

## FAST-MOVING RETAILER KEEPS GROWING WITH SOFTWARE AG TECHNOLOGY

### Challenge

Fast is the name of the game in consumer goods retailing—especially for Massdiscounters. Facing growing competition, expansion opportunities and an increasingly complex supply chain, the retailer needed to increase its agility. By leveraging its investment in its core system and evolving to a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA), Massdiscounters would be able to respond rapidly to changing business needs.

### Solution

Massdiscounters builds on its 25-year investment in Adabas and Natural to create a highly flexible SOA. The company standardizes integration on the webMethods Integration Server, which links legacy apps with other systems in real-time. webMethods EntireX assures fast service enablement. Massdiscounters adopts CentraSite for SOA governance to improve service re-use. With webMethods Business Process Management Suite (BPMS), business users will be able to make process changes anytime on their own.

### Benefits

- Easy modernization of core system built in Adabas and Natural
- No disruption to the business—“rip and replace” avoided while evolving to an SOA is seamless
- Reduced integration challenges
- Faster response by IT to business needs
- Faster training for developers
- Projects now completed in weeks—instead of months
- Future process changes expected in just days using BPM



**MASSMART**  
Dedicated to Value

Massdiscounters has more than 100 stores and two brands: Game and Dion Wired. In business since 1970, Game is Africa’s largest discount retailer of general merchandise with 92 stores in South Africa and 10 other countries. Dion Wired opened its first store in 2006 and sells up-scale electronics and appliances to affluent consumers at six stores in South Africa. Massdiscounters employs more than 9,000 people.

**Get There Faster.™**

**“Software AG has been a great partner. They’ve provided the right products for us at the right time.”**

Anton Groom | IT Executive | Massdiscounters

### Building on a proven investment

The core retail system Massdiscounters built 25 years ago in Adabas and Natural is still helping to track sales, buy and manage stock as well as receive and price products. This massive enterprise system—called POM (it was first created for Purchase Order Management)—has proved worth holding onto, according to IT Executive Anton Groom.

The company originally built its business on the mainframe-based system. “It was the core of our business,” Groom said. In recent years, however, management felt the mainframe system might be holding the business back. “IT’s job was to make that anchor into something that would drive the business forward,” he said.

Using webMethods technology, the POM system has continued to prove it is extremely reliable, cost effective and easily adaptable. Massdiscounters has leveraged the core value of the POM system in an SOA using the webMethods Integration Server, an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB).

Core functionality in the mainframe was service-enabled using webMethods EntireX without having to rewrite the modules in question. As a result, Massdiscounters could easily link its core business system with virtually any other system, inside and outside the company, including off-the-shelf applications.

Historically, no other system talked directly to the mainframe. Only batch integration was used. That’s all changed. Now it’s routine for a mainframe app to call an external Web service, get information back and then continue on with a process.

“Certainly a year or two ago, that wouldn’t even have been conceived. We wouldn’t have thought we could actually achieve it. But we did, and that was all through the webMethods ESB,” Groom said.

“I guess the key measure of the success of the project is that we’re still running our Adabas and Natural application with the webMethods ESB. That’s helped us avoid the major disruption to our business, which we would have had if we’d replaced that with an ERP solution.”

He added: “By undertaking this project to provide that agility and confirm the sustainability of the technology, we’ve been able to allow our business to keep trading and to keep growing. We’ve grown significantly over the last few years with this application. I think that success speaks for itself.”

### Making the complex simpler

As the company’s enterprise architecture has grown more complex, webMethods Integration Server has become Massdiscounters’ standard integration tool. “It wasn’t until we got to the point in the mid-2000s when we realized we had created an extremely complex enterprise architecture,” Groom said.

“We realized we needed to simplify things a bit for ourselves, and one of the things we did was standardize all of our integration on webMethods, and we made a conscious effort to eliminate all other integration tools out of the business. That was very efficient for us.”

Using the standards-based webMethods integration platform, all of the company’s Web services, JMS messaging, packaged and custom apps as well as legacy systems can communicate efficiently in an SOA.

“By normalizing everything onto webMethods, it’s reduced the number of different technologies that our developers have to be familiar with, so the training and the hiring of those developers is certainly more efficient,” Groom said. “And whenever there’s a change requirement, they know right upfront that it’s going to be a webMethods communication.”

Changes are now much faster. Groom recalled one project that took just three weeks instead of an anticipated three to six months—all thanks to moving away from what he called a “spaghetti architecture” of point-to-point connections.

“What we’re really seeing is reduction in the complexity,” Groom said. “For example, there were over 250 different subprograms that made calls to our stock file, which meant that every time we wanted to make a change to the stock file, it would mean that a developer would have to look at all 250 of those subprograms and determine if the change he was making into their data structure had to be changed, and that was extremely time consuming.”

“By going to services, we now have a stock service, that’s the only program that makes any changes to that stock data file. So when the data file changes, you only have to change it in one place ... you don’t have to worry about the rest of the application.”

### Getting it together with governance

Groom advises using CentraSite for any company going down a services path. “I would recommend that they get CentraSite early on, and make sure that they focus on changing the process and educating the people, so that it can be implemented properly.”

Using CentraSite, Massdiscounters can re-use services effectively to speed new innovations to market. Additionally, changes can be tracked and managed. Usage patterns can be monitored.

### Taking the next step with BPM

Because many change requests from the business are process-related, Groom said he looks forward to using BPM to make those changes faster.

“There’s not a lot of new functionality that’s asked for. It’s just about changing the way things are done,” he explained.

“Historically we’ve always had to get the developer to go in there to rewrite programs to change the sequence or change the way the business flow happens. Now with BPM, if we get our services at the right level of granularity, my expectation is that the majority of those process-related changes will be done, not even by a developer. They’ll be done by a business analyst, who can sit with the business, understand the changes they want.”

With the friendly user interface of webMethods BPMS, Groom said he expects “those changes can be done in a matter of days instead of months.”

## KEY COMPONENTS

**Adabas** is the world’s most comprehensive data management system.

**Natural** is a highly productive application development and deployment environment.

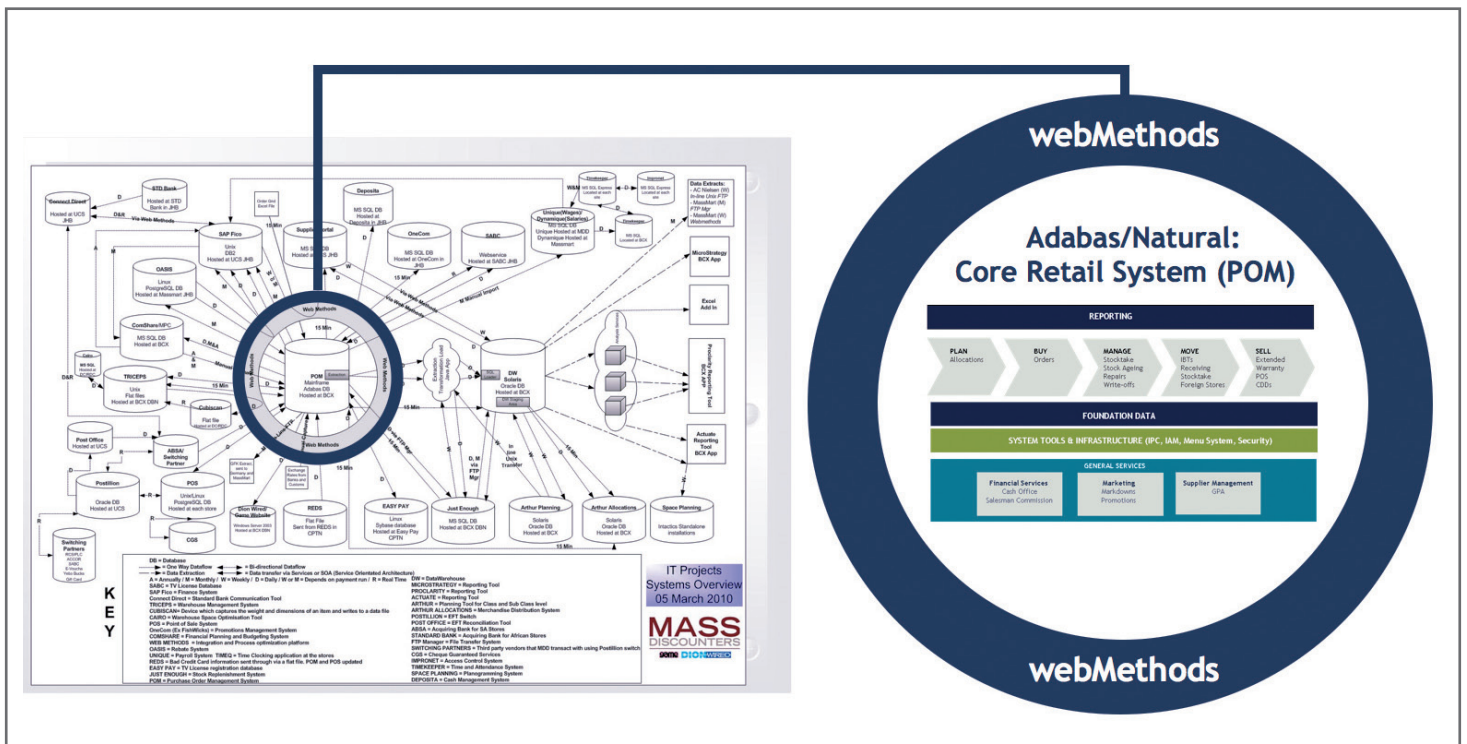
**webMethods Integration Server** is a standards-based integration platform—the foundation of an SOA and the most complete enterprise integration infrastructure available. It “speaks” any technology so all Web services, JMS messaging, packaged and custom apps as well as legacy systems can communicate efficiently in an SOA.

**webMethods EntireX** is one of the most robust service-enablement solutions avail-

able, providing truly bi-directional service wrapping of mainframe and open-source systems.

**CentraSite** allows repeatable services to be built faster and at less cost. This Business Service Repository gives developers and business analysts one place to store, find and re-use all service and process assets.

**webMethods BPMS** unites leading BPM and SOA capabilities to offer a comprehensive set of fully integrated tools for automating and managing processes.



The adaptable POM system built in Adabas and Natural is used for a wide range of core business functions. webMethods interconnects a multitude of applications with the POM in a highly flexible SOA.

## ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

Software AG is the global leader in Business Process Excellence. Our 40 years of innovation include the invention of the first high-performance transactional database, Adabas; the first business process analysis platform, ARIS; the first B2B server and SOA-based integration platform, webMethods. We are unique in offering the world's only end-to-end — and easiest to use — business process management (BPM) solutions, with the lowest Total-Cost-of-Ownership.

Our industry-leading brands, ARIS, webMethods, Adabas, Natural and IDS Scheer Consulting, represent a unique portfolio for; process strategy, design, integration and control, SOA-based integration and data management, process-driven SAP implementation, and strategic process consulting and services. Our comprehensive software and services solutions allow companies to continuously achieve their business results faster.

### Software AG - Get There Faster

To find the Software AG office nearest you, visit [www.softwareag.com](http://www.softwareag.com).

© 2010 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.