

# Color by Numbers

*Miller Paint brushes up its bottom line with VAI's System 2000 enterprise software on an IBM® @server® iSeries™ platform.*



An organization needs compatible internal communications to stay in the black.

That's why Miller Paint, which sells high-quality hues out of 20 stores on the West Coast, acted quickly to avert shades of a disaster when the systems running its business processes couldn't talk to each other.

"We had separate modules to handle our business functions," recalls Ed Selee, Miller Paint's Chief Financial Officer. "But the interfaces between them were failing on a regular basis, resulting in corrupted data and inaccurate financial information. We had to spend considerable time and money to track down where the dollars were. Our system was broken and needed to be replaced."

Four firms responded to the company's Request for Proposal. "We were the only one that could demonstrate – point for point – all the functionality Miller Paint needs, on the scalable IBM platform they require," recalls Vincent Taravella, Director of Channel Sales and Marketing for Vormittag Associates, Inc. (VAI), an IBM Premier Business Partner.

IBM Premier Business Partners, like VAI, must achieve a high level of proven customer satisfaction, as measured annually by an independent survey company selected by IBM. They also invest in skills development, technical training and other IBM programs to ensure the advice they give is of the highest quality.

Thanks to VAI's System 2000 enterprise software running on a robust IBM @server iSeries server, Miller Paint today has a comprehensive bundle of business applications that operate seamlessly – and all in real time. Miller Paint's Chief Financial Officer Ed Selee has finally stopped seeing red. "We were able to do 10 percent more transactions immediately on a daily basis," he says. "We have also eliminated the licensing fees of all the business systems software we used to run prior to installing System 2000."

"VAI was able to deliver an integrated solution to Miller Paint by pairing their System 2000 enterprise software with a high-performance IBM @server iSeries server. And now that they have their internal business applications running smoothly together, Miller Paint can explore new ways their iSeries server can help them provide a still higher level of customer service."

**Ginny Keiser, IBM Sales Executive, Small and Medium Business**



“All our software was designed to run on IBM’s servers. They’re the most maintenance-free, reliable and scalable in the business. And they bring Fortune 500 technology to the medium-sized business arena.”

– Vincent Taravella, Director of Channel Sales and Marketing, Vormittag Associates, Inc.

### Miller Paint integrates and saves with iSeries solution

Oregon-based Miller Paint, founded by Ernest Miller in 1890, has invested more than 100 years of expertise in every can of paint. Its product is specially designed to handle the unique weather of the U.S. Northwest. And its promise to the thousands of consumers, designers and architects, contractors, dealers and corporate customers who buy its products from Seattle, Washington to Ashland Oregon, is: “Any project. Any palette. Any paint.”

### A real-time solution

To meet that level of customer commitment, the company needed an IT solution that could track all business processes, in real time.

“Our POS (Point-of-Sale) system didn’t communicate with our back office,” recalls Stuart Tull, Miller Paint’s Information Systems Manager. “And the information flow between financial modules would at times stop working, which meant we could not balance our general ledger accounting with our sales history. We were getting to the point where every month we had to do the books manually, or hire a consultant to produce accurate financial results.”

Furthermore, the company’s aging IBM AS/400® could not keep up with the company’s rate of growth. In the past three years alone, Miller’s sales have grown by 40 percent, its locations by 50 percent, and employee numbers by 30 percent.

### A powerful platform

VAI got the job of coming up with a solution because of its “skills and knowledge of both software and hardware,”

recalls Mr. Selee.

An award winning software developer, VAI specializes in dynamic applications tailored to the specific needs of mid-range companies. Its System 2000 enterprise software solved Miller’s IT compatibility concerns by bundling together its retail, financial, inventory, purchasing and customer order applications into one integrated package. The software is designed to seamlessly run every business process live, from a centralized IBM platform.

Thanks to the expertise of a dedicated team led by Mark Van Leeuwen, VAI’s West Region Territory Manager, the transition went off without a hitch.

“A high quality machine that does the job at an attractive price with excellent service will always get our attention,” says Mr. Selee. “The iSeries upgrade coupled with VAI’s Enterprise 2000 software was a natural.”

IBM Business Partner:	Vormittag Associates, Inc.
Solutions:	System 2000 Enterprise Application Suite running on @server iSeries
Servicing:	United States, Canada and the Caribbean
Customer Target:	Small & Medium Business

### Horsepower to spare

“All our software is designed to run on IBM servers,” says Mr. Taravella. “They’re the most maintenance-free, reliable and scalable in the business. And they bring Fortune 500 technology to the medium-sized business arena.”

Today Miller Paint’s IBM server is

handling tens of thousands of retail and wholesale transactions daily, with plenty of room for more. It also deploys software to track inventory from the warehouse floor right through the supply chain. If one store is out of stock, Miller Paint can easily arrange to transfer it or send customers to another outlet. It also keeps pricing and promotions in one place for all stores to access, and generates all the company’s financial reports.

“When we’re ready,” says Mr. Tull, “this platform will provide us with enough horsepower for proposed mail and data storage projects for our Microsoft® Windows®-based network clients as well.”

With such a reliable, integrated platform, the company has been able to free staff from repairing broken applications to working on more creative projects that support the business’ strategic objectives.

Mr. Selee estimates the company will see a full return on its investment within eight months – thanks to this solution’s faster processing time and the elimination of costly licensing fees for Miller Paint’s former myriad of applications.

Are there any outstanding challenges? “Yes, but they are good challenges,” according to Mr. Tull. “Now that our users can see what a stable and reliable system can do for them, they are asking for more IT services involving the new system. Now that we have a system that works, they know we can meet their needs.”

You could say that VAI’s solution has become the pot of gold at the end of Miller Paint’s rainbow.

For additional information on how **Vormittag Associates, Inc.** can help your organization, contact us at **1-800-824-7776, ext. 225** or visit our Web site at **www.vai-solutions.com**.

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