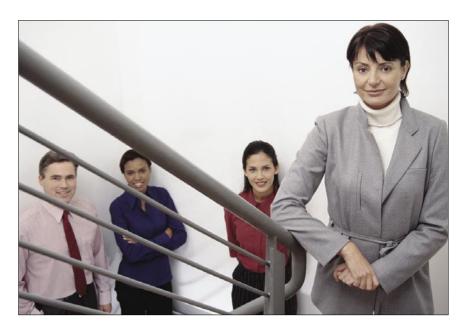**IBM** Business Partner ™

# Body Corporate Services



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**Overview**

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■ **The Challenge**

- Streamline strata management workflow processes for initiating repair and maintenance jobs through to managing insurance claims.

- "Capture" experience of strata managers and incorporate it in shared on-line systems.

- Provide strata managers with single on-line view of all property reports and workflows.

- Establish and maintain industry best practices to improve customer service and market competitiveness.

■ **The Solution**

In partnership with IBM Business Partner* IC Consulting, BCS embarked on a Web portal project utilising IBM WebSphere® Application Server and IBM Websphere Portal Server (running on Red Hat Linux), IBM WebSphere Studio Application Developer, IBM eServer™ BladeCenter® Servers, IBM Tivoli® SAN storage software, the IBM jStart Program and a migration from Microsoft Exchange to IBM Lotus Notes.

■ **The Benefit**

- Streamlined business processes with single-point access to on-line information and workflows.

- Full data integration of older systems. Improved customer service through more rapid response to, and prioritisation of, job requests. Increased productivity of strata managers with task prioritisation features.

- Significant reduction in time and effort locating documents.

**About Body Corporate Services**

Established in 1980 and now the largest subsidiary of Prudential Investment Company of Australia, Body Corporate Services (BCS) is Australia's largest body corporate/ strata management company. With its headquarters in Sydney and a further 14 offices located along the country's eastern seaboard. BCS provides an extensive range of strata management services to a large and growing client base.

**Challenge: Streamline Processes and Protect Corporate Knowledge**

For BCS Chief Executive Officer, Greg Haywood, the company's focus on streamlining processes is essential in achieving the strong growth planned for BCS over the next few years. A key component of this is the development of a Web portal, designed to provide strata managers with a single interface for all current and future IT-based BCS strata management systems.

*"Our strata managers have a complex job and we recognised that the introduction of a portal to streamline information, workflow and communications would help reduce costs and provide our clients with higher levels of service efficiency," Haywood said.*

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"On top of this, we're faced with one of the most common business challenges – dealing with the loss of corporate knowledge when an experienced staff member decides to leave the company. What we needed was a system with workflows that could be designed to replicate the best-practice processes of our most experienced and best strata managers, then deliver that out to all strata managers. Essentially, this would mean that all strata managers would be using the same workflows and delivering a consistently high level of service to every one of our clients."

### Solution: IBM Technologies and IC Consulting

With assistance from IBM business partner IC Consulting, BCS undertook one of the most ambitious Web portal projects undertaken by an Australian company. Along with IBM WebSphere Application Server and IBM WebSphere Portal Server (running on, Red Hat Linux), IBM WebSphere Studio Application Developer, IBM eServer™ BladeCenter® Servers, IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager software, the IBM jStart Program and a migration from Microsoft Exchange to Lotus Notes.

### The Single (Browser-based) View

With the introduction of the new portal, BCS strata managers and their assistants will be able to utilise an on-line dashboard for monitoring and managing a growing number of property management tasks. This single – and seamless – view into several new and existing BCS applications is a major foundation upon which BCS is now basing its business growth.

"Enhancing the productivity of BCS strata managers and their assistants by giving them the best possible tools for their jobs was an overriding principle of the project," BCS Manager, Information Systems, Michelle Clarke said. "These are the people who are dealing constantly with clients and are responsible for the day-to-day management of BCS property portfolios."

"By employing a portal approach we're working to create a system whereby only a Web browser is needed to gain access to reports, workflow processes, priority lists and even e-mail. It all comes down to giving people with complex jobs a tool that helps them achieve even greater productivity but with greater ease and less time needed."

### Full Data Integration of Older Systems

Rather than "reinvent the wheel" for the entire project, BCS built on the investment in the company's existing IBM AS/400 and IBM DB2™-based BCS Property Management System. According to Clarke, to migrate the large volumes of client, financial and insurance data and processes, would have been a significant exercise without necessarily providing any benefit to the organisation. The real benefits were in using the IBM software tools to improve access to the data and provide integration to other systems such as document management.

"It has been demonstrated clearly that the portal could indeed provide a single, modern interface to virtually any system we have or may implement over the years."

### Maintaining Best-Practices… Consistently

From the very start, one of the project's stated goals was to establish a high quality of service that was consistent across the entire company's strata management team, regardless of their experience and individual work practices. By creating the portal workflows for everything from initiating repair and maintenance jobs through to managing insurance claims, BCS is removing the reliance on individual work methods to provide best-practice service to its clients.

BCS Business Development Manager, Fiona Rawson, commented: "Each workflow is designed in consultation with those of our strata managers who have the most experience in the particular service area. This actually gives us numerous distinct benefits. Firstly, it essentially captures the knowledge of the strata managers and embeds it within the workflow, giving us the ability to retain and protect that knowledge even in cases where a strata manager leaves the company."

*"Just as important, once designed into the workflow, the knowledge and experience of the strata managers involved will then provide a consistent and best-practice framework for every BCS strata manager using that workflow."*

### Prioritised and End-to-End

One of the features being built into the new portal is job prioritisation – a feature that ensures strata managers are presented with ordered list of outstanding jobs. "BCS strata managers can be under enormous pressure to get a lot of things done for clients in a short amount of time. By providing them with a prioritised list, they can view at a glance what jobs need to take priority over others, rather than having to leaf through a stack of paper reports," Clarke explained.

In addition, by capturing workflow data for every job, BCS is able to generate comprehensive reports that can be used to further refine the system, identify trends that may indicate potential problems in areas such as maintenance. "The ability to track jobs and view reports on individual properties, groups of properties or even strata manager performance levels gives BCS an enormous advantage," Clarke said.

### Document Management

A new feature to be introduced with the portal is a comprehensive set of document management capabilities developed around the IBM Lotus Domino® Document Manager application by IC Consulting. By migrating documents from paper to electronic files and incorporating on-screen search and retrieval functions, there is predicted to be a significant reduction in the amount of time required by strata managers and administrative staff to locate specific documents.

*"BCS managers now have a single desktop tool that can be used to see precisely how well the business is performing as well as those areas that need to be given special attention."*

In commenting on the new portal-based system, Rawson said: "During phase one of the rollout, the advantages have become increasingly obvious to our strata managers. New staff members in particular, will benefit from how easy it is to access, to plan management information, and handle repairs and maintenance workflows on-line. As the new workflow systems are delivered, we will absolutely see an improvement in prioritisation of work, less reliance on individual work methods and greater streamlining with end-to-end processing of all major workflows on-line."