



SOFTWARE AG USES OWN MDM PRODUCT TO GET RESULTS 10 TIMES FASTER

Challenge

Fast-growing Software AG needed a better way to manage product data. The company offers a portfolio of nearly 1,000 products—and that list continues to grow from mergers and acquisitions as well as new product releases. In the past, product information for planning and production was stored in two separate systems. Because of this, data was often out of sync—common for companies with multiple data stores. Staff had to synchronize data manually several times a week, taking hours away from other important tasks.

Solution

Software AG implemented a Master Data Management (MDM) system using its own product, webMethods OneData. Implementation was 10 times faster than developing a custom MDM system. Configuration took only two months. Now, with product data mastered in webMethods OneData, there is “one source of truth,” and manual synchronization is no longer necessary. New products can be added easily. The system also can expand to integrate data in other domains when needed, such as customer service.

Benefits

- Potential savings of €1 million by avoiding custom MDM system development
- Improved decision-making by having always-accurate product data
- Simplicity—all data management and storage now handled in one system
- Manual effort eliminated
- Easy scalability to handle more products and domains
- Easy to use, simplifying managing critical data across the company
- Greater transparency with full audit trail for all data changes



Software AG is the global leader in Business Process Excellence with 40+ years of software expertise. Two out of every three of the world's largest corporations rely on a Software AG product to run their business. The company had revenues of €1.1 billion in 2010 and a presence in 70 countries. In 2011, its webMethods OneData product ranked first in MDM technology for the third year in a row by a leading U.K. analyst firm.

Get There Faster.™

“We’re finally using a specialized product—webMethods OneData—to manage our product data. This is an important step towards process excellence as a digital enterprise.”

Hans-Christoph Rohland | Senior VP, R&D | Software AG

Two systems = double trouble

In the past, Software AG stored product data in two legacy systems. Product managers used one system for planning data, such as specifications, product requirements, milestones and bills of materials. The other system, operated by R&D, stored planning data along with production and historic product data.

There was 100 percent redundancy of product data between the two systems, explained Michael Backhaus, project leader at Software AG R&D because the data was needed in both systems. “Synchronizing data between the systems was a manual, error-prone process,” Backhaus said. “It took valuable hours away from our R&D staff to correct the errors.”

Realizing an MDM system was needed to alleviate this problem, R&D began to develop an MDM application from scratch. Six “person” years into this slow-going project, Software AG acquired Data Foundations and its OneData MDM product. “We thought—this is exactly what we need!” Backhaus said.

The perfect fit

Backhaus found the existing data model could be implemented easily in webMethods OneData. “It was a perfect fit,” he said.

The system, now known as iData, currently manages the life cycle of nearly 1,000 products, from development through release, plus the introduction of new product versions. As Software AG acquires more products, those data stores can be integrated into iData, making it a system that continues to grow with the company.

With proper authorization, anyone in the company can maintain his or her own data, Backhaus explained, using a common user interface that simplifies viewing and managing data. Sharing product data further increases the system’s ROI. That’s because many different departments across lines of business can use the high-quality data in

their business processes. Many business users tend to view reports, such as the Product Version Platform Availability Report, which contains the life-cycle dates of the currently supported product versions. The legal department creates reports to check third-party license conditions.

Accurate data improves process performance and, at the same time, the iData solution minimizes risks, keeping Software AG compliant with the policies of third-party product providers and providing a complete audit trail for all changes made to the data.

Using the OneData built-in workflow feature, product approvals, product releases and product availability notifications follow an established process each and every time. This streamlines the process, ensures consistency, and provides notifications and escalations to keep the process on track.

iData feeds downstream systems, such as the Customer Support Request Tracking System and the Online Customer Support system. It provides the list of products for which the customer is entitled to support services, and the specific versions and operating systems they’re using. This ensures the customer and support representative have all the correct information when it’s needed.

Another benefit of webMethods OneData: it generates reports, such as supported versions and operating systems for a particular product, “like magic,” Backhaus said. “It’s amazing how it creates reports on complicated data structures without requiring any coding.”

Better data = better processes

Feedback within the R&D group has been phenomenal. “Now our developers spend more time coding new product features and building new systems rather than correcting data,” Backhaus explained.

Added Senior VP of R&D Hans-Christoph Rohland: “The Software AG R&D team can now stay focused

on value-generating activities, since webMethods OneData gives us proven methods to handle data out-of-the-box. Not only are we saving time but the company—and our customers—benefit from the higher consistency of the product data managed with far less effort.”

The next step for iData is to automate the release process with logistics. This is done today with a separate tool, and it’s a manual process managed through e-mail. Automating this process through a workflow will reduce manual tasks and provide notifications and escalations, if necessary, ensuring timely completion of the release process.

KEY COMPONENTS

webMethods OneData reconciles, cleanses, governs and synchronizes enterprise master data on customers, products, suppliers—virtually any category. OneData assures “one version of truth.” Redundancies and errors are eliminated. Only reliable, accurate and approved enterprise information flows through processes, systems and applications.

Take the next step to get there – faster.

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; and the first B2B server and SOA-based integration platform, webMethods.

We offer our customers end-to-end Business Process Management (BPM) solutions delivering low Total-Cost-of-Ownership and high ease of use. Our industry-leading brands, ARIS, webMethods, Adabas, Natural, CentraSite, Terracotta and IDS Scheer Consulting, represent a unique portfolio encompassing: process strategy, design, integration and control; SOA-based integration and data management; process-driven SAP implementation; and strategic process consulting and services.

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