

AMBAC's Search for a New HR Software System

For three years, AMBAC, Inc., a New York-based financial services company, used Spectrum Human Resource Systems' HR/2000 product. According to Lori-Ann Santigate, AMBAC's HRIS manager, the company liked the DOS product, but they were ready to make the next transition to a more powerful system with additional tracking, payroll, and automated attendance. More important, the company was

Spectrum's Microsoft-based HR product, but the technology department wanted to make a fair comparison," Santigate says. "So, we started our selection process."

First, the company reviewed a Ziff-Davis CD-ROM, called Computer Select, which contains digital computer magazines including *PC Week*, *CIO*, and *Software Magazine*. AMBAC's technology department perused the CD to review articles and ads on various HR software companies. Selected software vendors other than Spectrum included Abra Cadabra, Dun & Bradstreet, HRSoft, Computer Associates, Cyborg Systems, Ceridian Employer Services, Peoplesoft, HRWinSys, and Oracle. Next, AMBAC used the Advanced Personnel System, a census on software vendors, to determine product features and functionality for these systems. In the second phase, AMBAC called the companies to request more product information and a demo disk. Each one of the competitors' products was compared to Spectrum's HRVantage demo.

Selecting Spectrum's HRVantage System

Once AMBAC decided to purchase Spectrum's HRVantage product, they started a wish list, which included a payroll interface, stock options functionality, automated attendance processes, and financial system integration.

"Besides the basic upgrade and platform change, we also had a list of things we wanted to do in the future," Santigate says. "And, I

knew we could accomplish our tasks with Spectrum's help."

Although AMBAC appreciated the HRVantage system's functional and technical merits, Spectrum's long history of outstanding customer service proved the deciding factor. "Spectrum has always provided excellent customer service, and that's the primary reason why they were selected," Santigate says.

In addition, ease of use was of particular importance because new high school co-op

students are trained on the system every six months. "The software is very user-friendly, and I knew going forward that we would need a simple point-and-click environment," Santigate adds. "With HRVantage, training the students is easy."

Implementation Made Simple

AMBAC implemented Spectrum's HRVantage product in less than three months. They started by copying the current system and sending it to Spectrum's Denver office. Santigate worked closely with the Spectrum team using phone calls to port the data over to the new system. Once the data were converted, AMBAC was given disks to test.

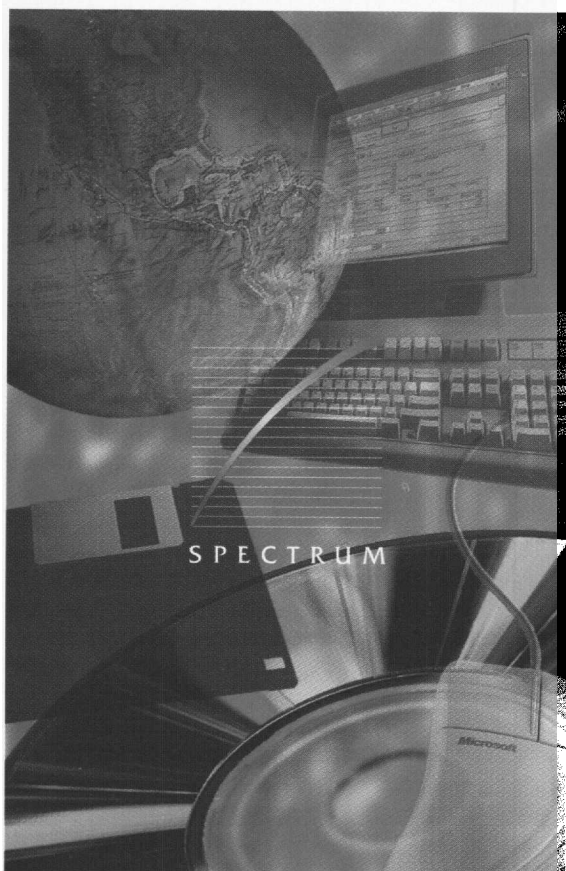
"We had to make sure that the data were converted and put into the right places to meet our individual needs," Santigate says. "Spectrum was polishing the data while I was proofing."

After the data were converted, AMBAC ran both the HR/2000 and HRVantage systems simultaneously for two months. "We wanted to make sure that both systems were running exactly the same," says Santigate. "We compared the data, page by page, to make sure that the forms matched and that everything was in the right spots."

For AMBAC, it was much easier to implement Spectrum the second time. "Initially, we didn't have automated files to import," Santigate says. "It took two people three full months to input records for 250 employees from scratch. This time, we took an existing database and transferred those data into a new system, so it was a much smoother process."

AMBAC implemented HRVantage over a year ago and continues to find ways to fully utilize the software. "I'm glad we selected Spectrum," Santigate says. "It's been an easy transition both for me and the HR department!" ●

AMBAC, Inc., headquartered in New York City, is a holding company that provides, through its affiliates, financial guarantee insurance and financial services to clients in both the public and private sectors. The company's principal operating subsidiary, AMBAC Indemnity Corporation, is a leading insurer of municipal and structured finance obligations. Through its Financial Services Division, AMBAC provides investment contracts, interest rate swaps and investment advice, asset management services, and electronic commerce primarily to states, municipalities, and municipal authorities.



AMBAC's transition to Spectrum's next generation was both smooth and quick.

moving to a Windows environment, and the technology department needed to find a software system that would integrate with Microsoft Word and Excel.

A Two-Step Evaluation Process

Even though AMBAC's existing software provider, Spectrum, offered a Microsoft-based HR solution, AMBAC wanted to complete a two-step evaluation process to select the new HR system. "I knew I wanted to upgrade to