PRO/5 Drives Trucking Company's In-House Conversion

By Elisabeth Monaghan

Name of Company - A. Duie Pyle
Founded - 1924
Location - West Chester, PA.
Description of Business - Highly diversified provider of integrated logistics resources. These services consist of less than truckload (LTL); truckload transportation; contract and public warehousing; pool distribution and assembly consolidation; dedicated driver and equipment leasing; third party logistics services; and a host of other specialized services and equipment.
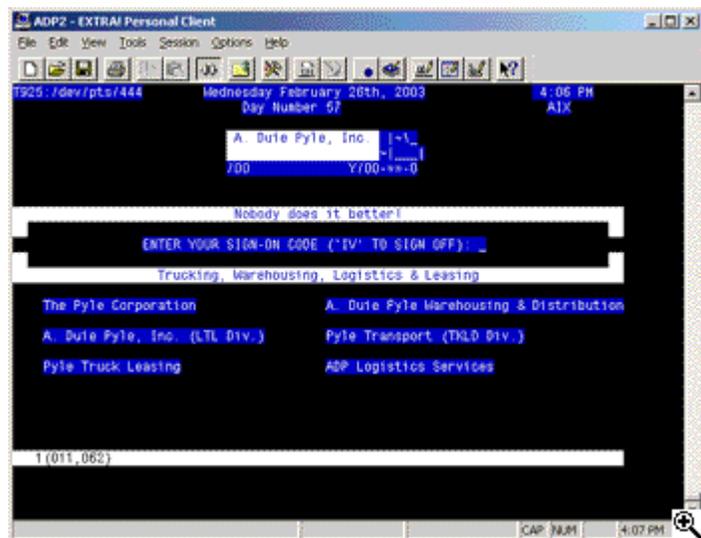
Converting from one programming language to another is a process no company relishes. Consequently, when it was time for trucking company A. Duie Pyle to convert from MAI System's Open BASIC, IT Director Jim Dobson was determined to find a vendor with a language that could support the company's immediate and future needs. With 15 sites throughout the northeast United States, and a base of 100,000 demanding customers, Pyle could not afford any downtime associated with a conversion.

To determine which language provider could offer future stability and accommodate Pyle's need for cutting-edge technology, Dobson relied on his team of seasoned Business BASIC programmers. Recognizing that these individuals would spend 40+ hours a week with the selected flavor of Business BASIC, Dobson knew that they could best determine which language providers to research. Once the team whittled down the list to two vendors, they voted. According to Dobson, BASIS PRO/5® won "hands down," and that vote of confidence was enough for him.
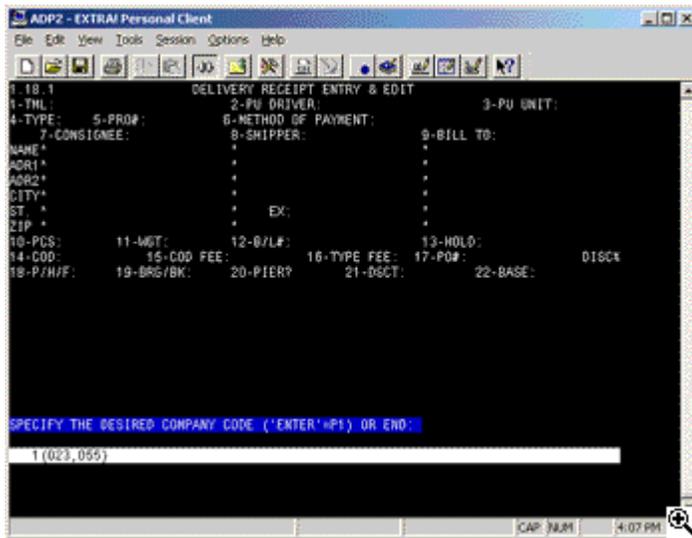
Because Dobson's team has experience with a myriad of Business BASIC platforms, Plye did not outsource the conversion to PRO/5. Instead, with his programmers and a well-defined development/test system, Dobson had the resources to plan, implement, and test the application conversions without disrupting the company's live system.

Seven months after installation, PRO/5 is the primary language for all the Pyle companies' operational software. Since the conversion, Pyle has modified its Web site to allow customers to request an ETA direct from the drivers on the road. A PRO/5 application processes this request and then routes the request to the appropriate driver's truck via Pyle's QualComm satellite units. The driver's response comes back to the PRO/5 application, which then replies via an HTML e-mail to the customer, providing a timeframe in which the customers can expect their freight deliveries. Innovations like these have

Sign-on screen for A. Duie Pyle's PRO/5-based application.

enabled Pyle to provide unique services to its customers and to stand out in its industry.

A. Duie Pyle's Delivery Receipt, Entry & Edit screen.

Now that Dobson has survived the conversion, how does he regard the process? "It wasn't easy," concedes Dobson, "I'd recommend that anyone else facing a similar situation outsource the conversion. Because we do have experienced Business BASIC programmers, along with a stable test environment, we were able to handle the conversion internally. If others in this situation don't have a lot of experience with Business BASIC platforms and don't have a test environment, they definitely need to outsource the conversion."

Dobson emphasizes that BASIS's support has made a significant difference in getting through the process. "We're not an easy customer to please," he acknowledges. "There aren't many vendors that I can say have been able to meet our needs. But, BASIS has been there at every turn of the road. We presented some difficult challenges for them, and they never backed down."

How does Dobson perceive BASIS's ability to support A. Duie Pyle's future growth? "In a nutshell, we have a path to the future," Dobson says. "BASIS has provided professional training on PRO/5, Data Server, and the ODBC connection. We are linking our operational data from PRO/5 with our Web site for secure services to our customers. In the past, we had to duplicate data and keep it in sync throughout the day. This was problematic at best. We feel confident that BASIS will be there for us as the world of technology moves forward."

Visit the company Web site for more information on the Pyle companies.