

## BOSSINI ADVANCES ITS SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY WITH THE WEBMETHODS ESB

### Challenge

To keep ahead in a fast-moving industry, leading Asia-Pacific fashion retailer Bossini needed to have better visibility into its business and operational processes through the synchronization of real-time data across multiple orders, shipments and stock-keeping units.

### Solution

By leveraging the webMethods Enterprise Service Bus (ESB), Bossini is able to speed up the deployment of new applications and processes and bring new partners on board much more quickly. The intuitive development environment of the webMethods ESB has enabled Bossini's programmers to easily, and quickly, build the large number of interfaces required to meet its complex integration requirements. Upon transforming to a service-oriented architecture (SOA), Bossini could synchronize real-time data from multiple orders, shipments and stock-keeping units (SKUs) across its Point-of-Sale (POS) systems and Warehouse Management System (WMS) inventory.

### Benefits

- Better visibility into real-time processes with dynamic synchronization of data between point of sale and warehouse management systems.
- Additional business capabilities, e.g. late shipment and sales performance monitoring via dashboards/SMS and stock-on-hand monitoring for all markets.
- Factory order allocation reduced from three days to one.
- Finance month-end closing slashed from 25 days to 7.
- Developer and IT productivity increased by up to 30 percent through user-friendly intuitive interface and reuse of programming objects from the webMethods ESB.



Founded in Hong Kong in 1987, Bossini Enterprises has expanded rapidly to become a leading clothing retailer in the Asia-Pacific region. Today, the company operates more than 1,000 stores in about 30 countries.

Headquartered in Hong Kong, Bossini's core markets are Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. The company offers a wide range of casual wear for ladies, men and children, and is known for its comfortable, energetic and colorful style.

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**“At this moment, we are using webMethods for the data level with **real-time synchronization**. But I know we can rely on webMethods to think about the next architecture for doing business process performance management.”**

Andrew Ling | Director of IT and Supply Chain | Bossini Group

### Addressing the challenge of real-time data synchronization

As changes in fashion occur at the speed of light, when capitalizing on emerging trends, Bossini defines speed and efficiency as a strategic differentiator.

To keep ahead in the fast-moving fashion industry, Bossini wanted to have better visibility into its business and operational processes by synchronizing real-time data across multiple orders, shipments and stock-keeping units (SKUs).

However, the data resided in a number of systems, from point-of-sale (POS) solutions to Bossini’s warehouse management inventory. In order to achieve its goals, Bossini had to integrate a series of platforms including the old and new versions of its Oracle application and the company’s legacy platform.

### Taking the SOA approach with webMethods

What Bossini needed was a new integration infrastructure based on an SOA. This will provide more efficient links between the key systems, enable the company to automate process execution and provide real-time, end-to-end process visibility across multiple transactions.

Following extensive evaluation of four competing integration solutions, Bossini selected Software AG’s webMethods Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) to address its requirements. As a proven solution with demonstrated scalability and a robust architecture, the webMethods ESB enables Bossini to minimize the risks involved in such a large-scale integration project. At the same time, its support for industry standards ensures greater ease of integration with internal applications and third-party trading partners.

### A standards-based solution

With the webMethods ESB, Bossini is able to take full advantage of the standards-based interfaces to integrate with their existing systems and utilize service orchestration to connect their existing systems to their processes. This allows Bossini to speed up the deployment of new applications and processes and bring new partners on board much more quickly. Subsequent changes are also easier to implement, and the company enjoys cost savings resulting from the re-use of the service components.

“The webMethods ESB enables us to achieve real-time interoperability across numerous disparate applications, including independence from the constraints of their operating systems and hardware platforms,” said Mr. Andrew Ling, Director of IT and Supply Chain of the Bossini Group.

### Increasing IT productivity

Of equal importance is the platform’s flexibility and ease of use. “This was crucial in our ability to gain competitive advantage in the fickle world of apparel retailing,” said Ling. “In our decision, we also took into account the faster adoption, lower training costs and quicker return-on-investment enabled by the very intuitive design of the webMethods ESB.”

Another factor in Bossini’s decision to go with the webMethods ESB is Software AG’s leadership within the Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) and Business Process Management (BPM) markets. This will enable Bossini to anticipate the technologies that would shape developments in these areas. At the same time, Software AG’s focus on “update and extend” – as opposed to “rip and replace” – will allow Bossini to protect its existing IT investments.

### Making the transition

During the transition from legacy system to SOA, the company’s different platforms had to be integrated. Other applications like the company’s new POS system had to be connected not only to its new Warehouse Management System (WMS), but also to the old POS because the company was still in the midst of systems migration. “Integrating these three components was like carrying out a heart surgery,” said Mr. Ling.

With the user-friendly features of the webMethods ESB, Bossini’s programmers could very easily, and quickly, build the large number of interfaces which were required to meet these complex integration requirements.

For example, to develop the way that the webMethods ESB could translate data from an application into a common format that can be understood by the rest of the systems, all a programmer had to do is to drag and drop and the application logic will automatically be generated.

## Realizing real-time data synchronization

Upon transforming to SOA, Bossini could synchronize data from multiple orders, shipments and SKUs across its POS systems and WMS inventory in real time – something that used to take up to a day to accomplish.

The POS system holds the company's sales information while the WMS contains all inventory information, both of which are core data for a retailer. With the deployment of the webMethods ESB, the hand-shaking between the POS and WMS is done in real-time, which means that the inventory captured in the WMS is synchronized with transactions captured by the POS simultaneously at the shop level. This gives the business real visibility into what products are selling and what products are still in the warehouses. Business capabilities which were not available previously - such as late shipment monitoring, sales performance monitoring via SMS and stock-on-hand monitoring for all markets - are now possible, contributing to enhanced decision-making by the company. In other process cycle improvements, factory order allocation has been reduced from three days to one and finance month-end closing has been slashed from 25 days to 7.

The webMethods ESB also generates automatic error handling during the process of updating several data sources in one transaction, such as simultaneous renewal of inventory information in the WMS and the POS. "Compared to the old days when we had to write XML and RMI to do some error checking, we save a lot of time," said Mr Ling. In addition, the webMethods ESB also sends alerts in the event of any issue, highlighting specific errors to the IT department.

## Advancing the supply chain strategy

The webMethods ESB has paved the way for seamless integration of applications, extending real-time process visibility and enabling dynamic synchronization of data. This has allowed Bossini to monitor and manage its business performance more closely and enhance its business agility.

It has also enabled Bossini to speed up the deployment of new applications and processes through significant enhancements in IT productivity. For example, the use of standards-based service interfaces with the webMethods ESB has led to a 30 percent improvement in productivity compared to conventional integration approaches.

To link the POS system of the Singapore office to the WMS of an external logistics company, for example, the IT team took only a month using programming objects from the webMethods ESB. Mr. Ling estimated that using traditional programming, it would have taken his team of programmers four months to code the integration program.

"We end up saving a lot of time in building a new program because we are able to reuse a number of programming objects from the webMethods ESB that we have built and stored in our software library," said Ling.

Furthermore, the webMethods integration technology has enabled Bossini to secure greater control and governance over its SOA initiatives. This leads to better reliability and performance for the key processes supported by the system.

## ROI in 18 months

The implementation drove Operational Excellence within the company and this in turn is one of the key contributors to the improvement in financial performance, among other factors like better product offerings and a stronger brand positioning. Hence, the ROI for the project was immediately apparent the following year, which saw revenue grow by 19 percent and gross profit increased by 25 percent during the six months under review.

## Bringing ESB to the next level

The success of the project has led Mr Ling to think about bringing the webMethods ESB to the next level. "At this moment, we are using webMethods technology for real-time synchronization at the data level, but I think we can leverage on the webMethods ESB for a next-generation architecture which will support business process performance management," he said. "The webMethods ESB is something that we treat as a 'must have' within our IT infrastructure; the absolute foundation for our IT road map."

### KEY COMPONENTS

#### webMethods Enterprise Service Bus

The webMethods Enterprise Service Bus acts as an integration server and enables high speed messaging between applications internally and with partners.

Take the next step to get there – faster.

#### ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

Software AG is the world's largest independent provider of Business Infrastructure Software. Our 4,000 global customers achieve business results faster by modernizing, automating and improving their IT systems and processes to rapidly build measurable business value and meet changing business demands. Using our solutions, organizations are able to liberate and govern their data, systems, applications, processes and services - achieving new levels of business automation and transparency.

Our industry-leading product portfolio includes best-in-class solutions for managing data, developing and modernizing applications, enabling service-oriented architecture, and improving business processes. By combining this proven technology with industry expertise and best practices, our customers improve and differentiate their businesses – faster.

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