into PostScript, they called on RSA's M.I.S. Print.

It seemed like the changeover process was going to be troublesome, "but it actually turned out to be pretty smooth. And that had a lot to do with the software engineers at RSA. They set it up for us and even though it was a long weekend, RSA employees were on call if we had questions.

Win Matter
Systems Analyst

M.I.S. Print software enables the printers to print LCDS (legacy applications using DJDEs and Metacode) as well as network printing, and is co-resident on the printer controller. This powerful software tool lets users access, view, archive and print documents created in a variety of environments by automatically converting print data streams, generated by mainframe or midrange computers, to industry standard PostScript, enabling direct printing to any PostScript printer.

RSA's solution proved a perfect fit.

For the M.I.S. Print solution, jobs are received via channel from the mainframe. M.I.S. Print converts the DJDE and Metacode applications to PostScript for printing. Currently, SAFECO generates more than 2.7 million impressions per month.

Getting up and running involved an intense three-day process, recalls Win Matter, systems analyst for SAFECO. "We had the big changeover during the three-day Memorial weekend," he says. "They physically shut the computer down, loaded the data on a truck and flew it here to Seattle." SAFECO staffers found themselves dealing with unfamiliar applications.

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"If we had questions, we'd call RSA's help desk," says Matter. "In three days of work, we only had 13 errors. And even with those 13, the technology experts at RSA were able to solve each one of them."

Behind the scenes, the process also unfolded smoothly. "From installation to production, it only took us one month to get SAFECO up and running," says Pat Groeger, RSA Alliance Manager. "We took special care to handle all the details ahead of time so that when the Memorial weekend transition got underway there would be no surprises."

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Making it look easy

Among M.I.S. Print's capabilities are its abilities to redirect host output to production printers to handle peak load printing requirements, electronic document viewing, and demand reprint where jobs can be archived at the printer for later reprinting without time-consuming delays and reprocessing at the host computer. Matter notes that one useful feature is M.I.S. Print's intelligent import capability to import printer resources. "We thought it was going to be a real project getting data down to the printer," he says, "but the process works great."

SAFECO's hard work has paid off. The long range benefits have been significant. SAFECO went from 12 printers to two. They were able to close down the print center in Indianapolis and handle everything on two printers in Seattle. By eliminating that entire expense, they've saved millions.