Siemens ICN leads IT convergence by integrating systems with IBM technology.

Overview

- ***The Challenge***
  Enable existing systems to support end-to-end business integration by automating processes with partners' systems
- ***The Solution***
  IBM WebSphere® Business Integration Trading Partner Interchange
- ***Why IBM?***
  Unparalleled knowledge of business integration and leadership position with new XML-based data-exchange technologies
- ***Key Business Benefits***
  Created a solid foundation for systemwide integration with partners, enabling faster, less-expensive process management

Talking the talk, walking the walk

A company that advocates a new technology also needs to be a pioneer in that technology. But few businesses want to scrap existing systems and architecture to make that happen, even if the new solution will save time and money in the long run. Integrating business processes with customers and suppliers is a big opportunity—but it doesn't need to be a total replacement of existing technology investments.

For many companies, being at the forefront of new, open-systems technology can seem risky, as can dedicating business resources to a new technology. But organizations are integrating at a rate that will leave behind those who don't make an effort to adapt. It's becoming increasingly important for businesses to balance this need to stay on the cusp of emerging technologies with the need to use their current systems and infrastructure.

"Once we have the opportunity to implement the solution in every direction, our operations should be faster and less expensive."

—Burkhard Tessmar, Project Manager, Siemens ICN

At the forefront of networking

Siemens Information and Communication Networks (ICN) division supplies some of the world's largest carriers, like AT&T and Deutsche Telekom, with networking products and services. Companies of all sizes have made Siemens ICN one of the top global providers of telecommunications systems. The division is currently focused on information technology (IT) convergence and providing next-generation convergence platforms. And as a company that offers the latest technology, Siemens ICN needed to bring some of its own systems and processes up to speed.

Updating without reinventing

"We had to be able to respond quickly to customer and supplier requests with new technology," says Burkhard Tessmar, Project Manager for Siemens ICN. "We can't lose an order if a customer wants to do it electronically." For Siemens ICN to streamline processes with its suppliers and customers, the company needed to find a way to take advantage of emerging Internet and Extensible Markup Language (XML)-based Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) technologies. In making the conversion to an open-standards platform, Siemens ICN could support multiple vendors, regardless of its partners' existing platforms. And it all needed to happen within the framework of the existing Siemens ICN infrastructure, without touching the back-end systems.

The project also had strategic importance for Siemens ICN. "We define XML technology as a new and strategic technology," says Tessmar. "We needed the experience and ability to put value behind the technology."

From existing systems to open systems

The existing system on which Siemens ICN wanted to build was a central hub that allowed divisions to communicate internally, as well as with external partners, using EDI for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT). Siemens ICN was already supporting other standards and different XML technologies, but wanted to enable the existing hub to support RosettaNet technology. As a member of the RosettaNet Consortium and a supporter of its new standards for partner interface processes, Siemens ICN saw this as a logical direction to take. Now all that remained was finding the product to enable communication across RosettaNet.

Integration—made possible by IBM

"The knowledge was available on the IBM side," said Tessmar. "It was an easy collaboration." To enhance its existing solution, Siemens ICN implemented IBM WebSphere Business Integration Trading Partner Interchange (TPI), which is powered by Cyclone. The first task for Siemens ICN was to implement IBM technology to enable communication with a large partner, with the eventual goal of expanding the use of IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI once the solution was in place. The IBM solution also facilitated the integration with RosettaNet, enabling effective communication between Siemens ICN and its partner.

Siemens ICN also shared a strategic interest with IBM in implementing IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI to allow for communication with RosettaNet. As co-members of the RosettaNet Consortium, both companies are committed to helping define partner interface processes using a common, open e-business language—an opportunity presented by the Siemens ICN implementation.

Get the message?

By using IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI, Siemens ICN could meet its goal of leveraging and enhancing existing systems and infrastructure. IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI supports loosely-coupled asynchronous connections based on Internet standards for datatype, transport protocol and security, incorporating an easy-to-use graphical user interface (GUI) tool to configure trading relationships.

Siemens ICN used the IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI for its enterprise resource planning (ERP) backend systems. Internally, a Siemens-specific standard is used to communicate from the ERP systems to the central hub, where the message is converted into a standard message. Business content is delivered from the central hub to the TPI tool where it is converted into a RosettaNet message, packaged, encrypted and sent, and can handle technical signatures and receipt acknowledgement. IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI can then send the business content message through HTTP, e-mail or file transfer protocol (FTP). A RosettaNet-enabled tool on the partner's side will confirm receipt.

"There has been a small benefit to optimizing the existing process with this initial partner, but the bigger benefit is that we now have the infrastructure and knowledge in place to use the technology across all of our partners."

—Burkhard Tessmar, Project Manager, Siemens ICN

Key Solution Components

Software

- IBM WebSphere® Business Integration Trading Partner Interchange

IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI communicates with the central hub, which generates RosettaNet business content to fully support the message exchange between Siemens ICN and its partner. TPI uses both partner and company profiles, converting the message to fit each specific system. And vice-versa, when Siemens ICN receives a message back from its partner, the RosettaNet message is received through the IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI, which unpackages the message, extracts the business content and transfers it to the central hub. The central hub then takes the content and translates it back to the Siemens ICN-specific standard, in this case an EDIFACT-based message.

When combined with RosettaNet technology, IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI allows Siemens ICN to streamline processes that used to require manual handling. RosettaNet Partner Interface Processes define business processes between trading partners in the form of system-to-system XML-based dialogs. And with widespread acceptance of RosettaNet technology among its trading partners, Siemens ICN relied on IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI to play an integral role in facilitating partner connections.

Returns, both small and large

The Siemens ICN division project was the initial phase of a Siemens-wide pilot. Processes between a German plant were connected with a large technology supplier. The result has been streamlined trading processes and cost savings on both sides. Siemens ICN intends to build on the expertise it has gained with the initial installation, and plans are in place to begin connecting to other customers and vendors.

Siemens ICN met its goal and has been able to start new projects as well as automate formerly manual processes without replacing legacy technology. With the help of IBM WebSphere Business Integration TPI, Siemens ICN can connect with its customers and suppliers via XML-based data exchange technologies. And with its new experience in business process, business content and technical implementation, Siemens ICN is poised to spread the IBM technology to other parts of its business. Furthermore, Siemens ICN is now in a position to take a leadership role in the area of XML-based business-to-business processes.

For more information

To learn more about the IBM WebSphere Business Integration Trading Partner Interchange solution, please visit:

ibm.com/software

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