

ISC expands market share through modernization



Investment Systems Company (ISC), based in Ohio in the U.S. has been providing integrated customized portfolio management and accounting software solutions since 1984. Over the years these IBM i based solutions have been enhanced to offer complete functionality, although still restricted by the limited deployment options that COBOL and RPG allow. Using LANSA's RAMP, ISC has recently redeveloped the most frequently used applications and refaced the remaining ones. The modernized solution is now available in a hosted environment and will be offered cross-platform when the modernization project is finalized.

The 80/20 rule

ISC started its business in the early eighties when they developed the Portfolio Accounting System, a COBOL-based portfolio management system, and the Shareholder Accounting System, an RPG-based mutual fund transfer agent system. ISC's client base includes mutual fund companies, investment advisory companies, family offices who exclusively manage the investments of their specific family and other authorities that need to manage their investments. Over the years the solution evolved from IBM System/34 to System/36 and then to the AS/400.

Ronni Bialosky, President at ISC says, "We offer what we consider a very solid base package and work closely with our customers to customize the systems according to their needs. But in the real world you need to have a graphical interface as well."

ISC started to look for modernization options, something that would not just provide a graphical look to the existing applications, but that would also allow partial and gradual redevelopment. One of ISC's main drivers for redevelopment was to expand its market share to Windows.

Partly New – Partly Modernized

It was at that time that Bialosky learned about RAMP from LANSA. She explains, "I liked the idea that RAMP offered a framework in which we could rewrite the 20 percent of the applications that our customers use most frequently and that we could leave the remaining 80 percent until later. LANSA's hybrid modernization and redevelopment approach meant that we didn't have to rewrite the whole system before we had something that we could take to market and show our customers."

ISC went ahead with its modernization project and used RAMP mainly for its framework navigation with searches and filters. Hardly any time was spent on repainting the screens generated by RAMP's embedded refacing tool. "Redevelopment is our goal in the long run and since that is a fairly quick process with Visual LANSA (the development tool embedded in RAMP), we might just as well spend our effort on that," says Bialosky.

Today ISC is well on its way to redeveloping the solution. In the current 'half-way' status, ISC customers already have a vastly improved view of their data. They can graphically and dynamically sort data and drill down, whereas previously they only had static reports. The

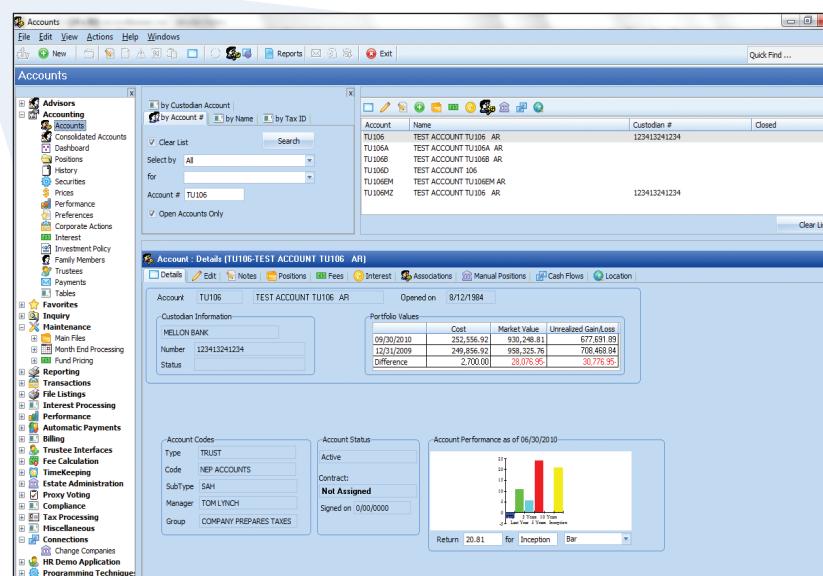
new online reporting makes research easier by letting customers, for example, list their portfolio by biggest winner or loser and then drill down into the details. Customers can also make the same dynamic data inquiry facility available to their clients over the Web.

Customers are excited about the facility to extract information directly into Excel. Data maintenance has become easier as well, because of drop-down, pop-up, calendar and other rich application facilities.

Increased Market Share

Bialosky found that there was a learning curve moving from COBOL and RPG to LANSA, but LANSA's framework feature and training services made the transition easy.

Making true on its vision that the application can be taken to market while only partly redeveloped, ISC is already noticing an increased level of interest. This is especially true for the hosted solution, for which the first few customers have already signed up. Existing customers are also pleased to see the application moving forward. ■



The framework navigation with searches, filters, sort and drill down facilities provides customers with a vastly improved view of their data.

COMPANY AND SYSTEM INFORMATION

- Investment Systems Company is a software company that offers integrated portfolio management and accounting systems. For more information and an online demo of the modernized solution visit: www.investmentsystems.com