

DuPont Plays the Match Game

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For years, DuPont Engineering relied on custom mainframe software to match engineers with jobs. But the system was unwieldy. So the business unit of DuPont & Co. turned to commercial software that automates the matchmaking and more quickly delivers reports.

DuPont's IT team first realized two years ago that it needed to replace the 15-year-old database application used to track graduates in its Field Engineering Program. Tracking some 275 engineers and rotating their job assignments every two years had become quite a task for the older software. "You're dealing with a lot of hidden characters [in the software code], which makes editing those documents pretty ugly," says Elizabeth Burch, IT integrator at DuPont.

Initially, DuPont tried rebuilding the tracking system using relational database-management software, but writing a custom interface for the application proved too costly. So DuPont asked Automation Centre, a project-management software developer, to customize a Lotus Notes-based personnel-tracking program the vendor offered. The app appealed to DuPont because it came with an interface users were familiar with and let them attach resumés to files, something they couldn't do with the relational database. DuPont saved at least \$10,000 by using the commercial software, Burch says.

Automation Centre, which previously customized a billing application for DuPont, combined features from two of its products, Applicant Tracker and Personnel Tracker, to develop the application for the Field Engineering Program. Automation Centre built an algorithm into the software that matches engineers with available jobs and churns out color-coded employee reports that make it easier to share data at meetings. It used to take three days to generate and distribute reports from the older system; now, Burch says, "A supervisor can enter information into the system the night before a meeting and have reports available the next day."

The reports include greater input from the engineers be-

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying an article from InformationWeek. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with links for HOME, NEWS, BLOGS, RSS FEEDS, EVENTS, RESEARCH REPORTS, WHITE PAPERS, and SUBSCRIPTIONS. Below this is a search bar and a category menu with options like WINDOWS, SOFTWARE, HARDWARE, SECURITY, OUTSOURCING, MANAGEMENT, and INDUSTRIES. The main content area features the article title 'DuPont Plays The Match Game' dated June 10, 2002, by Tischele George. The article text describes how DuPont replaced a 15-year-old database application with a Lotus Notes-based system, saving \$10,000. To the right of the article are sections for 'RELATED STORIES', 'RELATED CONTENT', 'LISTENING POST', and 'TECH ENCYCLOPEDIA'. The 'RELATED STORIES' section lists several articles with their titles and dates. The 'LISTENING POST' section includes a link to a podcast. The 'TECH ENCYCLOPEDIA' section has a 'DEFINE' button and a link to a random definition.

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cause their preferred job descriptions are automatically matched to job openings listed in the system, says Peggy Gibson, business manager of the program.

In the future, DuPont is considering a feature that would let plant-site managers submit requests for field engineers via the Web. Such requests now are handled via phone, E-mail, or in person. ♦



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