

Cardiff County Council elects WebSphere software for customer care initiative.

Overview

■ Challenge

Cardiff County Council sought to implement an e-business solution to increase customer satisfaction by providing a single point of communication

■ Solution: Integrating Stage

Connect to Cardiff: an integrated, Web-enabled customer relationship management (CRM) solution to support city government

■ Why IBM

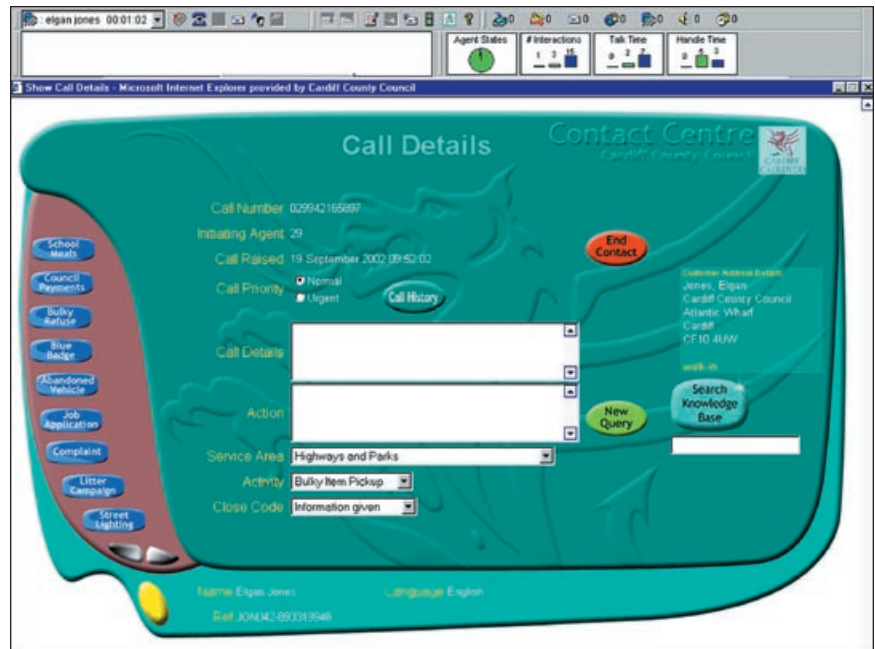
IBM viewed as an established and reliable e-business vendor that could deliver highly scalable e-business solutions and customized application integration at a competitive price

■ Key Business Benefits

Projected annual decrease in operating costs of £1.8 million (US\$2.8 million); increased customer satisfaction with an estimated 80% of customer inquiries resolved in a single contact; expected full payback in 3 years; greater staff productivity due to centralized information

■ Business Partner

Mitel Networks Ltd.



Connect to Cardiff is a direct link to Cardiff County Council services, including a citizens' advice bureau.

As one of Europe's fastest growing capital cities, Cardiff is considered a gem in the U.K. The Welsh capital maintains a £360 million (US\$558 million) annual budget and is home to more than 300,000 residents. When these residents have a question or a concern regarding their community, they turn to the Cardiff County Council (the Council), a focal point for everything from mundane litter clearance to critical childcare requests.

“Citizens were unhappy with our organization because it was difficult to find the proper customer representative to address a particular concern. We wanted to alleviate the frustration by creating an integrated system with a single point of customer contact.”

—Crispin O'Connell, Head of Information and Communication Technology, Cardiff County Council

e-business—accelerating the pace of business and the pace of change

Key Components

Software

- IBM WebSphere® Application Server Advanced Edition, Version 3.5
- IBM WebSphere MQ
- IBM WebSphere MQ Workflow
- IBM WebSphere Studio Application Developer
- IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for Windows NT®

However, where to go for information was not always clear. “Citizens were unhappy with our organization because it was difficult to find the proper customer representative to address a particular concern,” says Crispin O’Connell, head of information and communication technology at the Cardiff County Council. “We wanted to alleviate the frustration by creating an integrated system with a single point of customer contact.”

“The goal was to allow citizens to contact the Council through a single phone number, e-mail, fax or a visit,” says O’Connell. “IBM and its Business Partner Mitel Networks answered our call with an integrated Web-enabled CRM solution based on WebSphere software from IBM.”

Connect to Cardiff, the Council’s new CRM application, is scheduled for completion in early 2004. Connect to Cardiff currently manages a number of areas such as highway maintenance, refuse management, event scheduling and entertainment. Upon completion, the application is expected to manage service requests related to 128 distinct areas. “We expect that by serving our citizens more efficiently, we’ll achieve a full payback in three years and then save an average of £1.8 million (US\$2.8 million) per year in operational expenses,” says O’Connell. “But the true value of our system lies in the better service we are providing. Citizens can now communicate using any channel they like.”

WebSphere software offers flexible application creation

The Council considered several proposals before selecting IBM, looking primarily for an e-business infrastructure that could deliver high availability to end users and development flexibility for backend application integration. “We have over 100 line-of-business (LOB) applications, as well as accounting, human resources and marketing software—and we wanted to integrate these with the CRM front end so that our customer representatives would have a consolidated picture of each customer’s interactions,” explains O’Connell. “For this reason, we also needed an extremely fast, robust and reliable database to manage all of our customer contact records.”

“We expect that by serving our citizens more efficiently, we’ll achieve a full payback in three years and then save an average of £1.8 million (US\$2.8 million) per year in operational expenses.”

—Crispin O’Connell

The Council evaluated CRM offerings from British Telecom, which presented call management software running on an Oracle database, and from local e-business integrator IT Net. Neither solution provided the seamless backend integration needed, so the Council considered a solution from Mitel and IBM. Mitel Commander, a multi-channel contact center solution, has been integrated with an in-house designed CRM solution that was developed and hosted with WebSphere software. "The solution from IBM and Mitel was the only one that shared our customer service vision and was a natural selection for this project," says O'Connell. "The solution delivered custom application development capabilities with backend integration. In addition, with WebSphere and DB2 software from IBM, we were able to create a powerful application that is expected to deliver a fast return on our investment."

Breezing through application integration and implementation

O'Connell and his team worked with Mitel to create and implement the IBM-based CRM application. The new system called for a reorganization of the current customer service workflow. Previously, citizens with particular requests had to select and telephone an appropriate city department, and incoming calls were routed to one of several decentralized service areas. On occasion, customers had to make multiple calls to multiple phone numbers to address an issue. Now, callers select from only two phone numbers, one for English speakers and one for Welsh speakers, and cross-trained customer representatives handle the calls.

Connect to Cardiff enables contact center personnel to respond to information requests from multiple channels. Incoming calls, faxes and e-mails are cross-referenced to a call history database. IBM WebSphere Application Server drives the application at the server end and IBM WebSphere MQ is the middleware that integrates the applications seamlessly and communicates with the legacy systems at the backend. The Council used IBM WebSphere Studio Application Developer to develop the Java™ code for the backend e-mail, fax, Internet chat and voicemail messaging workflows. The backend workflows integrate with the existing operational applications, such as scheduling and accounts receivable, to deliver caller information from the DB2 database to the WebSphere CRM desktop application.

"With WebSphere and DB2 software, we were able to create a powerful application that is expected to deliver a fast return on our investment."

—Crispin O'Connell



With a history that spans nearly 2,000 years, Cardiff Castle is one of Wales's major tourist attractions with more than 175,000 visitors annually.

For example, when a customer contacts the Council, Mitel Commander automatically performs a lookup on the DB2 call history database to determine if the caller is known. If a match is found, the associated call records are then presented to the WebSphere CRM application and displayed on the customer representative's screen. If no match is found, the application presents a new contact account.

Representatives usually resolve customer issues on the spot—in fact, the Council strives to resolve 80 percent of incoming calls during the first contact. However, there are occasions when they need to route the call to a specific department for customized servicing. To address these situations, the Council leveraged WebSphere MQ Workflow. WebSphere MQ Workflow translates, transforms and routes messages to the appropriate LOB application. When necessary, WebSphere MQ Workflow posts transactions directly to these applications, connecting the contact center to the back-office services—without the need to re-engineer operational systems.

The shift to a centralized system has prompted a positive change in customer care philosophy and staffing. In the past, the service representatives focused only on their specific departments. “Now everyone feels a sense of accountability to all customers and the representatives have more than just an allegiance to the customers of individual service areas,” says O’Connell.

Preparing for application evolution

The Connect to Cardiff CRM solution is attracting attention outside city borders. During a recent Welsh technology event, the solution earned Cardiff County Council the “Best Use of Information and Communication Technology in Government” award. The Council has also been receiving requests from neighboring cities interested in developing similar integrated contact center applications.

To further enhance Connect to Cardiff, the Council has begun using GSM and GPRS wireless telephony technology to enable service representatives to access the system remotely through a virtual private network connection. With this technology, representatives can erect temporary service stations at shopping malls, community centers and other institutions to reach constituents who may otherwise have limited access to council services. Concludes O’Connell, “With WebSphere software from IBM, we’ve been able to create the foundation for a range of communications services that will enable us to be more accessible to the people we serve.”

For more information

Please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner.

Visit us at:

ibm.com/e-business

For more information about Cardiff County Council and Mitel Networks Ltd. visit:
www.cardiff.gov.uk
www.mitel.co.uk



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2002

IBM Corporation
Corporate Marketing
New Orchard Road
Armonk, NY 10504
U.S.A.

Produced in the United States of America
09-02
All Rights Reserved

DB2, DB2 Universal Database, the e-business logo, IBM, the IBM logo and WebSphere are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Windows NT is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Java and all Java-based trademarks are trademarks of Sun Microsystems, Inc. in the United States, other countries or both.

Other company, product or service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

This case study is an example of how one customer uses IBM and Business Partner products. There is no guarantee of comparable results.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.