

ActiveBatch®

Customer IT Automation Success Story

Sub-Zero Group, Inc. Innovates with Self-Service Automation for Business Users



Company: Sub-Zero Group, Inc.

Industry: Consumer Goods

Customer Site: Madison, Wisconsin, United States

Brief Company Overview:

Since its humble origins in the basement of its founder in Madison, Wisconsin in 1945, Sub-Zero has specialized in the beauty and performance of refrigeration. Today, 70 years later, the same dedication to creating innovative, technologically advanced products with design flexibility is why both Sub-Zero and Wolf are category frontrunners, engineering the most desired products in high-end kitchens. Looking to consolidate the number of tools in its automation environment, Sub-Zero purchased ActiveBatch in 2013 and has since transformed its automation strategy, innovating with self-service capabilities for business users and automating common IT and business processes across various applications.





SUCCESS STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Reducing Complexity of Siloed Scheduling tools with a Single Point of Control
- Improving Business Processes with Self-Service Automation
- Automating Data Warehousing and FTP Processes Improves Productivity
- Taking Advantage of Event Automation, Alerting, and the Integrated Jobs Library

The Challenge: Siloed Scheduling Tools Create Complexity & Increase Burden on IT

For over 70 years, Sub-Zero Group, Inc. has specialized in the beauty and performance of refrigeration and food preservation. Sub-Zero pioneered the concept of dual refrigeration and prides itself on being the first company to store frozen foods at ultralow, “sub-zero” temperatures. In 2000, it further expanded its expertise by adding a cooking line with the formation of Wolf Appliance Co. Over the years, Sub-Zero has grown from a one-man operation founded in a basement in Madison, Wisconsin, to a privately held company with global distribution. As the company grew, the IT department also grew, supporting the business with advanced technologies and applications.

In order to manage and automate these technologies, the IT department introduced a mix of different scheduling tools including SQL Server Agent, Windows Task Scheduler, and an iSeries scheduler. This combination of siloed scheduling tools was making Sub-Zero’s automation environment increasingly complex and difficult to manage. Utilizing various point solutions also made it impossible for the IT department to trigger jobs across different environments or platforms.

In addition to this, the IT department wanted to provide business users with the ability to trigger and monitor jobs; giving business users the power to initiate processes themselves without having to wait for an IT team member to help. The increasing amount of time devoted to juggling the complexities of an elemental automation environment and the desire to provide self-service automation to business users was taking its toll on Sub-Zero’s IT department. In 2013, Sub-Zero went out to market for

an automation solution that could reduce the burden on the IT department and simplify the company’s IT environment.

“We wanted to find a solution that could handle multiple environments and have the ability to create jobs that crossed different platforms, says Jason Van Pee, Sub-Zero’s Database Administrator and the company’s primary ActiveBatch specialist. “We chose ActiveBatch because it solved the issues we were having with our existing scheduling solutions. We also looked at a few other automation products, but preferred the user interface and flexibility that ActiveBatch provided,” Van Pee says.

ActiveBatch manages business as well as IT process automation tasks, applications, and workflows across a range of platforms including Microsoft Windows, Linux, UNIX, z/OS, OpenVMS, and more. In addition, ActiveBatch’s unique licensing point system accommodates system and environment changes without additional fees or licenses.

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Learn more at ActiveBatch.com 

 **ADVANCED**
SYSTEMS CONCEPTS, INC.

ActiveBatch Improves Business Processes with Self-Service

As business processes are increasingly becoming tied to IT processes, more and more organizations are putting the power in the hands of business users by having business users trigger and manage their own processes. ActiveBatch's simple and graphical user interface and ease of use makes it very accessible to both IT and business users.

According to Van Pee, Sub-Zero's IT department consists of approximately 50 members who support a variety of business areas including manufacturing, engineering, customer service, and marketing. In order to reduce the burden on IT and give business users more control, Sub-Zero has implemented a level of self-service automation, allowing business-end users the ability to initiate and monitor processes, without the need for IT involvement.

In addition to having the ability to trigger their own jobs, business users at Sub-Zero are set up to receive emails on failed jobs, long running jobs, and completed jobs. Van Pee says business users appreciate this because they are made aware of the issue before they spend time troubleshooting discrepancies that are a result of the job running outside the normal expectations. With this level of self-service alerting in place, Van Pee estimates business users save many hours of time each month.

Van Pee says, "ActiveBatch is reliable and accessible. We can depend on it triggering processes when we need them to be triggered. It is also very accessible so we can give anyone in the business the ability to manage, view, trigger, and create their own jobs. Giving this power to the business allows the IT department to focus more time on other business needs."



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Reference Functionality Improves Database Administration

In addition to implementing self-service automation for business users, Van Pee heavily utilizes ActiveBatch for database maintenance. In his role as a database administrator, Van Pee's responsibilities range from database maintenance, performance, and architecture to data integrations.

To do this, Van Pee heavily utilizes the Integrated Jobs Library SQL Server Database job steps and ActiveBatch's reference capabilities. For example, Sub-Zero has one job that performs database backups, accepting parameters for the server, database, backup type, and destination. In order to perform full, differential, and log backups across every SQL Server in the enterprise, Van Pee utilizes ActiveBatch reference capabilities to create three references per SQL Server. "This allows us to configure schedules separately, but still have one job. If we decide to backup using a different method we only need to change one job, and all our SQL servers are set," says Van Pee.

ActiveBatch's referencing functionality allows hundreds or even thousands of "reference" jobs to mimic the same logic of the original "template" job. As a result, a single change to the template object will be automatically passed down to each reference without the need for further action, resulting in faster workflow creation, but more importantly simplifying maintenance of these jobs going forward. The benefit is that users can easily make changes to one job or plan that can be incorporated across hundreds of thousands of jobs with a single key-stroke, resulting in less clutter and improved management of related reference jobs. The reference object has its own triggers, constraints, alerts, and security, and runs in a different workflow.

Van Pee says, "I really like having the ability to create one job, then using references and variables, I can use that same job to execute the same process on all our other SQL instances. It saves us time when setting up the jobs and it saves us time when troubleshooting because we know exactly what the job is doing. If I want to modify that job, I just need to change it in one place instead of fifty. This not only saves us time but it keeps maintenance consistent across our environment."

ActiveBatch Supports Core Business Processes

For Sub-Zero Group, Inc., designing and manufacturing refrigeration and cooking appliances is central to the business. Sub-Zero utilizes ActiveBatch to support core business processes like coordinating model information and parts to vendors. ActiveBatch acts as the middleman between the data warehouse and a third party vendor to convey model information for refrigeration units. According to Van Pee, the IT team created an ActiveBatch job that accesses data from Sub-Zero's data warehouse, creates a text file, and FTPs the file to the vendors' FTP site. From there, the file is consumed and the vendor uses the data within their own environment.

Utilizing Key ActiveBatch Features

Event Automation, Alerting, Integrated Jobs Library

ActiveBatch incorporates an event driven architecture that supports the triggering of jobs and job plans based upon a wide array of event types to address specific business and IT requirements. As a result, workflows can be designed to ensure that processes are initiated when specific business or IT events occur, reducing slack time and delays. Additionally, ActiveBatch supports over 30 different alerts and alert objects that are used to notify users and operations that a specified condition has been raised within a workflow.

Sub-Zero utilizes various ActiveBatch alerts for different situations. "Some jobs will send an email, some jobs send a text, and some jobs create a service desk ticket," says Van Pee, "Having this flexibility has been very helpful."

In addition to using ActiveBatch alerts, Van Pee reports Sub-Zero "uses the Integrated Jobs Library almost exclusively". The Integrated Jobs Library allows developers to

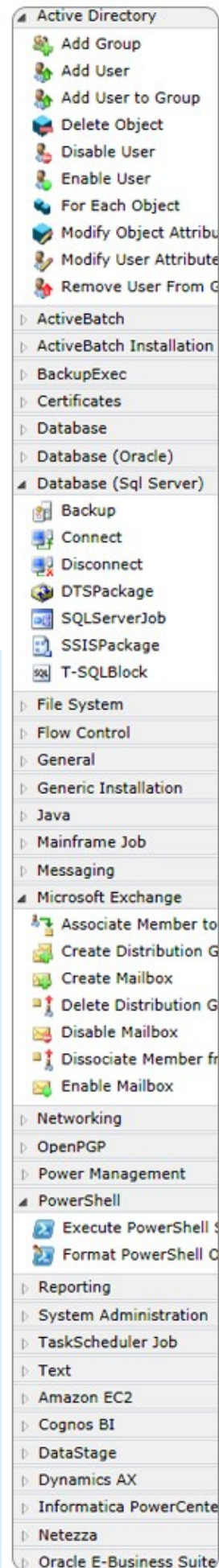
create more reliable workflows in half the time by providing hundreds of pre-built Job Steps to key third-party technologies and applications like SAP, Informatica, and more.

All job steps feature pre-built logic that reduce the time and costs developers would otherwise spend researching, coding, and testing the logic. The intuitive and graphical drag-and-drop workflow designer allows developers to easily create workflows that automate key business and IT operational processes.

Van Pee says, "Having a nice user interface is great for building jobs. It allows me to simply select the task from the list instead of searching for how to script it."

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High Marks for Training & Support

Shortly after purchasing ActiveBatch, Sub-Zero made use of Advanced Systems Concepts' training courses. Van Pee attended the ActiveBatch Boot Camp, which is a course intended for first-time ActiveBatch users. The Boot Camp introduces job design concepts and best practices for using ActiveBatch. "The training was very good. I went into the training thinking I knew what ActiveBatch could do for us, and I came out realizing it could do so much more," says Van Pee. "Support Services have also been great."

Looking Toward the Future with ActiveBatch

In addition to fully implementing self-service automation capabilities for business users, Van Pee says, "A main goal I have is to use ActiveBatch for iSeries jobs". Sub-Zero purchased an iSeries execution agent and has an iSeries team in place to start working on plans for jobs across platforms, but has not yet automated iSeries jobs in ActiveBatch.

Overall, Sub-Zero Group, Inc. has achieved a lot of benefits. Van Pee says, "For me, the big thing is improved consistency. Having the ability to run the same process on multiple servers is very helpful." Looking towards the future, Van Pee says, "I am very confident that ActiveBatch will be able to scale to meet our needs."

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About Sub-Zero and Wolf

Sub-Zero Group, Inc., headquartered in Madison, Wis., manufactures the global premium appliance brands Sub-Zero and Wolf. Founded in 1945, Sub-Zero, Inc. is the leading manufacturer of American-made luxury refrigeration, freezer and wine storage products. Specializing in food preservation, Sub-Zero pioneered the concept of dual refrigeration and prides itself on being the first company to store frozen foods at ultralow, "sub-zero" temperatures. In 2000, the Wolf brand was created as the premier maker of residential cooking appliances with the acquisition of brand rights from Wolf Range Company. Wolf therefore joined Sub-Zero, establishing the brands as corporate companions and kitchen soul mates. In its third generation of family ownership, the privately held company also operates manufacturing facilities in Fitchburg, Wis., and Goodyear, Ariz. Both brands are continually recognized for the highest achievements in refrigeration and cooking innovation and customer satisfaction. For more information about Sub-Zero and Wolf, visit <http://www.subzero-wolf.com> or follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/subzerowolf](https://www.facebook.com/subzerowolf) or Twitter at [@subzerowolf](https://twitter.com/subzerowolf). For Sub-Zero and Wolf Customer Care, call 800-222-7820.