WebSphere® software

Mobitel lowers costs and competes more effectively with IBM WebSphere Business Services Fabric

Overview

■ **Challenge**

Manage complex environment to support fast implementation of innovative new products in competitive telecom market

■ **Solution**

Business Process Management (BPM) powered by Smart SOA solution simplifies complex IT environment and leverages business services developed once and reused many times through federated (SOA) using New Generation Operations Software and Systems (NGOSS)-based approach

■ **Benefits**

• *Cost savings due to business optimization*
• *Improved customer service through fast implementation of mobile offerings*
• *Ability to share in-house developed services with subsidiary operators*
• *Improved business and IT alignment and collaboration*

Mobile operators have abandoned the search for the killer apps that might transform the market in the way e-mail has revolutionized communications. Instead they are focused on delivering more unique, customized and complex services to the market with shorter lifecycles. With no more mass markets, communications service providers (CSPs) need to be able to accelerate time-to-market for these innovative services and minimize the cost of bringing such services to market given their potential for a short lifespan.

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Key Components

Software

- IBM WebSphere® Business Services Fabric
- IBM WebSphere Telecom Operations Content Pack for WebSphere Business Services Fabric
- IBM WebSphere Business Monitor
- IBM WebSphere Business Modeler
- IBM WebSphere Application Server Network Deployment
- IBM WebSphere Services Registry & Repository
- IBM WebSphere Process Server

Consider, for instance, Mobitel, Slovenia's largest mobile communications company. A mid-sized company, Mobitel develops its own innovative mobile solutions in accordance with the needs of the Slovenian market and users' demands, keeping development in the Slovenian mobile telecommunications market parallel to the most advanced countries worldwide.

For Mobitel, the infrastructure required to support the feverish pace of innovation can be complex. "We implement the services of the future today, bringing the convergence of voice, data, Internet, video, television, advertising, local services and social networks," says Mobitel CEO Klavdij Godnic. "We achieve this by integrating with many established technologies, products and service suppliers in the industry."

Mobitel has embraced the challenges of managing complex processes, systems, applications and interfaces by adopting BPM and service oriented architecture (SOA) technology to accelerate its speed to market and optimize the business costs involved in generating new products.

"SOA increases our efficiency," says Mitja Stular, Mobitel CTO. "It brings a kind of organized distributed modularity into our network. Previously, we had many, many modules which were programmed in Java and C++."

Simplifying IT architecture

Ironically, the initial reasons for implementing BPM and SOA at Mobitel did not include cost concerns. Mobitel IT Director Bostjan Robeznik, who led the push to implement an SOA, campaigned in its favor by focusing on the architectural benefits to IT. "I approached Mobitel's executives with the idea that SOA is a clear must for the future," he says. "You have to have an SOA in order to enjoy a clean IT structure. SOA enables us to orchestrate the entire IT landscape and all its applications using a single business support system. It was only after we had obtained funding and implemented the SOA technology that we began to realize the potential for business optimization."

To convert its infrastructure to an SOA, Mobitel chose IBM as a partner. "We did quite a deep analysis of the market at that time," says Robeznik. "IBM was qualitatively different compared to other vendors and the leader in SOA development. Our conclusion was that IBM could offer us a solution which would help us achieve our goals."

In fact, IBM's expertise and commitment were critical factors in the success of the project. "Since the start of the project, IBM actually invested a lot into Mobitel with their valuable knowledge, and with their experts who helped us onsite," says Robeznik. "Working with IBM has been a great experience. I've never seen so much involvement on the part of a vendor. IBM's commitment to our success helped drive our SOA project to completion."

Fast rollout of SOA with industry specific solutions

Major differentiators that led Mobitel to choose IBM were the two products that the company used to implement BPM and SOA: IBM WebSphere Business Services Fabric and IBM WebSphere Telecom Operations Content Pack for WebSphere Business Services Fabric. Both products are key components of the IBM Service Provider Delivery Environment (SPDE) framework. Based on a NGOSS approach, the SPDE Framework helps CSPs quickly deploy more solutions while increasing business agility along the way. This means that solutions deployed with SPDE can be extended with new capabilities, meeting new and perhaps unanticipated business requirements, and as a result extend the business value of their systems.

"One of the goals of the SOA project was the fast rollout of industry standard business processes and data objects," says Robeznik. "This is a part of the Telco Pack. And the Business Services Fabric gives us the ability to dynamically select services based on policy. We could not obtain these capabilities from any other vendor."

WebSphere Business Services Fabric uses a business-defined vocabulary and tasks to enable the assembly of existing and new IT assets into BPM and SOA-based, discrete, reusable and sharable business functions called "business services." The IBM Telecom Operations Content Pack provides prebuilt industry BPM and SOA content based on TeleManagement Forum (TMF) standards and integrates seamlessly with the WebSphere Business Services Fabric platform. A project such as this highlights the practical benefits of SOA and a framework approach to reduce complexity and deliver a return on investment (ROI) quickly.

At the core of every successful BPM and SOA project is a Smart SOA Application Foundation. Mobitel focused on their existing application foundation, an open source JBoss Application Server, and replaced it with the innovative, performance-based WebSphere Application Server ND to deliver on business objectives and contain or even reduce cost.

Adding value with industry standards

According to Robeznik, the IBM WebSphere products are unique in the industry for their adherence to industry standards. "Adopting the industry standards means using the best practices from around the globe, which help us run optimally," he says. "Also, Telekom Slovenije d.d. owns some mobile operators that can now easily adopt our solution because it is based on industry standards. This means our knowledge can be leveraged for additional benefits."

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Bringing two worlds together to align business and IT

In most companies, IT and business occupy radically different frames of reference and do not often communicate effectively. This was the case at Mobitel. However, SOA requires the buy-in from business units as well as the executive suite. SOA tends to reshape priorities for business units in that shared services are far more likely to receive priority than stand-alones. In addition, through its ability to map IT services to business goals, SOA encourages the examination of business processes and tends to make them more rational by minimizing redundant or inefficient tasks. Business process optimization and lower costs are the result of this examination. And cost reduction, especially in times of recession, is of utmost importance to Mobitel. With the promise of business optimization and the cost reductions that it brings, Robeznik obtained buy-in from Mobitel's business units.

Two IBM products—IBM WebSphere Business Modeler and IBM WebSphere Business Monitor—enabled Mobitel to achieve business optimization. Business process modeling with IBM WebSphere Business Modeler enables users to visualize, document and model business processes for process execution. The resulting business processes can be service-enabled through BPM and SOA. WebSphere Business Monitor provides visibility into the effectiveness of business processes and performance.

"By using the Business Modeler, the business people have a way of communicating with IT and providing ideas on what the business processes should look like," says Robeznik. "Our business people used the Business Monitor to measure our human tasks and our different KPIs. This bidirectional communication between IT and the business units gives us more agility in the market and helps us lower costs. Migration of services to the WebSphere platform has reduced the number of servers and operating costs. We also can introduce new services faster—such as a self-service portal, and a new billing and CRM application, so we're providing better support to our customers, who are happier as a result."

Through a BPM and SOA competency center, Mobitel writes new business services once and reuses them many times as developers access the services they need. The center has a significant impact on the deployment of new processes and their upgrades, on the initial phases of modeling, and on service naming and the use of appropriate standards. "With IBM's continued support, the SOA model we have built will sustain our evolution for many years to come," Robeznik concludes.

For more information

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