EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ORGANIZATION:
IT Network Division,
Santa Barbara County, California

COMPUTER NETWORK TECHNICIAN:
Jere Short

INDUSTRY:
Information Technology

BUSINESS CHALLENGE/NEEDS:
- Manage IT asset warranties and track assets in 250 locations
- Replace a complex, incomplete asset tracking system with a user-friendly, customizable solution
- Find an enterprise-level asset tracking solution for an affordable price
- Allow 10 staff members to access customized reports and tools to perform distinctive tasks
- Save staff members’ time so they could focus on external IT needs

SOLUTION:
- Fishbowl Warehouse as a standalone asset tracking solution

RESULTS:
- Staff members started using Fishbowl without requiring extensive training
- It was easy to download the county’s existing data into Fishbowl
- The IT Division cut costs and boosted its credibility when seeking funds
- Despite budget cuts, the division maintained great service by improving efficiency
- Fishbowl helps them determine immediate needs and solve potential problems before they become emergencies
- They can accurately prepare budgets and predict asset life cycles
- The division has an easier time tracking assets, freeing up time to deal with IT issues

CASE STUDY

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY TRACKS IT ASSETS IN 250 LOCATIONS WITH FISHBOWL WAREHOUSE®.

In addition to maintaining and managing the IT for 250 locations (closets) throughout the county, the IT Network Division, Santa Barbara County, California, was tasked with monitoring all IT asset warranties while keeping track of all purchased and consumed assets.

To track assets, a former technician began building an in-house asset tracking database, but left the organization prior to completion, leaving the IT Network Division staff stuck with a complex, incomplete and non-functional system.

When Jere Short, Santa Barbara County Computer Network Technician, joined the county in 2005 he found an asset tracking system that was in chaos. He was tasked with researching and implementing a new tracking system for the county’s IT assets. He needed to find a solution that was user-friendly and customizable. Coming from a background in warehouse management and inventory control, Short knew what he was looking for and began searching for the right product from among a half dozen different options.

Soon after going through a Fishbowl Warehouse demo and webinar, Short was certain he had found the solution that would meet his needs.

In addition to the feature set that included more than what he expected, he was impressed by how easy it was going to be to import all of the county’s existing data into the new Fishbowl asset tracking system.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE & NEEDS

The IT Network Division had ten staff members who required access to the existing asset tracking system on a regular basis, each with different needs for information, reports and functionality. The system, a customized Access database that was never completely finished by the
previous network technician, was difficult to use and would only do basic tracking and organizing. It wasn’t intuitive and there wasn’t any way to get different views or lists unless the programmer customized it to do those functions. For about five years, the department painfully used the database to input basic data.

Overseeing the IT assets across 250 different closets around the county, the division relied on the system to track part lists and locations of all assets. Since accounting was a different division, they did not need the solution to integrate with the accounting system—they simply needed to track assets. They also needed to be able to generate estimates for new assets in a quick and efficient manner, which the existing system wasn’t capable of doing. To obtain a report or estimate with the old system, the process was labor intensive and required one person to receive the inquiries, create the needed document and then email it to the recipient.

“Coming into the division, I knew of some enterprise-level asset tracking solutions from previous experience, but I knew we needed something more low key than an ERP and so I began an online search for options,” said Short.

Knowing the primary needs of the division, Short narrowed down his options to six solutions and began looking at them in depth. In the end, he chose Fishbowl Warehouse.

THE SOLUTION

Popular as an add-on to QuickBooks, Fishbowl is also offered as a standalone asset tracking solution for divisions and departments of large organizations. The IT Network Division of Santa Barbara County falls under that category. As an asset tracking system, Fishbowl is a cost-effective, scalable solution suitable for any organization seeking to track assets. Prior to customizing Fishbowl, Short saw that the system was more feature rich and had more capabilities out of the box than others he looked at. He found importing existing data would be a simple process.

The division didn’t need a comprehensive asset management solution, but Fishbowl’s...
customizable-reports function allowed them to view what the county purchased over the years, track each asset's location and manage the warranties. These functions are essential for creating detailed budgets and assessing the life of assets within the department. Since budgets are continually analyzed throughout the county and nonessential spending is limited, these components ensure the IT department always has essential equipment. With a county-wide accounting system already in place, they simply needed a solution that would help keep assets organized while still providing the financial information and cost estimates they needed to go with it.

“Fishbowl’s reporting metrics can locate a device by serial number, indicate what closet it is located in, and track its warranty life,” Short said. “That in itself gives us a proactive approach to managing assets and being able to address problems before they become catastrophic.”

THE RESULTS

“Not only do we trust the data and rely on the reports Fishbowl Warehouse generates, we have been able to use it to obtain financial support for additional assets and keep the system support in place even during budget cuts,” said Short.

In addition to addressing its original needs, Fishbowl has enabled the division to streamline its budget while increasing its credibility when asking for additional funds. Through the customized reports, Short can easily demonstrate immediate needs and foresee the depreciation of assets so they can proactively preserve them whenever possible.

With Fishbowl’s user-friendly interface, Short’s staff can use the software to create detailed estimates and requisitions without any extensive training or knowledge of the software. This enables them to quickly get into the system and do what they need to do and then get back to their core functions and responsibilities.

Some of Fishbowl’s most valuable features to the IT Network:

- Easy to learn and easy to use. One training session is all that is necessary and all users can utilize the basic and customized options.
- Out of the box, it has a comprehensive standard format. The system is robust and offers solutions to meet the county’s needs. When needed, it is full of customizable features.
- Easy to import existing files from other databases.
- Flexibility to choose which features they want to use with no requirements to integrate with the accounting system.
- Product Tree feature is essential for organizing and retrieving items with unusual part numbers.

“FISHBOWL’S CAPABILITIES HAVE SURPASSED MY EXPECTATIONS AND THOSE OF MY SUPERVISOR. WE CLEARLY SEE THE ADVANTAGES AND VALUE IT PROVIDES THE COUNTY AND RECOMMEND THE SOLUTION TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS.”

JERE SHORT
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
COMPUTER NETWORK TECHNICIAN

FISHBOWL PROVIDES THE #1 REQUESTED MANUFACTURING & WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS FOR QUICKBOOKS!
“What stands out the most for us is the robustness of the program to customize to an enterprise level, and yet it’s a package that a gas-station owner could easily use to run his inventory and integrate seamlessly with his accounting system,” said Short.

After using Fishbowl for nearly five years, the division runs more smoothly and systematically—a vast difference from their prior system. Additionally, each user has their own level of accessibility to data and reports specific to their needs, further expediting and streamlining processes. Fishbowl enables Short and his team to manage and track their assets efficiently and dedicate more of their time to IT issues across the county facilities. Short believes Fishbowl will continue to provide them with efficient asset tracking with the potential to do even more beyond the scope of their current needs well into the future.

ABOUT FISHBOWL

*Fishbowl* is the No. 1 requested manufacturing and warehouse management solution for QuickBooks users, and it is also a popular standalone solution for organizations or enterprises looking to track assets. For QuickBooks users, it provides the same advanced features and flexibility larger organizations enjoy, but at a fraction of the cost.

*Sign up for a personalized product overview by calling 1.800.774.7085 ext. 2 or visit our website at [www.fishbowlinventory.com](http://www.fishbowlinventory.com)*