# Toyota's one-stop information shop

## Overview

- ### The Challenge
  Toyota Financial Services needed to create a one-stop information shop for its Business Partners that would be available at all hours and remove the need for support staff to answer questions.

- ### The Solution
  IBM Business Partner* Convergence implemented an extranet based on IBM Lotus Domino.

- ### The Benefit
  Toyota Financial Services now has a homepage that delivers broadcast information and secure group-specific broadcast email announcements. An online advertising module has enabled dealers to create advertising material in a consistent format, and the extranet has led to a significant reduction in loan settlement enquiries to the company's head office.



*New Zealand's largest captive finance company Toyota Financial Services is winning the paper war by putting electronic-based information at the fingertips of its dealerships, thanks to IBM Business Partner Convergence and the IBM Lotus® Domino® application suite…*

Housing customer intelligence and business applications information in a data warehouse is one thing, but unless you've got the systems to instantly share the information with the people who need it most – typically your sales force – then business will bear an additional tax on doing business.

"Better managing business knowledge can deliver simple and immediate returns on investment," says Convergence's Saleem Ebrahim. "For distributed organisations, particularly where you have other people selling on your behalf, creating a one-stop-shop for information, without barriers such as office hours and availability of support staff to answer questions, removes sales barriers and speeds up the rate of sales."

**TOYOTA**
**FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Referring to the inherent advantages of a company extranet, which enables Toyota's dealership employees to get the sales support information they need via desktop computers, Abriham says IBM Lotus Domino integrated database and email framework adds another dimension to selling. "You end up getting business that might otherwise have been lost because you are able to combine customer intelligence with messaging and workflow, which automatically presents hot prospects and monitors their outcomes."

Responsible for 55 dealerships and both wholesale and retail financial operations, Toyota Financial Services competes against banks and other financial institutions and is constantly looking for ways to deliver better service, says Toyota Financial Services development group manager Glenn Armishaw.

*"It is impossible to operate a finance company without a decent IT system. You've got to continually work hard to put more functionality around your core systems."*

## The platform to share

The company's core systems comprise a front-end financial quoting system called VPOS (vehicle point of sale system) to process loan applications and run credit checks and a legacy transaction engine to administer these loans once accepted.

With the introduction of VPOS the company started to think about integrating the previously paper-based information it captured from customers – such as loan application demographics recorded by dealership sales people – with the transactional information to get a better view of its customers. A SQL-based data warehouse was put in place to facilitate this.

"Part of the process of selling is gathering information on people. So if we could digitise customer information and join it up with the transaction engine we could start profiling our customers and better customise our offerings," says Armishaw. "We wanted to share information with dealers in an ongoing fashion, without technical people involved, via internet architecture."

Adding IBM Lotus Domino, initially as an email system and progressively as a web based platform and presentation layer, it was a short leap to share the company's data warehouse information with its business partners.

Opting for an extranet, which offered the necessary security, user-friendly home page presentation, a content management system that allows business units to maintain their own areas of the site and publish to it themselves and flexibility to add more dynamic functions, such as group broadcasts and bulletins, paper-based line flow reporting to dealerships will soon be extinct.

"In most cases we would spend two days with rulers dividing the printouts for delivery. So the decision was a no-brainer; once we have data in an electronic format rather than paper it is time to start sharing it."

### Information rich

The real beauty of the IBM Lotus Domino application suite is its ability to deliver to work groups both structured and unstructured information in a secure, organised way. Using centralised LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) authentication extranet users access information intended for their eyes only, so every user's experience is potentially different.

For Toyota Financial Services a homepage delivers hotlinks and news, including dynamic information such as interest rate changes, awards, rewards, market commentary and Toyota Group information; secure group-specific broadcast email announcements contain hotlinks that securely connect recipients to intended information; an online advertising module ensures better consistency across advertising materials, enabling dealers to create

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and format advertising with the right information for direct submission to publishers; staff contact lists and profiles enable dealership employees to identify the people they need to talk to, with designated dealership administrators updating the system.

But perhaps the biggest saving is the reduction in loan settlement enquiry phone calls to Toyota Financial Services head office. Whereas previously dealership salespeople had to call Toyota Financial Services to settle a loan in the event of a current Toyota customer wanting to trade up or sell, now the information is online which has seen related calls drop by two thirds, down from 800 to around 300.

"It was also a case of getting hold of the right people to get the answers you needed. Now that it is online dealership salespeople can get the answers themselves, 24x7. So it's better use of time and you get rid of a whole lot of double handling."

## Clipping on functionality

A good example of the modular approach to adding functionality to the IBM Lotus Domino platform is the addition of online learning. Deployed early on in IBM Lotus Domino rollout, the system was a winner as it drastically reduced head office time spent administering training, says Armishaw. "We spent a lot of time talking to dealers and training, but as you can only be in one place at a time there was a lot of chasing your tail. By putting training resources online people can view it at their leisure, which frees up time to do higher level training. Testing can also be conducted online, with pass/fail feedback given on the spot."
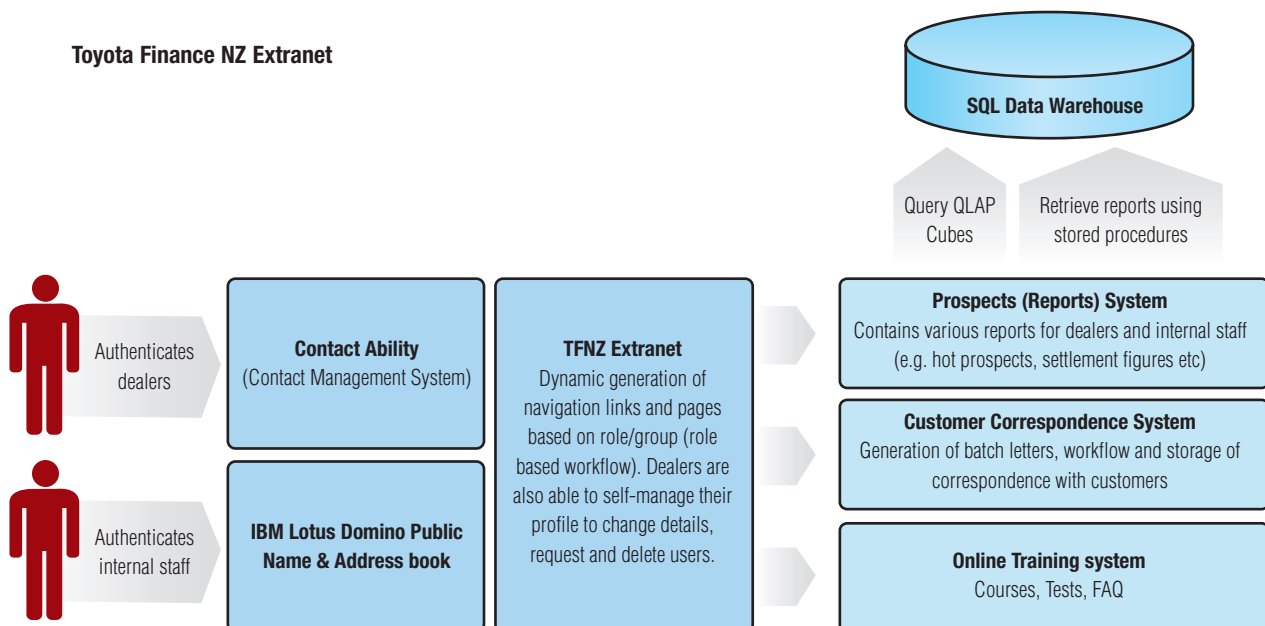
The company is also trialing an OLAP (Online Analytical Processing) tool that lets extranet users view back-end relational systems data in a graphical manner, based on specific queries.

## Return on investment

Citing the reduction of head office phone calls along with reduced mailing costs to dealerships for bulletins/notices as the leading 'hard' indicator of savings, Armishaw says the high satisfaction of dealership users is another indicator of money well spent. "It is about measuring satisfaction and the feedback has been very good as they want more and more online.

*"The big gain for us is getting the information out without having to deliver it on bits of paper. The bigger gains are for our dealers and their customers. Putting information at their fingertips delivers a totally different level of customer service."*

**Toyota Finance NZ Extranet**

**SQL Data Warehouse**

Query QLAP Cubes

Retrieve reports using stored procedures

Authenticates dealers

Authenticates internal staff

**Contact Ability**
(Contact Management System)

**IBM Lotus Domino Public Name & Address book**

**TFNZ Extranet**
Dynamic generation of navigation links and pages based on role/group (role based workflow). Dealers are also able to self-manage their profile to change details, request and delete users.

**Prospects (Reports) System**
Contains various reports for dealers and internal staff (e.g. hot prospects, settlement figures etc)

**Customer Correspondence System**
Generation of batch letters, workflow and storage of correspondence with customers

**Online Training system**
Courses, Tests, FAQ

**For more information**

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