

Vermeer Compass Dealer Portal



Type: System Integrator/Oracle
Technology Specialist
Founded: 1982
Locations: West Des Moines, IA;
Minneapolis, MN;
Portland, OR
Public/Private: Privately held
Geography: North America
URL: www.zirous.com

Zirous is a privately held company specializing in Oracle sales, development, implementation and integration. Zirous has extensive experience with private companies and public organizations throughout the country.

“The Oracle Fusion Middleware technology stack has allowed us to effectively communicate with our dealers. The ability to integrate Oracle’s Identity Management products into the Dealer Portal to secure user accounts, grant privileges and control access policies was critical to the success of our effort to re-engineer and design our Dealer Portal.”

*- Paul Schuring, Director of IT,
Vermeer Manufacturing*

Overview

Vermeer Manufacturing, an industry-leading manufacturer of earth-moving and agricultural equipment, was expanding its market internationally. To accommodate the resulting increase in user numbers and locations, Vermeer needed to streamline interaction with 150 dealerships worldwide. In August of 2006, they enlisted Zirous to design and implement a robust and sophisticated dealer account management system that would delegate user administration to the individual dealerships, while also ensuring high availability and object-level security. The result was the Vermeer Compass Dealer Portal – a powerful solution built using several Oracle Access Manager (OAM) components, Oracle Internet Directory and Oracle Directory Integration Platform. The new portal/identity management solution allows Vermeer dealerships to securely manage their own users’ access, profiles, and passwords; substantially reducing administrative time and costs for both Vermeer and their dealers.

The Challenge

As Vermeer extended their reach to include more overseas dealerships, they realized their existing portal could no longer meet their account management needs, particularly in the areas of content publication and user administration. Under their current system, marketing staff required direct IT assistance to publish all new content, driving up IT costs. And Vermeer administrators were spending substantial time and effort managing publication access rights and adding, modifying and deleting user profiles, both within Vermeer and at dealerships around the world. To adequately manage ongoing market growth, Vermeer would need a new portal/identity management system that would allow them to easily update content and delegate identity administration to the dealerships without compromising availability or security.

Technology

Stack:

Oracle Database 10g,
Oracle Application Server 10g

- Oracle Web Cache
- Oracle Portal
- Oracle OC4J

Oracle Access Manager
Oracle Internet Directory

An Ongoing Partnership

Vermeer's relationship with Zirous began in January 2006, when the two companies met to discuss Vermeer's existing Oracle environment. Vermeer was having difficulty with their Oracle Application Server configuration; they lacked the experience to upgrade to the current version of App Server, and they were dissatisfied with service previously provided by another Oracle vendor. Zirous stepped in to mentor Vermeer through the upgrade process, thus demonstrating the expertise required to work with the complex collection of components that comprise Oracle App Server.

Soon after the App Server upgrade, Vermeer engaged Zirous to architect a complete Fusion Middleware Environment, which included Clustered Webcache, Clustered Infrastructure, Clustered OC4J (Java containers) and Oracle Enterprise Edition Database, as well as load-balanced Oracle Portal, Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports and Oracle Discoverer. The environment was implemented in the summer of 2006.

In August, when Vermeer identified the need for a more robust portal and identity management system, it was the success of the high-availability Fusion Middleware Environment project that led Vermeer to partner with Zirous once again and to rely on Oracle products for an effective solution.

The Vermeer Compass Solution

Gathering business and technology requirements was critical to the planning phase of the portal/identity management project and centered on defining the complex relationships between the manufacturing company and its dealerships. Vermeer dealers are not a homogeneous group; they are located across the globe and specialize in specific product lines for customers in a variety of industries. Users vary within each dealership as well, performing functions such as sales, marketing and customer service. Zirous and Vermeer identified these essential user variables, then collected and stored the corresponding data for each dealer. Next, this information was compiled in a powerful directory structure utilized by OAM and other internal applications (i.e., dealer catalog applications, Oracle Reports, Oracle Forms, Oracle Discoverer, online parts ordering and technical publications) to create personalized portals based on the end users' specific functions, locations and lines of business.

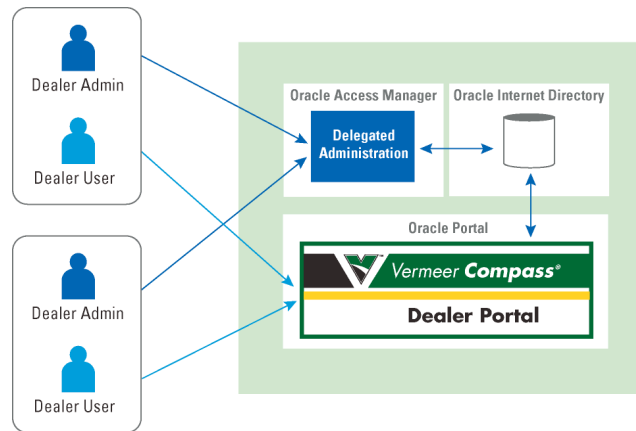
The Vermeer Compass Dealer Portal solution was designed to accomplish multiple goals:

- Allow Vermeer to delegate identity administration to dealerships, eliminating the need to manage thousands of end users worldwide.
- Offload administrative tasks while maintaining object-level security and maximum availability.
- Allow Vermeer dealers to securely add, modify and delete individual user profiles and manage user groups.
- Allow Vermeer IT to grant publishing rights to marketing staff, who can then upload and manage their own content via Oracle Portal.

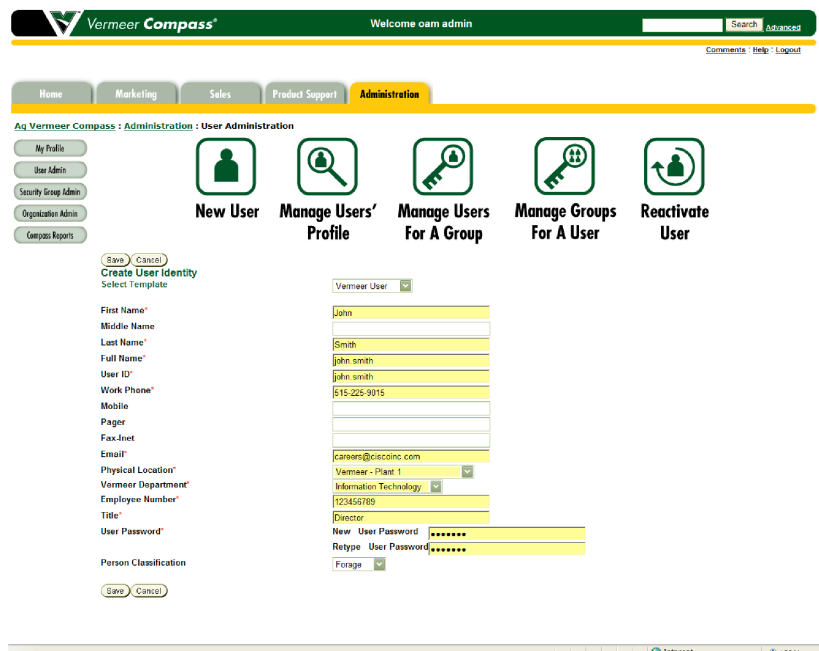
Oracle Components

Vermeer knew they wanted to structure their dealer account management system around Oracle Portal. Zirous, however, realized that on its own, the Oracle Portal product would not provide all of the capabilities Vermeer required. Consequently, Zirous proposed a more sophisticated solution that would add the functionalities offered by additional Oracle products, including five components of Oracle's newly acquired application management suite (OAM). The final architecture included:

- OAM components – Oracle Access Server, Identity Server, Webgate, Policy Manager and Webpass, combined in a highly available solution
- Oracle Internet Directory
- Oracle Directory Integration Platform



- Oracle Access Manager Integrated into the Compass Portal



Vermeer Compass – Dealer Delegated Administration

Zirous

Results

The Vermeer Compass Dealer Portal solution allows Vermeer's users, partners, and customers to log in and gain access to a broad range of Vermeer resources. Oracle Access Manager provides Vermeer with a secure identity management and access control system that is shared by all applications, resulting in a centralized and automated Single Sign-On solution for managing access to a variety of information across their entire infrastructure. Data transferred via the Vermeer Compass Dealer Portal utilizes industry-standard encryption methods and is directly integrated into Vermeer's Oracle Fusion Middleware technology to minimize impact on existing Oracle applications. Applications outside of the Oracle stack are also configured to utilize OAM authentication, authorization and auditing capabilities.

Although the Vermeer Compass Dealer Portal and identity management solution was only recently rolled out to dealerships, Vermeer has already recognized new efficiencies for both Vermeer and Vermeer dealers; delegated identity and access management are reducing administrative costs, while new publishing capabilities are decreasing IT costs. Not only is Vermeer pleased with the capabilities and early results of the portal and ID management solution, they are currently slated to leverage additional OAM functionalities.



"Zirous has partnered with Oracle Corporation since 1992 to help clients solve business problems. As Zirous and Vermeer Manufacturing worked to implement a single entry point for Vermeer's e-business applications and to provide a communication tool for essential dealer business information, it became clear that Oracle Portal was the critical technology for the success of the project."

*Mike McDermott
Chief Executive Officer*