Mainstream New Zealand

Kiwi start-up grows into world-class freight and logistics solutions provider by focusing on the customer and employee experience

Mainstream New Zealand began in 1992 as a virtual business providing freight services between Auckland and Christchurch. With over 300 staff members today, the company has locations across New Zealand and provides logistics solutions for sellers worldwide. Suppliers, customers, and staff leverage the company's internally developed freight management system (FMS) to manage consignments, and its warehouse management system (WMS) to automate warehouse pick, pack, and dispatch processes. Both proprietary systems utilize Rocket® UniVerse to deliver the capabilities both the business and their customers need to succeed.

Challenge

In the start-up phase, businesses often lack the skill and resources to buy or build the systems they need. Luckily for Mainstream, its co-founder, Diane Haliday, is a technologist by trade. After evaluating off-the-shelf FMS solutions, she realized creating a bespoke solution was the only way to deliver the capability to grow efficiently and in alignment with business and customer needs. Her knowledge of applications based on Rocket MultiValue led her to create the entire business infrastructure with Rocket UniVerse at its core. Still, many processes remained paper-based or at least required data to be transferred manually to the FMS. "Our customers needed an online portal so they could get quotes, enter consignments (shipments), print shipping labels, and track deliveries," says Diane. "They wanted real-time proof of delivery, which meant we not only needed a portal for them but a means for our drivers and staff to update our systems in real time."

This became even more critical when Mainstream expanded into warehousing goods for their clients. Diane's team went to work building a WMS solution that met Mainstream's specific needs, eliminating the risk and overhead associated with

a separate solution. "To add a new application and toolset just didn't make sense for us or our customers. Plus, we had decades of business logic built into the FMS and adding the WMS capability was relatively straightforward. We didn't need to rewrite anything, which kept costs down and allowed us to proceed rapidly." Delivering solutions to both staff and customers with the same Rocket UniVerse database at the core was critical due to the just-in-time nature of the business.

While Diane was steadfast in her approach and convictions, some IT staff were less sure about building around a Pick database. Their concerns were quickly addressed when they were introduced to Rocket U2 REST, allowing the team to use familiar tools including RESTful services to create APIs that leverage MV data and business logic to both automate manual, paper-based processes and to provide capabilities including mobile and web interfaces.

The need for real-time interfaces became even more critical when Mainstream expanded into warehousing goods. Working with their partner, mvSolutions Ltd., Mainstream created web-based applications that provided the real-time interfaces

they needed in the warehouse, on the road, and at the customer's location. The portal provides both web browser and tablet access, empowering customers and employees (drivers and office staff) to access quotes, enter consignments (shipments), print shipping labels, track deliveries including real-time proof of deliveries, and more.

When Rocket introduced Rocket® MultiValue Integration System (MVIS) it was a game changer. "[Rocket] MVIS is more stable and provides greater visibility into system health," says Nick Suvalko, managing director of mvSolutions Ltd. "With MVIS we are easily able to monitor performance and tune connection pool settings to increase capacity over time or be able to handle both typical and peak workloads." Continuous development of tools like MVIS, combined with the low footprint of the Rocket UniVerse database have been key to allowing Mainstream to grow efficiently and to rapidly scale the business. Because of the inherent support of cloud and hybrid deployments, MVIS is deployed as a hosted solution, providing end users everywhere with responsive, real-time access to processes and information.

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>
> *Diane Haliday*
> *Co-owner, Mainstream New Zealand*

Results

Rocket MVIS delivers capabilities such as automation, logging, and monitoring as well as DevOps and cloud capabilities that allow Mainstream's IT team to deliver solutions to market that many larger players have yet to achieve. Tablets are used by drivers on the road to record the status of every shipment in real time, while warehouse and depot staff have scanners attached to forklifts that record the movement of every pallet of goods. The customer portal is written in HTML and JavaScript, and Python is used to script complex transactions on the back end. Agile and rapid development methods bring new functionality to market much faster. Not only is the team more productive but they are excited to use modern languages which help in both attracting and retaining talent.

"We are continuously modernizing the tools used by our customers and staff, spending money where it counts," says Greg Haliday, Mainstream's managing director. "Our capabilities rival that of the largest firms in our space, and we also deliver capabilities that allow many of our small customers to operate as their larger competitors do. It's a key reason we have grown our customer base: They know we are focused on helping them to be as successful and efficient as they can be."

The customer portal and database support over 1,200 users per day, all of whom receive real-time updates as information changes, utilizing the same subroutines supporting operations in the field.

Mainstream's IT team continues to build more modern interfaces for their internal staff using smart GUIs that make processing more intuitive and streamlined. The small number of green screens left will be eventually phased out. Almost no one is required to manually key in information, and process improvements are fueling efficient growth as the business expands.

"The original Rocket U2 REST solution came at a critical juncture, allowing us to transition from manual processes to digital or automated workflows on the online portal without fuss," explained Diane. "We have literally grown from having a single trade route to being a multi-million-dollar integrated carrier, all on the back of Rocket UniVerse. Our strategy has allowed us to grow rapidly, intelligently, and efficiently, and I'm excited to see how future solutions support our continued growth and innovation."