



Customer Reference Story | Colt Telecom UK | Telecommunications | webMethods Enterprise Service Bus Platform

COLT TELECOM IMPROVES CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH THE THE WEBMETHODS ESB PLATFORM

Challenge

COLT had deployed the same systems in several countries and all of them were operating independently. As a result, there were over 10 instances of each application — and each one containing its own silo of information. Customer information was recorded in several systems and there was no consolidated view of a customer across the whole company.

Solution

Systems were linked together using the webMethods ESB Platform and all information was centralized in the London data center, with only one instance of each application. This provides for reliable messaging between the applications at the three main centers in London, Paris and Frankfurt.

Benefits

Thanks to a single view of the customer, COLT can respond more quickly to customer issues and can also analyze its customer base more easily.



COLT is one of the leading European providers of business communications. The company specializes in providing data, voice and managed services to midsize and major businesses and wholesale customers. With more than 50,000 customers across all industry sectors, COLT owns and operates a 13-country, 20,000 km network that includes metropolitan area networks in 32 major European cities with direct fiber connections into 10,000 buildings and 12 COLT data centers.

Get there faster.™

“Our first B2B project delivered an ROI in less than 6 months. Since then, we have implemented numerous additional B2B and internal interfaces, all of which are allowing us to stop points of failure where data was originally being manually transferred from one system to another.”

Andy Roberts | Integration Services Manager | COLT Telecom

A redundant architecture and silos

COLT wanted to improve the provisioning process and more generally, the real-time end-to-end visibility of other key business processes. It had originally adopted a classic data center and systems architecture, deploying the same systems in every country, with each operating independently. As a result, COLT had over 10 instances of each of its applications, which included fault management, order handling, billing and configuration, and inventory management. Only its financial applications were centralized.

A key problem with this approach was that each application contained its own silo of information. Customer information would therefore be recorded in several systems. Since COLT relied on manual data entry into these systems, there could be numerous replications of the same customer within each of the systems, and each with slightly different spellings or abbreviations.

“There was no consolidated view of a customer across the whole company,” comments Andy Roberts, Integration Services Manager at COLT. “If a customer called customer service, the customer service representative would have to know that the customer was probably entered four or five different times in the fault management system. Not only that, different products were handled by different systems, requiring the customer service representative to work with three or four different systems to find information to assist the customer.”

COLT also wanted to automate the provisioning process with the local telecom operators for certain products. This would require COLT to integrate its order handling system with that of the operator. This extended the scope of the integration challenge beyond the enterprise into the realm of B2B.

Step-by-step integration

The first step was to link all the systems together using the webMethods ESB Platform. This provided reliable messaging between the applications at the three main centers in London, Paris and Frankfurt. It reduced the growing number of ad hoc links, data inconsistencies and errors, and sped up processes such as customer provisioning. Prior to this, a service order in three countries would go through three separate systems.

The second step was to centralize all information into one data center in London, with only one instance of each application. “Part of the problem we had was that we had 13 different instances of our systems,” said Roberts. “So, in a lot of cases we would have to send data to multiple systems in order that the one system could see a view of data that was also present in another system. We now have significantly simplified that process by consolidating information in one instance of these systems.”

Benefits

COLT is now benefiting from a single view of the customer. This means COLT can respond more quickly and easily to customer issues, and can also analyze its customer base more easily. The company is also leveraging the powerful B2B capabilities of the webMethods ESB Platform to dramatically improve the provisioning of products with local telecom operators.

“Our first B2B project delivered an ROI in less than 6 months,” mentioned Roberts. “Since then, we have implemented numerous additional B2B and internal interfaces, all of which are allowing us to stop points of failure where data was originally being manually transferred from one system to another. By automating the process, we have been able to completely eliminate errors that existed previously.”

SOA-enabling the future

COLT is progressively deploying a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA), which has become a key enabler moving forward. “A key benefit of SOA is the ability to use and re-use the services provided by our systems without worrying about the business or functional logic that these systems contain,” said Roberts. “We are particularly interested in a plug-and-play scenario, where we can seamlessly replace any system, such as a fault management application, with others providing similar services.”

The new SOA enables COLT to be more responsive to market changes, bring products to market faster and deliver more detailed information than before to its customers.

KEY COMPONENTS

webMethods ESB Platform

The webMethods ESB Platform combines proven application integration capabilities, high-speed messaging, support for B2B, legacy applications and event-driven technologies to create the most complete integration infrastructure available.

ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

Software AG is the world’s largest independent provider of Business Infrastructure Software. Our 4,000 global customers achieve measurable business results by modernizing and automating their IT systems and rapidly building new systems and processes to meet growing business demands.

Our industry-leading product portfolio includes best-in-class solutions for managing data, enabling service-oriented architecture, and improving business processes. By combining proven technology with industry expertise and best practices, our customers improve and differentiate their businesses – faster.

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