



Case Study: Planting the Seed for Advanced Data Analysis

Engage partners with Brandt Consolidated to create a new, custom software application that helps clients lower costs

At a Glance:

Background

- Brandt Consolidated is a leading agricultural company that helps growers adopt new and profitable technologies.
- Founded in 1953, Brandt consists of three divisions: Specialty Formulations, Dealer Support, and Retail Agronomy.

Challenges

- Geospatial data collected from disparate technology platforms were siloed in various formats.
- Brandt needed to create a single repository for the data that would integrate with third-party systems, standardize information and allow for easier analysis.

Solution

- Brandt partnered with Engage, a St. Louis-based expert in the design and development of web and mobile solutions for enterprises.
- Engage built a custom solution, BASE (Brandt Agronomic Solutions Engine) to integrate with third-party platforms and serve as a data repository.

Results

- Successfully aggregated data into one, single repository for streamlined reporting and analysis
- Powered its Total Acre precision agriculture tool by using BASE to seamlessly bring data into the system.
- Maximized the value of Total Acre to increase customer satisfaction by providing insight into new efficiencies that enhance productivity and reduce costs.

Full Case Study:

Background

A leading agricultural company, Brandt Consolidated was founded in 1953 to help Illinois farmers adopt new and profitable technologies to their operations. Today, Brandt continues to provide products and services that give growers the best opportunity for maximum return while building a stronger, healthier and more abundant food supply.

Brandt, headquartered in Springfield, IL, consists of three divisions which serve growers around the globe: Specialty Formulations, Dealer Support, and the focus herein, Retail Agronomy. Brandt's Retail Agronomy division provides product and services to farmers such as crop nutrients, seed, crop protection products, crop scouting, soil testing, custom application of pesticides and fertilizers, and development of comprehensive nutrient management plans. In addition, the division provides customized computer and GPS systems designed to enhance grower profitability by helping customers more efficiently track results versus inputs.

Challenges

Brandt's Retail Agronomy's Technical Support division is in charge of managing customers' spatial data collected at the field-level of a location, such as crop yield and application of fertilizers or pesticides. Brandt then analyzes this information in order to provide customers with insight into areas of cost savings and new efficiencies. However, information was collected from disparate technology platforms from a range of vendors. This meant that there was no standardization to the data that came in from the various systems, and the collected data was siloed. Although Brandt was using a software system that could communicate with each platform, the company wanted to advance its data collection and analysis capabilities by standardizing data and bringing information from third-party platforms into a single repository.

Solution

Brandt sought the expertise of St. Louis-based [Engage](#), who Brandt believed would bring a fresh approach to building a customized application for collecting, standardizing, and analyzing customer data. After working closely with Brandt to first understand its specific needs and map out a three-phase rollout, Engage created a web-based application called BASE (Brandt Agronomic Solutions Engine) using the DNN-based content management platform, Evoq™ Content, integrated with an SQL database.

Within BASE, Engage built integration points so that consultants can directly upload spatial data into the system from virtually anywhere, regardless of the software used to collect the data. Once information is input, BASE consolidates the data in a standardized format. Brandt employees can then easily pull the data from BASE into Brandt's precision agriculture software tool, Total Acresm, to analyze and generate reports to help make recommendations to the customers based on the growing season.

"We needed a solid base application to serve as a single data repository," said Pat Schaddel, Brandt's Technical Support division manager. "It was key that the solution could seamlessly interface with third-party applications so that we would only have to go through one touch point to access and report on data."

In addition, Brandt's Technical Support Division built a web service that syncs its existing accounting software, AgVance, with BASE, so users can also input, standardize and access not only spatial data, but also accounting information.

Results

With BASE, Brandt can successfully aggregate data from third-party sources into one, single repository for streamlined reporting and analysis. The company no longer has to spend time and effort going through various touch points to obtain the data needed to provide insight to its customers.

Since data from BASE feeds into Total Acre, Brandt is able to maximize Total Acre's value and market the system as a competitive differentiator. The insight gleaned through Total Acre, via data from BASE, has enabled growers to increase their productivity by making better decisions based on data. With

enhanced insight on how to increase crop yields, growers are producing more crops per acre. And, when more crops are produced, the nutrient sufficiency (the amount of nutrients it takes to yield “x” number of crops) decreases. Thus, if growers are maximizing their nutrient application, they are capable of lowering costs.

Because Engage developed BASE as an open application, it is easy to add new integration points. This offers Brandt the flexibility to bring in data from additional systems as needed, making BASE a scalable platform for years to come.

“Working with Engage has been great in that it has helped our company to adopt new technologies to better serve our customers and give us confidence in the data we provide them,” Schaddel concluded.