



AUTOTRADER.COM SPEEDS UP SERVICE USING THE WEBMETHODS BPM ENGINE

Challenge

AutoTrader.com is the ultimate online solution for buying and selling cars and trucks. To maintain that status, the company must do all it can to rev up inventory levels and retain its thousands of dealership/customers. In its fast-paced industry, AutoTrader.com also must speed up time to market with new products and stay highly responsive to customer needs.

Solution

The company standardizes on the webMethods Business Process Management Suite (BPMS) to bring new customer features to market – faster – and to improve internal collaboration. The first project delivers results in just 90 days. Using BPM, AutoTrader.com can report on daily inventory and show dealerships how to increase their ROI in AutoTrader.com products.

Benefits

- Stronger customer relationships with proactive service
- Faster time-to-market, thanks to improved collaboration
- Savings of up to 70,200 person-hours per year in research time for the sales team
- Savings of 2,080 person-hours per year by eliminating daily manual reports for the service team
- Improved communication since business analysts and software engineers now use a single tool to build and share best processes
- Better use of in-house talent because everyone's working together better – faster



AutoTrader.com, created in 1997 and headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., is the Internet's leading auto classifieds marketplace and consumer information website. AutoTrader.com aggregates in a single location millions of new cars, used cars and certified pre-owned cars from thousands of auto dealers and private owners. The site attracts about 15 million unique monthly visitors. Through innovative merchandising functionality such as multiple photos, videos, detailed descriptions and comprehensive research and compare tools, AutoTrader.com unites new and used car buyers and sellers online to improving the way people research, locate and advertise vehicles. AutoTrader.com is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises. The venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers is also an investor. For more information, please visit www.autotrader.com.

Get There Faster.™

“Our customers really love it! Now they can see how to maximize the value of the money they spend on Internet advertising at AutoTrader.com and they also know how to harness the great value proposition that AutoTrader.com provides – which is increasing foot traffic at their dealerships.”

Jai Siswawala | Head of Integration and BPM Technologies | AutoTrader.com

AutoTrader.com: where the business drives IT

Inside AutoTrader.com, the saying is: “ATC (AutoTrader.com) is IT and IT is ATC.”

The company’s multi-faceted Web site offers a huge inventory of vehicles from dealers and private sellers. Online shoppers can read car reviews, get buying tips and find help with finance, insurance and warranty programs. Because the Web site is the hub of the business, the systems behind it must run smoothly on all cylinders.

That’s why the SOA and BPM practice at AutoTrader.com had the total support from top management when it came to improving enterprise workflow and standardizing processes.

Then CIO Dan Crowe explains: “We’re an Internet-based company – one of the best – so it’s an imperative that we respond to changes within our market with Internet speed. In terms of our specific objectives, we want to be consistently first-to-market. We also want to be more responsive to our customer’s demands and we want to operate leaner. What these goals share in common is a need for effective business process management.

“With our adoption of webMethods BPMS, we can collaborate more effectively with internal stakeholders to more quickly deliver new and more innovative solutions to our customers. This is critical as our long-term differentiation is based on our continued ability to offer a level of service that can’t be matched competitively.”

AutoTrader.com can now turn on a dime using webMethods BPMS to change processes or rules

around decisions within a process at any time, explained Jai Siswawala, Head of the Integration and BPM Technologies. IT can steer processes precisely as business directs.

“IT must be ready to move when the business demands it,” he said. “We have to be agile. So if the business wants us to take a left, IT has to take a left; if business goes right, then IT has to take a right – no questions asked!”

Processes intersect at webMethods BPMS

Like many companies, AutoTrader.com has had multiple applications with different one-off processes embedded in them. These siloed processes were used only by specific applications and not shared across the enterprise. Consequently, there was no easy way to share best processes across business lines.

Now with webMethods BPMS, the company can develop and share processes enterprise-wide. Business process analysts and developers can work together to quickly build or improve processes using a common tool. Leveraging a single process will make AutoTrader.com more efficient, Siswawala said. Improved internal collaboration will help reduce time to market.

Data and processes flow through webMethods BPMS, which in turn orchestrates processes and feeds information to multiple applications. Siswawala added: “People understand what the processes are and can also leverage common processes across different business units. We were not able to do it before, because all of these processes were one-offs and were in different applications.”

On the expressway to excellent service

Proactive customer service is a top priority at AutoTrader.com. So the first BPM project using webMethods BPMS created a process to evaluate dealership inventory statistics and send daily e-mails to sales and customer service personnel. These e-mails report on dealerships with no or low inventory, a sudden drop in inventory, or inventory that will expire within a few days.

With this information in hand, sales teams can work one-to-one with dealerships to show they can improve their sales performance and increase their ROI in advertising on AutoTrader.com. Automatic alerts are sent via webMethods Business Activity Monitoring (BAM).

According to AutoTrader.com project manager Sameer Nanda, the automated process eliminates having to create a report from the daily jobs of eight employees manually (before the process automation, the report had to be compiled from three different spreadsheets). That means a savings of 40 person-hours per week or 2,080 hours per year, which now can be focused on assisting customers in other ways.

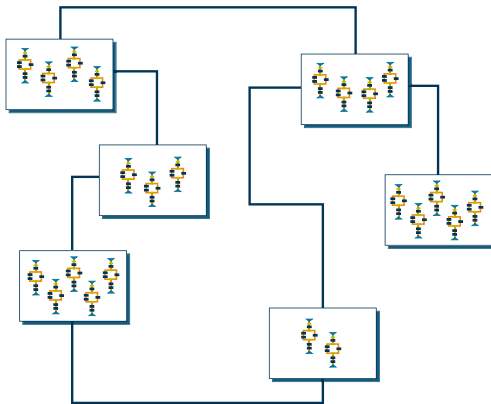
On top of that, each sales person is saving up to 90 minutes per week in research time. With 900 sales people that adds up to a remarkable savings of 70,200 person-hours per year!

The improved process also increases the speed at which AutoTrader.com can identify and solve issues.

Moving forward, the company also plans to use BAM to see real-time how processes are performing and how these processes relate to revenue, Siswawala said.

Situation before:

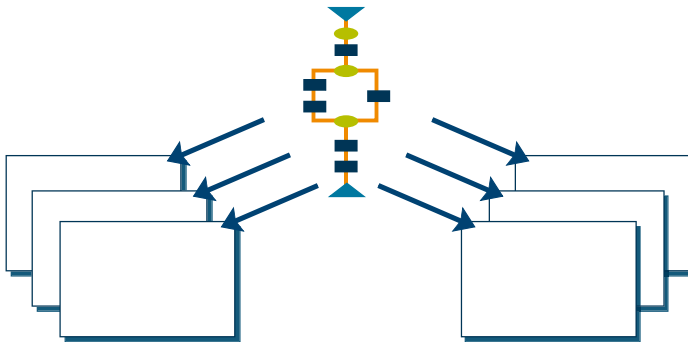
Multiple siloed applications with embedded processes



webMethods solution:

webMethods BPMS orchestrates processes to multiple applications

webMethods BPMS



Next step: improving order to cash

AutoTrader.com will take proactive service to the next level using webMethods BPMS to help retain customers, Siswawala said. Another key project key will be reducing processing time for auto management. Today, orders take from eight to 32 hours to process. The company aims to get that turn-around time down to two hours. With the right pieces in place, including webMethods BPMS, Siswawala said this goal is highly achievable.

KEY COMPONENTS

webMethods product suite

The webMethods Business Process Management Suite enables AutoTrader.com to automate workflow and optimize processes.

webMethods Business Activity Monitoring gives AutoTrader.com greater insight into the business and process performance.

The Global Consulting Services team helps AutoTrader.com launch their first project in just 90 days.

Take the next step to get there – faster.

ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

Software AG's 4,000 global customers use our software to improve business processes and drive an agile IT infrastructure. Our customers' goals are to reduce costs and increase flexibility and efficiency. We help them do this by optimizing and governing their operations and aligning IT with the business goals.

Our leading Business Infrastructure Software portfolio is used for data and system integration and modernization. It fosters new levels of IT agility through SOA and allows the rapid creation of new business processes with BPM.

Our forty-year history of success ensures our customers have a reliable platform for driving future business results – faster.

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