



## **IT Asset Management Case Study Unisys Corporation / Federal Government Agency**

Unisys recently faced the challenge of providing a major government agency with a complete and robust IT Asset Management (ITAM) solution that would track and manage an enterprise-wide diverse list of assets. Requirements specific to this client, whom we cannot name for security reasons, included:

- 1) a comprehensive solution with all components: tools, processes, and people;
- 2) a wide variety of asset types to manage which included software, technology assets, office equipment, and specialty devices (33 different asset types in total);
- 3) an interface to a configuration autodiscovery system;
- 4) electronic integration with the client's procurement, installation and disposal systems;
- 5) business procedures (called "catch points") to ensure ongoing data accuracy; and,
- 6) an extensive list of asset and configuration reports.

To meet these complex requirements, Unisys engaged TekMethods, L.L.C. to complete a TekMethods Solution Blueprint<sup>SM</sup>. The service included, but was not limited to, 1) a rigorous discovery of the current environment utilizing TekMethods' exclusive and proven "probing question" methodology, 2) identification of the desired end state of the solution from the perspective of key stakeholders, 3) analysis, at the architectural level, of both the functional and technical solution requirements, 4) recommendation on tools, technologies, processes, and policies needed to meet the client's requirements, and 5) creation of a detailed go-forward strategy for meeting the client's objectives and requirements in managing the technology asset base.

To commence the implementation project, TekMethods mobilized an extended Asset Management Implementation Team of senior management, advisory resources, technical resources, and additional stakeholders, to develop a mutually agreed upon Plan of Action.

With the team assembled and all relevant information in hand, TekMethods proceeded with the following steps:

- ▼ Created a Comprehensive Data Dictionary  
Utilizing the proprietary TekMethods Solution Dictionary<sup>SM</sup> we proceeded to define all data elements to be maintained by the system, each data element's point of capture and subsequent update points, each data element's attributes, standards and business rules as well as the flow of data elements between automated systems.
- ▼ Developed Data Integrity "Catch Point" Procedures

Catch points are functions or processes whereby changes to an asset can be reliably “caught” and recorded in the asset repository to maintain continued accuracy. The catch point procedures we implemented were tailored to match the lifecycle of each type of asset managed in the Asset Management solution.

▼ Installed and Customized an Asset Repository Tool

A robust and fully-referential data repository was selected to contain and manage the asset data and provide reporting capabilities. A referential system ensures that only clean data is entered into the repository and directs the potentially erroneous data to the asset manager for review. There it can be corrected and reconciled with the existing accurate data.

▼ Implemented Hand-Held Scanning Technology

We installed customized hand-held barcode scanning technology to be used for data collection, data transfer and system administration. These pocket PC-based scanners are used to quickly and accurately perform receiving, disposal, inventory and asset physical reconciliation functions. This reduces the likelihood of human error while simultaneously speeding the collection time.

▼ Developed System Interfaces

Considerable effort was expended by TekMethods’ solution architects to design enduring integrations with Unisys’ service delivery systems. These automated interfaces enable updates to be automatically applied to the asset repository to ensure continued data accuracy. For this particular client, we also developed an interface to their web ordering system (procurement vendor) and the configuration autodiscovery tool. Thus, the solution is very automated and requires much less manual data entry and oversight.

▼ Physical Hardware Inventory

TekMethods, in collaboration with an alliance partner specializing in physical inventory, performed a complete baseline physical inventory of approximately 45,000 assets over a nine week period. On average, 10-12 professional inventory teams simultaneously visited 6 locations per day for a total of over 300 locations inventoried. In addition, remote inventory “field kits” were sent to another 200+ very small locations. The synchronization of this effort alone was significant and required a tremendous effort. Ultimately, no complaints were received and the client was extremely satisfied with both the inventory effort and the end result of data.

▼ Post Physical Inventory

A special team of TekMethods and Unisys personnel reconciled and normalized the inventory data and subsequently populated the data repository. This data was then electronically transmitted to the Unisys Service Desk and made available to all Unisys Field Operations personnel who perform installations, moves, adds and other changes to client hardware and software.

▼ Train PMO and Client Staff

To effectively support this government client, training was provided to both the Unisys Program Management Office staff and various client personnel. Using a train-the-trainer approach where TekMethods and the software vendors trained Unisys personnel, specialists focused their training on the following areas:

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- Monitor the system's overall performance and functionality.
  - Generate all reports and system exports (scheduled and ad hoc).
  - Maintain documentation reflecting current Asset Management procedures for those personnel which may have responsibility for various aspects of the equipment lifecycle.
  - Monitor each of the system interfaces and resolve data quality issues which may arise.
  - Modify established data integrity catch point procedures as needed to meet the organization's changing business information flow.
  - Perform root cause analysis and correction of data inconsistencies as well as support "rogue" asset resolution.
  - Report system problems and perform problem resolution activities.
  - Key manual records as needed for non-automated processes.
  - Provide process training as required, and accommodate personnel turnover.
- ▼ Ongoing Solution Support  
 Essential to an effective Asset Management solution is the provision of on-going support of the overall solution. TekMethods' support includes all aspects of the solution both technical (tools and interfaces) and procedural (catch point procedures, system usability, data management). In addition, each of the software vendors provide "Level 2/Level 3" of support for their software products (i.e., asset repository, configuration autodiscovery, hand-held scanner).

Upon completion of the above efforts, the Asset Management Implementation Team held a formal system review and turnover for both Unisys' ongoing support staff and client interfacing personnel.

In addition to the numerous benefits the client expected from having accurate asset-related data readily available for decision-making and service management, a few unexpected benefits have been noted. For example:

- 1) Proactive replacement of bad hard drives was initiated on a particular PC model when it was determined to be problematic.
- 2) Anomalies between what was expected to be shipped from the client's procurement vendor and what was actually received into the database have been resolved resulting in a financial credit to the client.
- 3) Disaster recovery efforts were accelerated due to the availability of accurate asset data following a recent hurricane.
- 4) The employee exit procedure was enhanced so that managers would know what assets must be turned in at the exit interview and this has resulted in improved cost avoidance.