

INTEGRATING WITH THE WEBMETHODS PRODUCT SUITE – A PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

Challenge

Corporate Express needed to create a multinational integration infrastructure that could not only link its internal applications, but also reach out to its customers and suppliers. The company also needed an alternative to traditional EDI.

Solution

After an extensive vendor selection process, Corporate Express selected the webMethods product suite based on the strength of the solution and the quality of Software AG's Professional Services consultants.

Benefits

Corporate Express has achieved a number of benefits through its implementation project, but the most important was the underlying goal of serving customers better. The company is now able to connect with its customers in whatever format they choose, while allowing them to reach behind the firewall to access pertinent corporate data.



Corporate Express NV, the parent company of Corporate Express, has grown to become one of the world's largest business-to-business suppliers of essential office and computer products and services. Corporate Express provides a value-added eBusiness environment to its customers by utilizing leading-edge technology, and providing market connectivity to third-party vendors based on customer needs: superior customer service, broad product selection and leading global distribution network.

Get there faster.™

“We could see an obvious difference in ease of use for the webMethods product suite. We thought highly of Professional Services and felt that they could get us up and running quickly. When we select a vendor for something as large as this, we’re interested in not just buying software, but in working together and having a relationship.”

Sandy McGregor | Director of EAI | Corporate Express

Creating an infrastructure was an absolute

Over time, Corporate Express developed a variety of proprietary applications, including a custom ERP system that serves as the backbone for its office product ordering system. It also operates a warehouse management system that has been customized at each site in the field, uses PeopleSoft for human resources and financials and runs a separate ERP application for its corporate furniture ordering system. Additionally, the company uses its E-Way online ordering system to handle the explosive growth of online sales.

Early on, the company recognized that it had an integration challenge on its hands that went far beyond linking one or two key applications. Corporate Express realized it had to create an integration infrastructure that could not only link its internal applications, but also reach out to its customers and suppliers and offer an alternative to traditional EDI technology and associated VAN cost savings. The company also recognized that it would need to integrate its applications between divisions in North America, Europe and Australia in order to offer the next level of support to global accounts.

Corporate Express’s commitment to integration began with the CEO and was reinforced throughout the organization. Many of Corporate Express’ Fortune 500 accounts had begun installing online procurement systems from various vendors and were determined to make the most of those investments. “We had customers who said, ‘If you cannot link to these, we’re leaving.’ That’s pretty compelling, and got our attention,” said Monty Sooter, CIO for Corporate Express.

When Corporate Express began the process of selecting its integration platform, it wanted more than a product. It wanted a partner that could help it succeed over the long haul.

More than just a “product provider”

The selection process began with a feature evaluation that eventually narrowed the list down to five integration platform vendors. Before awarding the contract, Corporate Express asked the finalists to participate in a proof of concept that involved a series of request-response scenarios between the company’s custom ERP system and PeopleSoft. The results of the proof of concept sealed the decision for the webMethods product suite.

“The Professional Services consultants were able to build the code in about four to five days for all of the scenarios. (The other vendor) took over a month,” says Sandy McGregor, Director of EAI. “Based on that, we could see an obvious difference in ease of use for the webMethods product suite. We also thought highly of your Professional Services capabilities and felt that they could get us up and running quickly. We liked the fact that the company wanted to form a partnership with us. When we select a vendor for something as large as this, which will be the global infrastructure for Corporate Express, we’re interested in not just buying software, but in working together and having a relationship.”

The two companies have been able to achieve numerous successes since the proof of concept. The milestones include creating a link between the E-Way online ordering system and the custom ERP system so clients can directly check orders against available stock in real time. Corporate Express has also leveraged the webMethods integration server to 120 customers using various procurement systems. Within the firewall, Corporate Express has been able to link many of its key business applications, including the custom ERP system with PeopleSoft, and the custom warehouse management system.

Serving customers better

Corporate Express has achieved a number of benefits through its implementation project, but the most important was the underlying goal of serving customers better. The company is now able to connect with its customers in any format they choose, while allowing them to reach behind the firewall to access pertinent corporate data like stock checks. With the infrastructure in place, Corporate Express can now begin rolling out much richer features in the format customers want.

Corporate Express is also replacing its existing eCommerce platform to provide one that is scalable to anticipated future volumes. This project is designed to leverage customer setup data and logistics rules contained within the company’s back-end ERP system. The company is using the webMethods product suite to send and receive supply chain data in real-time.

KEY COMPONENTS

webMethods Product Suite

The webMethods product suite provides comprehensive integration capabilities and the ability to automate and improve business processes.

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.

Software AG – Get There Faster

© 2008 Software AG. All rights reserved. Software AG and all Software AG products are either trademarks or registered trademarks of Software AG. Other product and company names mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.