NGS Software Solutions
'Make the Grade' at Montana State University Bookstore

Supporting and enhancing the academic goals and day-to-day needs of 12,000 students is not an easy assignment for Montana State University Bookstore located at the Bozeman, Montana campus. With eight million dollars in annual sales and a staff of 20 full time and 100 part time employees and work study students, the MSU Bookstore is a full-function operation, providing not only course textbooks and materials, but reference and general interest books, art supplies, insignia clothing, computers and accessories, food, ... just about everything a student needs for college life.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Industry:	Retailer, University Bookstore
Annual Sales:	$8 million (approximately)
# of Employees:	20 FT, 100 PT
Business Software:	MBS Bookstore Retail Management
IBM Business Partner:	MBS Systems
NGS Software:	*Concert Series* Financial Management
	NGS-IQ Business Intelligence

To meet the challenge, MSU Bookstore has used bookstore retail management software from MBS for many years, but was still depending on a financial package designed for the IBM System/34.

"Here we were with this powerful IBM iSeries 400 and the MBS software, yet needed to run our financial software in System/36 emulation," relates Mike Steinmetz, Controller at MSU Bookstore. "The old financial package was labor intensive, with lots of manual and duplicate data entry. It had served its time years ago."

Research Begins...
The decision was made to find a better fit for their iSeries 400 and the store. As Mike began the selection process for new financial software, two critical requirements were on-line access and a fully integrated system. Mike reviewed various software packages on the market, and narrowed it down to New Generation Software's *Concert Series*™ financial management system and *NGS-IQ*™ business intelligence solutions. Mike's selection was largely based on his familiarity with NGS software; he had used the *NGS-IQ* product for four years at a previous employer and was extremely pleased with the software and level of support.

"You find something you like and stick with it," says Mike. "And it works well with the MBS software." Another plus, he adds, was that "NGS pricing fit well within our budget."

Implementation of the NGS software was remarkably uneventful, which Mike attributes to the staff at NGS. Fifteen months later, MSU Bookstore is very satisfied with their selection. Mike credits the customer support they receive from NGS as a critical factor in their success with the software. "It lends comfort that NGS sees this as a long term relationship. NGS' support is receptive and responsive to our needs and requirements."

Testing Complete...
Mike says the *Concert Series* G/L delivers all the functionality they require, but admits his biggest delight is *ConcertPro*™ doing all his financial statements in Microsoft Excel. The *ConcertPro* module boasts a seamless bridge between the *Concert Series* General Ledger and Excel. *ConcertPro's* ability to download *Concert Series* G/L data from the iSeries 400 provides a dynamic link to quickly and accurately update Excel spreadsheets automatically with the latest G/L data. *ConcertPro* also uploads budgets and transactions to *Concert Series* G/L files. Mike relates that it used to

CUSTOMER QUOTE

"ConcertPro is slick! It's eliminated all that re-keying, and allows me to be in and out of the iSeries 400 seamlessly. It takes a matter of minutes for that data to be pulled into Excel. The old financial package required so much manual data entry that more personnel were needed to support it. The Concert Series directly contributed to our 25% staff reduction."

take him five hours each month to manually enter data for the bookstore's financial statements. Now, with three separate spreadsheets totaling 27 pages, Mike simply has to open the spreadsheets, and they are automatically refreshed when he changes the date selection. "*ConcertPro* is slick! It's eliminated all that re-keying, and allows me to be in and out of the iSeries 400 seamlessly. It takes a matter of minutes for that data to be pulled into Excel."

A lifesaver is how Mike describes the A/P module of the *Concert Series*. With the old financial package, his A/P clerks had to dig deep into the paper documents for answers; now they go right into the *Concert Series* A/P Inquiries and have immediate information at their fingertips.

The board is pleased, too, because Mike was able to reduce his accounting staff by one full time person. "The old financial package required so much manual data entry that more personnel were needed to support it. The *Concert Series* directly contributed to our 25% staff reduction."

As for the *NGS-IQ* business intelligence software, Mike reports it's a tremendous time saver to be able to link queries. In the past he had to pull a lot of pieces together, but the advanced functionality of *NGS-IQ* eliminates creating temporary files. Mike relies on the conditional calculation capability of the host-based *IQ Server* module of *NGS-IQ*. He affirms that "85-90% of the 'if, and, or, else' statements can be accommodated within *IQ Server*." He frequently uses *NGS-IQ* with the *Concert Series* Payroll, such as a line item report on payroll taxes for individual employees. *NGS-IQ* also facilitates electronic transfers by having required information readily accessible.

Future plans for the bookstore include an on-line reservation system for textbooks and supplies for their students. Mike says that *NGS-IQ* will be instrumental in pushing inventory stock-on-hand data from the product to their Web site.

Using the *Concert Series* and *NGS-IQ*, Montana State University Bookstore has graduated to a new level of information accessibility, operational efficiency, and productivity to meet the needs of their students.

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