



Ladybridge Systems

Case Study—Crowell Systems



www.crowellsystems.com

Crowell Systems is a leading provider of clinical management systems for the healthcare market, with their headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA.

The Medformix application is an enterprise software system for doctors, both in an office and a clinic setting. It provides automation for all of the functions needed in their offices: practice management, electronic medical records, automated third party billing and much more. It supports almost all disciplines and even multiple disciplines in the same practice, be it one office or many linked together.

They first saw QM in an article in Spectrum Magazine. As is so often the case, the first motivation to look at QM was largely driven by the low price of the product. Crowell Systems had previously used IBM's UniVerse product and, to quote company president Ed Crowell, "none of our customers thought they could afford to keep it under maintenance, so when they needed new ports, UniVerse costs were prohibitive. The biggest advantage of migrating onto QM was its initial price, and the maintenance cost was such that we could bundle it into our maintenance cost."

Crowell Systems also found that Ladybridge Systems worked closely with their clients, were highly responsive to suggestions for product enhancements and that these enhancements were delivered extremely quickly.

Of course, migration always carries the disadvantage of needing to change the application though, in this case, this "was not a big job and it had the benefit of finding bugs in our code because the QM compiler is stricter."

During the migration process, Crowell Systems maintained two parallel systems for about 8–10 months and converted clients one at a time. By creating an upgrader suite they were able to perform the switch-over without going on site.

After this initial changeover period they stopped making changes to the old system which encouraged the migration for the remaining users. Their 12.6 release was for QM only and had some new features.

Crowell Systems MUI (Multiple User Interface) product version XXV is also QM only, confirming the final stages of the transition from UniVerse to QM.

So was it a success? Again, to quote Ed Crowell, "We are pleased with the outcome of the change. Our customers have not suffered at all due to it. We found a few little things which required some work but nothing we could not work through. Most of the benefits were anticipated—lower cost, sound operating system. The support has been great. It is outstanding that we can actually request changes to the database and be heard and have them acted on in a timely way. The support where there were not changes requested has been accurate and timely. The time and distance problems we anticipated are just not there."

The customers using this application are medical professionals who have little interest in the underlying database technology. What they care about is that they have a cost effective, reliable package that supports this critical medical application. They are also very happy to be able to add users at a reasonable cost.

Crowell Systems were also the driving force behind the port of the MITS reporting tools to QM. This has received a very positive response from their customers and will be integrated into the medical package.

To date, Crowell Systems have moved some 2000 users to QM. The process is continuing and new developments in the application software are causing much interest from potential new clients.

And what of the future? "QM gives us a solid base to grow from; we don't have to be concerned with operating system problems and the pricing helps us to be competitive in our market."