



Resene painting customers' world any colour with ETint

The Kiwi paint pioneer needed an easy-to-use POS paint-tinting application. Optimisation developed ETint and now the custom software is making tinting a cinch...

Resene is recognised as being at the forefront of paint manufacturing, particularly because of its commitment to environmentally sustainable paint. Now, an unusual tinting application, developed for the company by Optimisation, is helping Resene overcome the technical, commercial and environmental challenges of paint manufacturing, while helping it grow locally and internationally.

Called ETint, the custom application allows for fast, accurate paint tinting at the point-of-sale. It also makes the complex paint-tinting process both simple and accurate for staff, trade buyers and customers.

Resene's CIO, Tim Simpson, says one of the keys to Resene's success is its ability to supply a broad, flexible colour range. However, behind the scenes, matching up the right bases with the right tints in the correct proportions is a complex business, involving many complicated chemical and mathematical formulas. The tiniest inaccuracy can result in a costly tinting mistake and much wastage from unusable paint.

Custom tint-making

Optimisation's software project team spent a lot

of time in the laboratory with Resene's research and development team getting to grips with the complicated processes used to colour paint. The team needed to ensure ETint could precisely and reliably process all the chemical formulas and calculations involved in custom tint-making.

"The breadth and flexibility of our paint range is key to our success as a business, and to attracting and retaining customers," says Simpson.

"ETint is designed to eliminate the technical and logistical challenges of providing such a large colour range, including matching customers' paint samples and making up custom paint-tints. ETint is also delivering technical and environmental benefits, and helping us to reduce our costs."

Accuracy equals less waste

Most mis-tinting is the result of human error, so the new system was designed to incorporate numerous check-points, where staff must double-check their work before proceeding to the next step. For example, they must confirm that they have correctly entered the code for the specified colour, have used the right base for the

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customer's needs, and have specified the output quantity correctly.

"These check-points will largely eliminate mistakes in the tinting process," says Simpson. "The system also provides information to guide people through the order and method of adding tint components, because, in some cases, colours must be added in a specific order and at a certain speed to mix properly.

"This comprehensive governance of the tinting process means we can ensure quality and consistency in the finished product, no matter which Resene store or reseller the paint is bought from."

Customers are able to get paint made up to match any sample, even if it is not an existing Resene colour. Another major benefit of the ETint system is that the formulas thus created for specific paint matches are now stored in a central database, so are immediately available for use by other stores. Previously such custom formulas were hand-written in the store of origin, so couldn't be shared with other stores.

Boosting the brand

ETint is now used across all Resene's 70-plus shops in New Zealand, as well as by numerous resellers, including Mitre 10 Mega stores. It is expected to play a key role in increasing Resene's competitiveness against other manufacturers.

"For example, Resene hadn't previously had a tinting application in Mitre 10 Mega, but one of our competitors had such a system in place in those stores," says Simpson.

"This meant staff used to have to tint Resene paints manually and, because of the inconvenience and risk inherent in the manual tinting process, they would naturally steer customers towards choosing competitors' paints."

"For stores like Mitre 10 Mega that sell a range of paint brands, the ease-of-use, flexibility, accuracy and reduction in wastage of ETint will make Resene paints much more attractive for the stores and their customers. This will give Resene a competitive edge."

Future enhancements to the ETint system, which is also being rolled out in Australia, include increased integration with point-of-sale systems and the collection of more detailed purchase data,


so as to provide personalised advice and recommendations to customers.

How ETint was developed

Optimisation used a range of Microsoft technologies, including Microsoft .Net Framework, Microsoft Synchronisation Framework, Windows Communication Foundation and Windows Forms to develop and deploy ETint.

Agile development and project management methodologies were also used, so the application could be developed quickly within a tight budget. This helped ensure that any problems with what is a very complex software application were identified and addressed early on in the development process.

Ease-of-use and an intuitive interface were crucial elements of the application design, as the system was to be used by retail staff in Resene stores and resellers throughout New Zealand.

Another requirement was that the system had to be easy to deploy across a variety of PCs and work with several different label printer configurations. Microsoft's one-click deployment technology was used to enable this process. This meant Resene didn't need to guarantee a certain combination of hardware and software was available in every outlet prior to roll-out. 



CASE STUDY

> Resene

AT A GLANCE

Industry

> Make-to-Order

Business Objective

> POS paint-tinting application to maintain its competitive edge by providing range of colours and custom-tint.

Solution

> Microsoft .Net Framework

> Microsoft Synchronisation Framework

> Windows Communication Foundation

> Windows Forms

> Microsoft One Click Deployment

Business Benefits

> Company now enjoys an industry-leading application that combines complex business processes and technical requirements with ease-of-use and an intuitive interface. Built-in system check-points increase accuracy and ensure quality control in the paint-tinting process. "One-click" technology enables simple and fast deployment to multiple stores with varying hardware and software configurations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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