

Room to Grow

When First Wireless needed help dealing with phenomenal growth, VAI and IBM® answered the call.



First Wireless Group knows first-hand the explosive growth of cell phone use.

The Long Island, New York-based company provides repair and refurbishment support to the major cellular wireless manufacturers and networks providers. When founded in 1996, First Wireless fixed, refurbished and reprogrammed 10,000 telephones a month; within five years, that number had leaped to as many as 100,000 a month.

At first, a PC-based application running on a shared system at a service bureau was adequate for First Wireless' needs. However, the company soon outgrew the system.

"First Wireless manages inventory using a real time system," says President Frank McNierney. "We hold separate inventories by customer location and assigned customer number, so being able to track data is crucial. Reporting is a big part of the service we provide to customers, and we need to be able to generate regular reports on work in progress, product return and other areas, and develop proprietary reports for such information as repair trends. And we definitely need room for continued expansion."

With technology-savvy customers also anxious to do business over the Internet, First Wireless turned to IBM Premier Business Partner Vormittag Associates, Inc. (VAI) for advice. 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.

VAI recommended an IBM @server® iSeries™ server for reliability, stability and scalability, along with access to the tools necessary to compete in the e-business world. VAI's own System 2000 family of enterprise software, running on the iSeries, would seamlessly run every business process live from the centralized IBM platform.

"First Wireless teamed with IBM Business Partner Vormittag Associates, Inc. to handle their explosive growth. With VAI's System 2000 enterprise solution they were able to provide their customers with Web applications for better service. Going from a PC-based application to an iSeries with Web-enabled applications in such a short time is truly remarkable."

Julie Heeg, IBM Sales Executive, iSeries Business Partners



“Our System 2000 software runs exclusively on the iSeries, which we feel is a great platform for its stability, reliability and scalability.”

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

VAI solution provides all the bells and whistles

Although First Wireless looked at other suppliers, Mr. Corrigan, Executive Vice President for First Wireless, admits IBM had an edge. “I came from a background using IBM’s AS/400®, so I was already comfortable with IBM’s reliability,” he says. “I called IBM for a list of authorized dealers, and chose VAI for its extensive experience with the manufacturing industry and its location in Long Island.”

An award-winning software developer, VAI specializes in dynamic applications tailored to the specific needs of mid-range companies. Its System 2000 suite of products gives customers the tools to dynamically manage and expand their business activities, from inventory management and customer service to electronic data interchange and e-business. Most importantly, System 2000’s flexible design allows companies to personalize the product to meet their specific requirements.

“VAI has achieved success by using IBM technology and offering customer-driven software solutions,” says Vincent Taravella, Director of Channel Sales and Marketing for VAI. “Our System 2000 software runs exclusively on the iSeries, which we feel is a great platform for its stability, reliability and scalability.”

VAI displayed the software on the iSeries through a series of demonstrations and site visits, and First Wireless was sold.

A responsive partner

First Wireless started completely from scratch, with no equipment and no Information Technology (IT) department.

At the last minute, after unsuccessfully trying to negotiate an extension in their contract with the service bureau, First Wireless had to move up the “go live” date.

Implementation occurred over a weekend. “Monday morning came and we were up and running with only a few minor glitches,” says Mr. Corrigan. “VAI worked very closely with us, almost like our own IT department. Once we made our decision, they were very quick to respond to any changes or modifications.”

In the following months, VAI was also quick to respond to a sudden increase in new customers and new reporting demands, providing an upgrade to the original iSeries model for a more robust system.

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

Efficiency, control, innovation

System 2000 running on the iSeries helped First Wireless do away with the many manual processes that had crept into their procedures. A customized feature using bar codes for serial numbers lets the system do the work, for an increase in efficiency of 20 to 30 percent.

The new system has also resulted in improved inventory control. “We use the IBM system heavily, and it allows us to

better track and control the thousands of phones we scan and ship out every day,” says Mr. McNierney.

The system also enabled First Wireless to respond to customer requests for a paperless service, by developing a secure extranet site for customers to expedite, analyze and monitor the progress of wireless repairs. “Our customers can download the details on phones that have been shipped to us, such as the model and the problem we need to fix,” says Mr. Corrigan. “The information comes in overnight, and is waiting in our system when we arrive in the morning, often before the phones themselves come in.”

He adds, “That saves us time capturing the information, and an e-mail confirmation step identifies any discrepancies before they hold up the billing stage.”

VAI’s System 2000 for the Web also allows First Wireless to use a table-driven interface to build and maintain the e-business application, perfect for a company with no in-house IT staff.

Set for future growth

“The IBM system helps us meet our key commitments of consistent quality and efficient inventory turnaround,” says Mr. Corrigan. “We believe the market has not yet matured, and we know our IBM system will be able to keep up with our growth.”

With opportunities calling – and VAI and IBM ready to respond – First Wireless won’t be placed on hold.

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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