

AT A GLANCE

Client Profile:

Graham Packaging™ is a worldwide leader in the design, manufacture, and sale of value-added, custom blow-molded plastic containers for branded consumer products. The company uses technology and innovation to deliver solutions that meet its customers' needs for new designs, product performance requirements, cost management and sustainability. Graham Packaging's strong design capabilities have been especially important to its customers, who generally use packaging to differentiate and add value to their brands.

Headquarters: York, PA

Industry: Manufacturing

Applications: SAP ECC 5.0, BI 3.5

Hardware/Operating System/Database:
Dell/Windows 2003/Oracle



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Jeff Rishel
Vice President of IT, Graham Packaging

Graham Packaging Uses SAP Support Savings to Fund Innovation

Graham Packaging's Vice President of Information Technology Jeff Rishel runs a tight ship. “We're in a world where increasing our productivity year over year is just extremely important,” says Rishel. “So making more bottles with less cost is something that we have to continue to do on a regular basis.”



A Stable, Fully Featured System — No Need for Functional Upgrades

Graham Packaging chose SAP 11 years ago for its unmatched global capabilities and the fact that SAP is a complete, integrated package. Graham started out on SAP R/3 3.1H, subsequently upgrading to 4.6B and finally to ECC 5.0. Rishel explains: “We make plastic bottles. So the SAP environment that we put together 11 years ago looks pretty much the same today as it did then: a very feature-rich, full set of all the functionality that gives us room to grow today and in the future. We didn't upgrade for more functionality. We upgraded because SAP said, ‘We're going to stop supporting your release unless you want to pay extra money.’”

Growing Frustration with Rising Support Costs

Saddled with steep SAP annual support fees, Rishel tried repeatedly to negotiate with SAP for a less burdensome support pricing model — to no avail. “As their prices went up, we were not seeing additional value received for our support dollars,” Rishel says. Graham was not even using all of the functionality in its existing SAP release, so with all of the outstanding features there was no need to consider upgrades.

Exploring the Options

Rishel looked at consulting firms, but “supporting an SAP system after the client had stopped paying maintenance was a fairly new idea to those guys and they didn't provide the reassurance they could support our needs,” says Rishel. There was another option Rishel had heard about: Rimini Street's premium third-party support program that guarantees savings of 50 percent and has a proven record of providing tax and regulatory updates. Rishel says, “We picked Rimini Street for the extensive savings, the company's track record of support responsiveness, and its engineers' demonstrated knowledge of our specific environment.”

BENEFITS

- **Significant savings realized in first year with Rimini Street** – With annual savings of 50 percent on annual support costs, Graham Packaging is extending the investment it has already made in SAP.
- **Focused personal support** – Graham now enjoys rapid execution and reliable response from an expert within 30 minutes, 24/7/365.
- **Mission-critical tax, legal, and regulatory updates** – Graham Packaging now receives “tax & regs” updates error-free and ahead of the vendor’s schedule.

WHY RIMINI STREET

- **Named, regional Primary Support Engineer**
- **Named Account Manager**
- **Application fixes**
- **No forced product or platform upgrades**

“One of my largest expenses has been SAP maintenance. Rimini Street is significantly reducing the annual operating cost of our SAP system, providing us focused, personalized support and operating like an extension of our internal team.”

Jeff Rishel
Vice President of IT, Graham Packaging

Rimini Street
Redefining Enterprise Software Support™

Ultra-Responsive Service Levels Ensure Availability of Mission-Critical Systems

Aside from the dramatic cost savings, Rishel identifies three of the biggest differences between Rimini Street support and SAP support:

- **Lightning-fast response time.** Rishel says that when Graham used to log issues with SAP support, “SAP would take days, weeks, months to respond; and the response would typically be to try things we’d already tried — or to tell us our issue was ‘fixed in the next release.’ With Rimini Street, within minutes we’re getting a personal phone call from someone who already knows our environment intimately and wants to take ownership of the problem, even on non-critical issues.”
- **Superior expertise.** On Rishel’s team is SAP Application Developer Karen Forsythe. According to Forsythe, “With SAP, I was never quite sure if the support person had ever actually sat down and ran through the processes they were talking about. I mean, have they ever actually processed a payroll, for example? With Rimini Street, not only is it easy to talk to an actual person, that person — our Primary Support Engineer — invariably understands what I’m talking about, as though they’ve been through the process themselves — because they have.”
- **Always-open channels of communication.** According to Rishel’s SAP Application Manager Gene Manganti, “With Rimini Street, the line is always open, the response is immediate, and it’s more of a collaborative effort: ‘What about this, what about that? Have you tried this or that yet, do you know about this other thing?’ Rimini Street has made our lives so much simpler.”

Rimini Street engineers have even fixed — in days — issues that had stumped SAP for years. One such case involved a balance in the projects system that would not go away in production, impacting the entire consolidation process including creation of the balance sheet and the P&L statement. “It had been a problem since years and years ago,” says Manganti. “We finally got SAP to log into our system and look at it; they told us we had to upgrade. Rimini Street looked at it for two days, found it was an unusual and complex configuration issue, and was able to fix it immediately. That extra measure of expertise from Rimini Street was huge.”

Cost Savings Enables Investment in New, Strategic Projects

Rishel says Graham’s cost savings from Rimini Street have helped the company avoid having to do further cost reductions by cutting jobs. And, because Rishel himself drove the high-impact move to Rimini Street, it’s given him enhanced credibility with Graham’s senior management in terms of focused spend on strategic applications. Looking forward, says Rishel, “I think we can get a better, cheaper e-procurement system. And I want to keep moving on innovation around the edges of our ERP apps, with things like virtualization and cloud initiatives. Because of our proven success with Rimini Street, there’s just a lot more receptivity to some of these ideas than there has been in the past.”

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