

WMS Gaming Beats The Odds With Serena Software

Mariner helps WMS win the game



COMPANY WMS Gaming

LOCATION United States

URL www.wms.com

INDUSTRY Games and Entertainment

PRODUCT Serena Mariner

APPLICATION Product Portfolio Management

“We manage 100-150 projects simultaneously. Doing that on a spreadsheet lacking process enforcement, tailored views by audience, complex sorting, reporting, version control or real-time data is simply not good business practice.”

Larry Stein, Senior Project Manager
WMS Gaming, Inc.

CHALLENGE

Lack of project ROI
No way to prioritize based on economic viability
Manual processes with lack of process enforcement
Tremendous growth

Executive Summary

WMS is one of the world’s leading slot suppliers with an unmatched reputation for innovative game design and development. Their portfolio has grown to include many of the industry’s most popular and profitable branded casino slots and state-of-the-art gaming technologies. WMS Gaming uses Serena’s Mariner to manage both software and hardware projects related to these highly regulated gaming systems. In particular, WMS is thrilled with their newfound ability to make key information readily available throughout the company. Using a highly advanced configuration of Mariner, this new partnership between Serena and WMS has saved nearly 244 person days of lost productivity per year. And that’s just the beginning. After a three month rollout, they now have role-based, reliable information available across the enterprise.

SOLUTION

Serena Mariner

Challenges

As WMS matured and experienced tremendous growth, they began to look for way to manage projects both internally and through outsourcing to stay competitive. Even with innovative products and strong market demands, WMS needed to focus their resources on the most profitable projects. While the company was doing amazingly well in the market, they lacked project ROI and didn’t know if their resources were applied in the most profitable manner.

RESULTS

Reduced a single process from 244 person days annually to nearly instantaneous
Reliable, role-based data is now available at the click of a button
Far more efficient and effective use of resources

Having determined a need for portfolio management in October 2006, Larry Stein was brought in as a Senior Project Manager to work with the product development group. Stein was hired due to his background in processes and tools to improve efficiency. “We didn’t have a good way of measuring or forecasting project costs and revenues, closing the loop once the product was produced, or evaluating projects to see if they were economically viable,” says Stein. “WMS Gaming is a cutting-edge company. While customer requests and market needs were a key part of the project priorities, many projects were based on whether it was ‘cool’ or ‘an industry first.’ If it was new, creative, and hadn’t been done, it was automatically on the list.”

Stein began looking at tools to help them from a Project Management Office perspective – tools that could help them move away from managing by spreadsheets. “We manage 100-150 projects simultaneously in the PMO. Doing that on a spreadsheet with a lack of process enforcement, tailored views by audience, complex sorting, reporting, version control or real-time data is simply not good business practice,” said Stein.

With the wide variety of project management tools available in the market, Stein says, “there are quick and dirty solutions and there are good solutions.” To be effective in managing this volume of complex projects, WMS required a good solution. Stein needed something that could manage the entire enterprise, managing financials, milestones and resources. He wanted to be sure he was solving problems not just for his piece of the universe, but instead finding a long-term solution that would solve problems for the entire company.

Solution

Serena's Mariner was the ideal solution, meeting and exceeding Stein's key requirements. These included all the core requirements for basic project management as well as:

- Managing project slippage
- Root cause analysis
- Process enforcement
- Customizability to meet the needs of WMS's specific processes and requirements
- Integration capabilities

While Microsoft Project was a high contender from a project management standpoint, Project Server fell short in managing project slippage and performing root cause analysis. If milestone dates shifted, he needed a way to perform a root cause analysis to help pinpoint the main reasons. Stein said, "Very few tools could meet this requirement. I could change dates, but I could not build metrics on them. This was the number one requirement and I wasn't willing to compromise."

Results

Three months later, Stein had successfully implemented, configured and rolled out Mariner. Because he already had processes in place, it was simple to automate them. WMS now has a system that is as close as possible to the previous manual processes, only it's real-time!

Users across the organization now have a system that provides:

- What used to take an average of 244 person days per year is now nearly instantaneous.
- Previously, managing and reporting milestone changes and root cause analysis using an Excel spreadsheet (once it became available for checkout) was time-consuming and frustrating. Now it's simple and quick.
- Reliable data and version control is now available. Previously, the spreadsheet provided no easy way of tracking what had changed since the previous version. WMS had created a usable but complicated work-around that was both manual and time-consuming and rendered the data unreliable. Now, with custom coding in the background, simply recording the date that a date changes makes the item turn blue and bold on reports. "Bold and blue is our quick, easy way to review what has changed. It is deeply entrenched across the organization, and it was not an option to create a new process. The ability to customize Mariner to meet this requirement was an important part of our decision-making," says Stein.
- Role-based information is now available enterprise wide in real-time. Previously, for a person to see the snapshot report which was produced weekly, they had to have Excel installed and download the file. Now all every employee needs is a Web browser and Internet access.

Stein says that because Mariner has made the process so much easier, they have now expanded the types of projects they are managing from theme projects and some hardware projects to include the high volume of change requests from the field and supporting new jurisdictions.

"It's so easy for the project managers to create new projects and it simply shows up in the milestone report so the field is informed as to when it will go into development and when it is expected to release. The field is geographically distributed and they are thrilled with this information, as they used to have very little insight and visibility," says Stein.

With the goals of phase one met, the rest of the company is now seeing how cool this is and they are asking for more. In fact he is piloting a project in Mariner using the product development discipline called Stage-Gate®, which takes an idea through the stages of evaluation, scoping, business case, development, validation and launch. "Now when a change request comes in, we can capture estimated costs and expenses, look at the various projects and weigh them for initial ROI. We now have the platform for making these decisions in one place. We've been doing this in spreadsheets with distributed data. Mariner brings this information together into a single location."

Stay tuned as they are also looking to expand this to pull revenue data from Oracle financials and use Mariner's resource and timesheet module to manage the resource planning.

“We now have the platform for making ROI decisions in one place. We’ve been doing this in spreadsheets with distributed data, but Mariner brings this information together in a single location.”

Larry Stein, Senior Project Manager

WMS Gaming, Inc.



ABOUT SERENA

Serena is a privately owned company, headquartered in Redwood City, California, with 29 offices in 14 countries and almost 1000 employees. Serena provides software on premise and on demand to over 15,000 customers including 96 of the Fortune 100. Serena enables teams of programmers to become more efficient by standardizing and automating development processes across both mainframe and distributed environments. Serena enables IT business analysts and power users to improve productivity with a new generation of Web 2.0 tools to build Business Mashups. Business Mashups automate common every day processes, are visual and do not require coding. Serena also enables IT executives to gain visibility into their projects, resources and costs – CIO’s should have access to the same quality of information about IT as the CFO has about Finance. For more information on Serena, visit www.serena.com.

CONTACT

Learn more about the enterprise-wide power of Serena products by visiting www.serena.com or contacting a sales representative in your area.

Serena Worldwide Headquarters

Serena Software, Inc.
Corporate Offices
1900 Seaport Boulevard
Second Floor
Redwood City, California 94063-5587
United States

800.457.457.3736 T
650.481.3700 F
info@serena.com

Serena European Headquarters

Serena Software Europe Ltd.
Hertfordshire
Abbey View Everard Close
St. Albans
Hertfordshire AL 1 2PS
United Kingdom

+44 (0)800.328.0243 T
+44 (0)1727.869.804 F
ukinfo@serena.com

Serena Asia Pacific Headquarters

Serena Software Pte Ltd.
360 Orchard Road
#12-10
International Building
Singapore 238869

+65 6834.9880 T
+65 6836.3119 F
apinfo@serena.com

Copyright © 2008 Serena Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Serena, ChangeMan, Comparex, Dimensions, Mariner, PVCS and TeamTrack are registered trademarks of Serena Software. Mashup Composer, Mashup Exchange, MicroMarket and Prototype Composer are trademarks of Serena Software, Inc. All other product or company names are used for identification purposes only, and may be trademarks of their respective owners.