

# LANSA Case Study

## C H Jones' Synon based fuel management system online in 9 weeks with LANSA

C H Jones Limited, the UK's leading transport industry services company, provides comprehensive fuel management services to fleet operators through its fuel bunkering services. Recently C H Jones has launched Efuels, a Web and LANSA based on-line fuel management service that extends their Synon based core system to the Web. The site was built in less than 9 weeks.

Chris Welsh, CEO C H Jones, says "Efuels offers immediate and secure access to extensive and real-time information about the way in which fleets use fuel. With margins tight in every area of production and distribution, the cost effectiveness of fleet fuel operation has a significant effect on profitability, whatever the size and type of business."



### The Challenge

Jon Bennett, C H Jones Group IT Director, explains the concept of fuel bunkering, "We don't buy or sell fuel, we just manage it. Our customers buy fuel directly from the oil company, usually at the spot market at a competitive bulk price. They will typically buy for up to one month supply for their fleet. They will notify us and after confirmation with the supplier we will credit their stock in our system. This stock is then called of from the suppliers as and when the sites require physical stock. We have arrangements with around 800 fuel sites around the country where we rent space in their tanks."

"Perhaps a better name for Fuel Bunkering might be Fuel Banking. Comparable to a bank, you can go to any cash point and withdraw money with your bankcard, provided your bank balance is sufficient. Similarly, if you assigned us to manage your fuel, you can go to any of our sites and get fuel with your card, provided you have enough stock left."

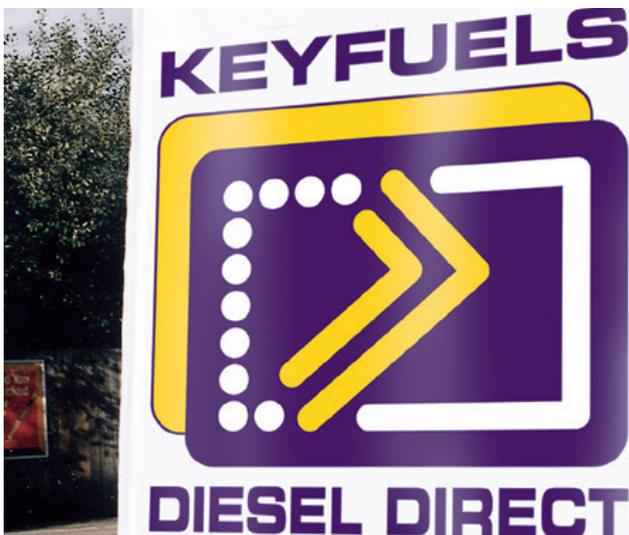
"Our business is split into two products. One is called Keyfuels and one is called Diesel Direct. Keyfuels customers are fleet operators and our Diesel Direct customers are dealers. Dealers resell cards and may charge their customers on a pay-as-you-use basis. To us the logic is the same. We have about 3,000 direct customers and about 40,000 indirect. Altogether we have around 200,000 cardholders."

*"Our Synon skilled staff picked up LANSA easily. We delivered in 9 weeks."*

"We used to provide a dial-in 5250 emulation service to about 10 of our bigger dealers for high volume card creation. However, most customers would write down the driver name and other card details and send a fax requests to set up a card. We would then key-in those details and mail the card. The customer would receive the card and key the card details into their system. The capacity for errors within that process was quite large."

Julie Brace, Customer Services Manager at C H Jones, remarks, "The yearly re-issue of cards was a time consuming job as well. Our cards expire annually and at that time of the year we used to send each customer details of his card base in paper format. We received these reports back with scribbles and instructions to make changes. We would the key those changes into our database."

"We used to get a lot of phone queries. Customers want to be able to check their stock levels, look at transactions, monitor fuel usage and identify irregularities. We got a lot of requests to re-print weekly reports as well. The reports created a big overhead in staff time, paper usage and postage."



Jon adds, "We thought the Internet could help us improve customer service and take costs down at the same time. If we want to retain our position as the leading independent bunkering company in the UK, then we have to keep ahead of everybody else."

### The Solution

Jon continues, "Our original system was developed using Synon/2E, but I didn't like their Web solution. We made the decision to use LANSA for the Web because it is a very flexible and easy to integrate solution."

"Our time scales were quite short, just under 9 weeks, but we delivered. We trained two of our Synon skilled staff in LANSA and they picked it up easily. We started development on July 10. Our target was to go live on the Web with the basic functionality on the 11th of September. During September we had a few customers using the system, which allowed us to use their input to fine-tune the solution. We had our annual conference on the 4th of October and launched the service to all customers."

"The system allows for maintenance of card and account details. It also offers inquiry in stock levels, card transactions and provides a variety of on-line queries, as well as reports that they can request to be emailed. All reports are completely automatically and delivered in PDF format."

"Customers may set up quite complex account structures within our system. For example, they may want to see fuel usage by cost center or vehicle type. Some accounts may have one cardholder, while other accounts may have hundreds of card holders. The Web site also provides a 'find a site' service, enabling operators and drivers to find the most conveniently located supply sites on their routes."

"LANSA Business Partner Technique Consultants helped us to convert our Synon model to the LANSA Repository. They have a tool that helps automate this process. We had the assistance of a LANSA consultant as well for the first two weeks, just to make sure everything would kick start quickly."

Richard Wilson, Joint Managing Director of Technique Consultants comments "CH Jones is a large user of COOL:2E/Synon. Their entire fuel management system is developed in Synon and contains over 3.5 million lines of code. We were delighted to see Buckingham Bridge give such a painless and simple fast start to Web enable C H Jones' mature COOL:2E model. Having the Web site nominated for an industry award is a tribute to the C H Jones development team and demonstrates the power of LANSA for the Web."

### The Benefits

"Efuels provides a range of services that might make the average bank customer feel their on-line bank ought to catch up with," says Julie "Customers are very enthusiastic

### Company and System Information

- C H Jones, established in 1895, is the UK's largest independent fuel management services company through its brand-leading Keyfuels and Diesel Direct fuel cards. For more information visit [www.efuels.co.uk](http://www.efuels.co.uk)
- C H Jones uses a model B configuration with an AS/400 model 720 for production and an AS/400 model 170 for Web serving. The same AS/400 model 720 is used by 50 internal users and for development.

*"On the card maintenance side we have doubled our productivity."*

that they can see their stock levels real-time and any time. Previously they had to phone us or wait for their weekly report. A real-time view is crucial, because fuel needs to be re-ordered when stock drops below three days of their stockholding."

"Customers can look at card transactions and deal with issues immediately. This is of major significance in relation to lost, stolen or misused cards."

"It is a win-win solution. We have achieved significant efficiencies by sharing card maintenance and other administrative tasks with our customers. Customers also experience efficiencies, because they can come to the Internet and key in cards details directly, rather than having to fax us."

"On the card maintenance side we have doubled our productivity and we can now handle the workload with two people instead of four. That means two people can now spend their time on real customer service instead of keying in data. This is a great result within two months after going live."

"The same win-win efficiency applies to online queries and reports. Historically we printed masses of paper reports each week and sent them out in the post. Now customers can get all the information they need on their screen and print it on their own printer. They prefer this to waiting for their weekly report, or calling us."

Neil Prendergast, fleet engineer at Nippres Continental, a haulage company and Efuels customer comments, "I had never used an on-line system before and found Efuels from the start easy and straightforward to use. On a scale of 1-to-5 I rate Efuels 4.5."

### Conclusion

"The system has only been live for two months, but we can already see significant benefits. Within 12 months we expect to have 80% of our customers dealing with us on-line," says Julie.

"LANSA and the AS/400 are robust and scalable and should easily handle the volume increase," concludes Jon.

"The LANSA solution is so much neater than other tools in that it provides a single source and single skill-set environment. LANSA's ability to do 5250, as well as Web and client server is appealing. LANSA has continuously developed new products and advanced features over the years, so the R&D budget is obviously there. LANSA is ahead of the rest and helps us to stay ahead of our competitors as well."

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