

LINKING CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS FOR INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Challenge

To conduct its business effectively, Idaho Power must acquire information from customers and exchange that data with service suppliers. Idaho Power worked to integrate two systems that automate those tasks for different business units, including a payment-protection insurance plan and an electronic bank payment program.

Solution

Idaho Power chose the webMethods product suite to provide an integration platform. Other integration projects will follow the first two as Idaho Power expands the role of the webMethods solution as a key component of its overall eBusiness strategy.

Benefits

The solution supports one of the company's central goals to simplify its infrastructure by reducing or eliminating expensive, custom, point-to-point integrations. In addition, Idaho Power can:

- Automate time-consuming and error-prone manual process.
- Reduce the amount of manual processing necessary to enter information.
- Reduce the operating costs associated with processing payments.
- Make rapid changes in business processes and in related applications and data.
- Automate business processes that span business entities.
- Maintain the benefits of using "best of breed" applications.

 IDAHO POWER

Idaho Power provides electric service to more than 375,000 customers in a three-state service area (including southern Idaho, eastern Oregon and northern Nevada). Named the most efficient electric utility in the United States by Public Utilities Fortnightly, Idaho Power continues to look for innovative ways to increase its efficiency and ability to continue offering its customers the lowest electricity rates in the nation.

Get there faster.™

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Rob Eamon | Systems Analyst | The Idaho Power Company.

Extensible integration platform

“The first two projects highlight a key benefit of the webMethods integration platform...it provides an eBusiness integration platform that can be reused and extended,” says Rob Eamon, Systems Analyst, Idaho Power Company.

“In this case, both projects had a payment component — the insurance company sends payments based on claims made, and the bank sends payments as a normal part of processing. In our previous approach, both systems would have been implemented with custom mainframe programs and would duplicate the logic needed to accept the payment. ”

“Now both systems convert their payment orders to a common event, which is then processed through the integration platform that serves the needs for all payments, regardless of origin. We could have done something similar using an intermediate file format, but using the webMethods integration platform enabled us to develop a solution faster and with greater flexibility,” says Eamon.

Instead of parsing the complex EDI data from banks by means of time-consuming “brute-force” programming, Idaho Power used the webMethods solution to save programming time and to deploy the bank solution much more quickly.

Eamon also anticipates that the webMethods solution will substantially reduce the time necessary to complete future integration projects. “While the first two projects took a couple of months from conception to deployment, the next projects may take only weeks or possibly days, because we will be able to extend the integration platform deployed in earlier projects,” he says.

Increased adaptability and efficiency

“The overall goal of our integration projects is to increase our adaptability and become even more efficient through eBusiness,” Eamon says.

“To do that, we need an integration platform that enables us to build on our existing eBusiness infrastructure and rapidly integrate new systems. The webMethods product suite provides us that ability now, and we believe it will become even more valuable as our eBusiness capabilities and integration needs continue to grow.”

“The webMethods integration platform enables us to isolate applications from each other, which preserves our investment and provides the ability to update or change applications as driven by business needs,” Eamon says.

“Any new application needs simply to support the same events as the old to make the change transparent to all other applications without requiring expensive custom coding.”

KEY COMPONENTS

webMethods Integration Server

The webMethods Integration Server capabilities provide a robust platform that supports data transfer and a variety of standards. The Enterprise Service Bus enables Web services, packaged applications, custom applications and legacy systems to communicate in a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA).

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