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**Scott Hines, EDI Specialist**  
Union Gas

## Union Gas, Ontario, Canada

### TYPE OF BUSINESS

UTILITY

### ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

#### OPPORTUNITY

UNION GAS NEEDED A ROBUST EDI SOLUTION THAT INTEGRATED WITH THEIR EXISTING WINDOWS NT NETWORK AND ALLOWED THEM TO LEVERAGE THE POWER OF EDI BEYOND TRADITIONAL MEANS TO IMPLEMENT CREATIVE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS.

### STERLING COMMERCE SOLUTION

UNION GAS TURNED TO STERLING COMMERCE, WHO OFFERED A ROBUST SOLUTION IN GENTRAN:SERVER FOR WINDOWS NT.

### BENEFITS

- ▶ SAVES OVER \$100,000 ANNUALLY.
- ▶ WAS BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP FOR WINDOWS NT, NOT PORTED FROM UNIX.
- ▶ MEETS CURRENT ELECTRONIC COMMERCE NEEDS WITH VISION FOR THE FUTURE.
- ▶ IS SCALABLE AND CAN EXTEND ELECTRONIC COMMERCE GLOBALLY VIA THE WEB.
- ▶ LINKS SEAMLESSLY WITH CORE ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS.
- ▶ IS EASY TO USE, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN.

### COMPANY BACKGROUND

Union Gas is a subsidiary of West Coast Energy, a \$4.8 billion company based in Vancouver, British Columbia. Union Gas services customers across Ontario, Canada.

### ELECTRONIC COMMERCE OPPORTUNITY

Union Gas began its EDI operations in early 1991 on a mainframe environment with GENTRAN:Basic® for DOS. During the first implementation of an electronic commerce (EC) environment, Union Gas utilized GENTRAN:Basic for processing purchase orders with external clients.

Over the next few years, the EC climate at Union Gas changed significantly. Scott Hines, EDI specialist at Union Gas, explains: "We implemented three additional EC projects—payments to the Canadian government, buying and selling gas nominations, and a pay-by-phone customer information system. Our EC system grew to about 50 commerce partners."

"From there, our EC infrastructure continued to grow," adds Hines. "We realized that our changing IT system—specifically, the installation of an SAP™ system and the move from mainframe to UNIX/Windows NT—could be utilized to a greater benefit. We also recognized a need to move our EC system to the Windows NT platform. So in early 1997, we implemented GENTRAN:Server for Windows NT."

### STERLING COMMERCE SOLUTION

"We went through a rigorous selection process when we chose our EC server," said Hines. "We started with a list of 10 vendor products before eventually selecting Sterling Commerce, because nothing else came close to GENTRAN:Server® for Windows NT.®"

"We were especially impressed that GENTRAN:Server was built from the ground up and not ported from UNIX," said Hines. And because Sterling Commerce maintains formal partnerships with SAP™ and other major application vendors, seamless integration between existing business systems at Union Gas and their EC system is ensured.

Today, the existing EC infrastructure of Union Gas consists of 65 Windows NT servers on a wide-area network. Union Gas boasts over 500 commerce partners and utilizes GENTRAN:Server to track purchase orders, produce status and exception reports, and update/re-post purchase orders based on status.

This new infrastructure has enabled Union Gas to leverage the power of GENTRAN:Server and EDI beyond traditional means to implement creative business solutions. For example, Union Gas has developed a means of reaching its non-EDI capable commerce partners through the use of GENTRAN:Server and

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the network fax server. The new system gives Union Gas the ability to reach over 500 new commerce partners by processing payments through EDI and the corresponding remittance vouchers through the network fax server.

**TANGIBLE BENEFITS**

With the choice of GENTRAN:Server came significant cost savings, creative EDI implementations and the power to implement electronic commerce as a critical part of their core business operations.

To date, Union Gas has realized tangible savings of over \$100,000 annually using the newly implemented EC environment. The benefits are quickly increasing as more business solutions are streamlined. In

addition, Union Gas enjoys increased commerce partner satisfaction, as payments are received faster (a week earlier) and easier than with the previous system—a direct result of a professional EC system built on Sterling Commerce GENTRAN:Server for Windows NT.

**ELECTRONIC COMMERCE FUTURE**

With an eye on tomorrow, Union Gas continues to explore additional ways it can expand its EC infrastructure, such as setting up an Internet solution for external communications. Union Gas expects that some, if not all, of its EDI transactions will be transported via the Internet in the future. "We see the GENTRAN:Server for Windows NT software playing an important role in our future EC expansion."



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