WebSphere Business Integration
Customer Solution Case Study

NORWICH UNION
an AVIVA company

Overview

Country: UK

Industry: Insurance

Customer Profile

Norwich Union is an Aviva company. Aviva is the world's sixth-largest insurance group based on gross worldwide premiums and the biggest in the UK. It is one of the leading providers of life and pensions products in Europe and has substantial businesses elsewhere around the world. Its main activities are long-term savings, fund management and general insurance. The group has 60,000 employees serving 30 million customers worldwide.

Business Situation

Norwich Union's IT infrastructure was based on legacy systems, characterised by high administration and support costs. In addition, many processes required extensive human intervention, leaving them prone to errors. Norwich Union recognised that the existing legacy architecture would not support the exploitation of future business opportunities in line with the goals of the organisation.

Solution

In order to build a robust infrastructure, Norwich Union is undertaking a program of work to implement a strategic new architecture across the company. Following Smart421's assessment of Norwich Union's in-house Enterprise Application Integration hub, and subsequent recommendations, Norwich Union contracted Smart421 to provide further design and integration consultancy as well specialist skills in the IBM WebSphere Business Integration product suite.

Benefits

- Maximising the value created from commercial underwriting

- Reduction in the cost and time to integrate future applications and processes (savings of up to 20%)

- Reduction in the cost base

- Reduction in human error

"Building the solution on a service oriented architecture eases future integration between applications and has provided Norwich Union with a scalable platform on which to build to further its business. The solution is designed to respond flexibly to changes in business process." Gavin Keeley, Head of IT - Intermediary Business & Underwriting, Norwich Union

Norwich Union identified that its tactical architecture was not flexible enough to support its changing business needs. The architecture was characterised by legacy systems with few reusable components and a lack of agility in responding to rapidly evolving business needs. In order to address these issues, Norwich Union identified the need to integrate systems into a service oriented architecture with the aim of, ultimately, decommissioning legacy environments.

In parallel and as part of this programme, Norwich Union's commercial intermediated business is undergoing a project to e-enable its products and services to deliver a faster and more convenient service to customers and brokers. This solution supports the strategic architecture and takes on board lessons learnt from the e-enablement of consumer products and services. The project aims to:

- Increase efficiency and effectiveness

- Combine business practices and assets held within Norwich Union

- Facilitate the e-enablement of commercial products and services

- Deliver a faster, more convenient service to brokers

- Deliver a faster, more convenient service to commercial customers through the development of direct distribution opportunities using the internet

- Maximise the value created through on-site commercial underwriting

- Focus Norwich Union's commercial resources on value-creation; automating, eliminating and reducing low value creating activities

- Build a re-usable, extendible strategic architecture for use Norwich Union wide

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Solution

Norwich Union recognised that integration was a fundamental requirement to fulfil these aims. Key activities were to identify and connect a number of existing systems used by the intermediated business, as well as to create new applications. Following a process of evaluation, Norwich Union selected the WebSphere suite of products to enable them to deliver the architecture solution.

Norwich Union contracted Smart421 to provide strategic integration consultancy into its integration team and to provide the specialist technical skills required to assist in both the design and development of the solution. Smart421 and Norwich Union subsequently identified the high level integration design in line with Norwich Unions strategic SOA.

The solution, based on this architecture, initially fully automates the provision and fulfilment of the quote and buy process for Norwich Union's commercial business. It re-uses components of applications currently used by the intermediated business in order to leverage existing assets, including technical utility services such as centralised correlated logging, integration to group authentication/authorisation services and message transformation. Additional, required business services (for example quote comparison for new business acceptance) were designed by the team to be reusable and provide generic/extensible capabilities.

The solution has been designed to be fully componentised, leveraging standard service interfaces for applications and resources. Business logic is located in various applications (for example IBM WebSphere Portal) and, where required, choreography between the applications is managed by IBM Message Broker flows. As such it removes reliance on human interaction to reduce the time taken to process quotes and makes it easy to "buy". It also allows integration with other portals (for example iMarket) and external partners.

Phase 1 of the company-wide implementation has delivered this key strategic architecture and a new insurance portal (eBroking) for the commercial intermediated business. Throughout 2006, Norwich Union will be reaping the benefits of this architecture through rapid deployment of new products and services across multiple channels. The next channel to be integrated is the insurance portal iMarket (www.imarket.co.uk), due to complete in Q2 2006.

"Smart421's demonstrable WebSphere experience has significantly facilitated the integration programme. Knowing that we had the skills on our team to give us a realistic view of the product's capabilities has meant that we have avoided making costly mistakes and can be certain the final solution will meet our expectations." says Gavin.

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