

ENABLING MOBILE NUMBER PORTABILITY WITH ENTERPRISE APPLICATION INTEGRATION

Challenge

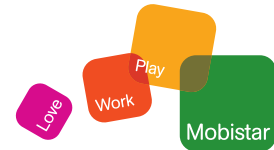
Due to legal requirements, Belgian mobile service providers must allow their customers to retain the same telephone number when switching service providers, and customer transfers had to be implemented within 24 hours. In order to comply with this new law, Mobistar's internal applications had to be integrated with an external application controlling the portability of mobile phone numbers.

Solution

An Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) solution to integrate around 200 internal applications — plus a variety of heterogeneous legacy systems — which enables communication among incompatible applications thanks to standard protocols.

Benefits

The internal integration allowed for the integration of Mobistar's internal applications with the CRDC, an external application that was the link between the three providers and which was required for the portability of mobile numbers.



Mobistar is one of the leading telecommunications players in Belgium, operating mobile and fixed telephones, and active in other market segments with high growth potential, such as data transmission and Internet. One of the fastest growing operators in Europe, it is the Belgian subsidiary of Orange S.A., which handles all of the international mobile telephone business of France Telecom. Mobistar is listed on the Brussels Stock Exchange and has a registered customer base in excess of \$2.5 million.

Get there faster.™

“The technology and services were excellent. We started five weeks later than a competitor who had opted for TIBCO and we finished three weeks earlier. The tests we ran from July to September, when we went live, were flawless.”

Patrick Evrardt | Head of Projects, Information Services Division | Mobistar

Before September 2002, mobile phone users in Belgium were assigned a new telephone number each time they switched service providers. This was a significant obstacle to the development of a competitive national telecommunications market. The Belgian Telecommunication Minister mandated that the three Belgian mobile service providers (Mobistar, Proximus and Base) must allow their customers to retain the same mobile telephone number when switching service providers if they so choose. The operators were given 24 hours to implement a customer transfer and within that time span, a mobile phone user might only be without service for a maximum of 30 minutes. These new requirements applied to both private and corporate clients, irrespective of whether they were post-paid or prepaid customers. In order to comply with this new law, Mobistar’s internal applications had to be integrated with an external application that controls the portability of mobile phone numbers between the operators. All three of them were required to have all technical preparations in place by September 1, 2002.

A very complex integration

To meet the deadline requirement, Mobistar opted for Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) and conducted the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) project. As with Mobistar’s parent company, France Telecom, the webMethods ESB Platform was selected. Accenture began the project implementation in early March 2002 with a project team of fifteen members. By mid-June, the project was successfully completed. The MNP project involved very complex internal application integration. Mobistar had approximately two hundred applications and the IT infrastructure comprised a variety of heterogeneous legacy systems and customized applications. For this

reason, it was essential to Mobistar that the webMethods ESB Platform supported the most important protocols (SOAP, XML and HTTPS), which enabled incompatible applications to communicate with each other. In addition to the use of generic adapters, specific interfaces were also developed. The systems required for the portability of mobile telephone numbers were integrated, i.e. customer databases for subscription and prepaid customers, systems for activation and invoicing, as well as data warehouses and applications that managed customer services. The links between the four applications that were already integrated were strengthened.

Additionally, the MNP project involved the integration of Mobistar’s internal applications with an external application known as the Central Reference Database of Customers (CRDC), which was the link between Mobistar, Proximus and Base. This was an externally developed and managed system for the three operators and it was required for the portability of mobile numbers. The CRDC had to be able to handle intensive communication between the three operators within a short timeframe. The application supported 1,020 transfers per hour, or 15,300 transactions within a 15-hour window. A text message notified the customer when the switch was completed.

“EAI is crucial strategy for us,” said Patrick Evrard, Head of Projects of Mobistar’s Information Services Division. “This year, MNP was the most important project for all mobile phone operators, especially Mobistar. The portability of mobile numbers is a great opportunity to increase our marketshare. In countries where the portability of mobile phone numbers has been mandated by law longer, the second largest mobile phone operator benefited the most. This was chiefly at the expense of the

first operator active in the market.” Mobistar has a 33 percent market share, Proximus 51 percent and Base 16 percent.

“Projects such as MNP are made for us,” said François Rassart, Project Manager of Accenture Belgium. “Dictated by an important business need, the project required a complex and technologically advanced solution that needed to be realized within a short time frame. The MNP project was also challenging because of the high number of critical interactions, both within Mobistar and on the CRDC, the central application that controls the portability between all mobile phone operators.”

KEY COMPONENTS

webMethods ESB Platform

The webMethods ESB Platform combines proven application integration capabilities, high-speed messaging, support for B2B, legacy applications and event-driven technologies to create the most complete integration infrastructure available.

ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

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

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