

To accomplish this, Gung-Ho parcels out portions of each fulfillment job to specialized subcontractors who may or may not be anywhere near Incline Village—or anywhere near the United States, for that matter. The company keeps tasks organized through the use of the Gung-Ho Enterprise Network and Information Exchange (GENIE). Running on Microsoft server technologies, GENIE is an Internet-based system that integrates all the manufacturing and distribution operations working with Gung-Ho, and allows Gung-Ho executives to keep tabs on these complex operations.

“Our partners can get information on the orders we have scheduled for fulfillment on any given day so they can staff up their manufacturing and distribution facilities to meet that demand,” says Wade. “At the end of the day, the distribution facilities send us confirmations on all of the shipments that went out, along with tracking numbers. We feed that information directly to our clients’ systems. So, if any of our clients’ customers call to inquire about an order, our clients have the information they need to track it down.”

This ability to stay on top of these distributed projects is critical to Gung-Ho’s success, because as part of its fulfillment services Gung-Ho routinely manages the actual inventory of publications, packaging materials, and software media for its clients. It must be able to provide current information about inventory, delivery schedules, and production queues whenever clients want it.

To provide this information, Gung-Ho has created the Gung-Ho On-Line Data (GOLD) system. The Windows 2000–based GOLD system acts as a secure portal to GENIE that enables Gung-Ho clients to use a Web browser to manage their orders online and receive real-time information regarding virtually every aspect of Gung-Ho’s manufacturing and distribution operations. Clients with a GOLD account can easily check order status, track shipments, enter new orders, change orders, check inventory, review bills of materials and assembly instructions, process returns, and generate reports. The GOLD system also allows clients, suppliers, and Gung-Ho to collaborate and share information such as artwork files, documents, and spreadsheets. GOLD operates in real time, too, so clients always have access to the latest information when they have a question.

“A client on the road,” says Wade, “can access GOLD right from Microsoft Internet Explorer for the Pocket PC, so they can always see just where things stand. We call it ‘GOLD To Go!’”

Staffing the Virtual IT Organization

In keeping with its outsourced business model, Gung-Ho relies on ManagedOps.com, rather than an internal IT staff, to take care of these powerful business applications. “Being a virtual company, we have a minimal in-house IT staff,” says Wade. “We view ManagedOps.com as a partner who handles that aspect of our business.”

As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner for Hosting and Application Services, ManagedOps.com specializes in the delivery of software as a service. ManagedOps.com hosts and manages Great Plains eEnterprise Financials for Gung-Ho, which Wade and his team can easily access from anywhere using the Internet. Not only does eEnterprise provide a full line of financial and accounting services, but it also provides all the capabilities Gung-Ho needs to manage inventory on behalf of its clients.

ManagedOps.com also hosts and manages Gung-Ho’s GENIE and GOLD systems. Because the GOLD server is designed to pull information through the firewall from the Great Plains eEnterprise system, ManagedOps.com had concerns about creating a potential security vulnerability. As a consequence, ManagedOps.com executives weighed in with specific security

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and performance requirements for the Web servers supporting GOLD. They agreed to provide Gung-Ho with the support it wanted, but only on the condition that the GOLD server run on Microsoft Windows 2000 Advanced Server. Anything less robust would not be acceptable.

"We engaged some programmers to do the programming for GOLD," says Wade, "but ManagedOps.com came up with Web site architecture, put in firewalls, and set up the routing. They made sure that it worked and that it would continue to work before they let us go live with it."

A Top-Notch Service Provider

Gung-Ho's decision to go with ManagedOps.com arose after the company had already won a contract to manufacture and deliver more than 2.2 million Kiplinger TaxCut software kits for Block Financial, an H&R Block Company. Wade had decided to go with Great Plains eEnterprise because it would enable him to share information with Block easily. But Wade quickly realized that Gung-Ho could never deploy eEnterprise on its own in the six weeks that remained before Gung-Ho was supposed to be shipping products on Block's behalf. And Gung-Ho had to ship on time or pay Block a \$100,000-per-day penalty.

"We asked the people at Great Plains for recommendations," says Wade, "and they told us that ManagedOps.com was the best in the business. Then we talked to other people in the industry and found that ManagedOps.com had a reputation for being dedicated to its customers' success. Everyone rated it as a top-notch company."

ManagedOps.com proved to be that quite quickly, too. Within its six-week window, Gung-Ho was up and running on Great Plains eEnterprise and able to use the GENIE system to validate the on-time shipment of all but 5 of the 2.2 million kits it manufactured. Statistically, that was an on-time accuracy rate exceeding 99.99999 percent, which surpassed even Block's high expectations.

"ManagedOps.com provides all the hardware, integration, and mission-critical application support we need to provide this kind of service," says Wade, "plus a 24/7 help desk. And they're doing it at a far lower cost than we could do it internally. For Gung-Ho, ManagedOps.com's ASP model is the perfect solution."

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For more information about Gung-Ho products and services, call (800) Go Gung-Ho (464-8644) or visit the Web site at www.gung-ho.com.

For more information about ManagedOps.com, please call (603) 644-7837 or visit the Web site at www.managedops.com.

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