

Success Story: PIC

PIC Improves Performance of Critical Data Processing Application By 25% with the Help of SyncSort

Organizational Profile

- Company with over 30 years of experience in B-to-C and B-to-B direct marketing services

Business Needs

- Improve data processing performance
- Ability to process more data, faster, in order to accommodate new clients
- Meeting of all SLA requirements

Environment

- Windows 2003 server with dual processors 2.8 Xeon, 2 gigabytes of RAM and 442 gigabyte of hard drive space

Benefits

- 25% Overall performance improvement
- SLAs easily met
- Time savings equals ability to do business with new customers

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AI Rivera
Manager Information Systems
PIC

The Challenge: Programmers Investment Corp. (PIC) has been offering B-to-C and B-to-B direct marketing services to customers nationwide for over 30 years. The company specializes in customized order processing, billing, and customer service solutions for a wide range of direct marketing programs.

Operations at PIC recently ran into a processing bottleneck with a weekly job of six gigabytes of customer data. The tool in place at the time was MFSort, and it was taking a counterproductive five and a half hours to finish the job—or, sometimes not finishing at all. This started causing problems with the meeting of SLAs, and two of PIC's biggest clients had to endure delays when it came to receiving their tracking reports. That's when PIC's IT team—AI Rivera, Chris Austin and Jim Heck—got together to delineate the criteria for new data processing software. They soon determined that their biggest need was performance.

The Solution: It was at this point that the IT staff at PIC asked SyncSort's technical experts to arrange a Proof-of-Concept (POC) program. Testing was to be done utilizing SyncSort software and Cobol MFSort. A trial processing job was soon set up on a server running Windows with one CPU. The test data was a four gigabyte flat text file containing fixed length records of 1604 bytes on a 22-byte fixed length character key. The benchmark result: MFSort took 45 minutes to complete the job, while SyncSort finished it in 5 minutes. The 88% performance gain impressed PIC so much that they licensed the SyncSort product and installed it for production on a dual processor server running Windows 2003.

The Benefits: Not meeting SLA requirements is now a thing of the past for PIC and valuable customers don't have to wait long when it comes to receiving their data. Excessive elapsed data processing time is also no longer a problem at PIC. In fact, overall performance has improved by 25%. Processing jobs are now smoothly conducted on a daily, weekly and ad hoc basis. About four million lines of code have been migrated from the mainframe and 106 gigabytes of data are processed by SyncSort in these time slots.

With SyncSort in place the company can confidently move forward and add new clients to its roster. "The bottom line is that SyncSort provides us with considerable cost savings, cuts down our elapsed time, and so pretty much justifies our project," concludes Manager Information Systems, AI Rivera.

SyncSort processed 6 gigabytes of data in five minutes versus MFSort's 45 minutes, achieving an elapsed time savings of 88% for PIC.

