

Driving greater efficiencies at Lockheed Martin with Solidsoft

Despite Lockheed Martin UK's Merlin Support and Spares Availability System being highly successful the company wanted to extract even greater efficiencies from it, by automating more of its business processes and integrating it with existing Government systems. Using BizTalk Server 2004, Solidsoft rapidly designed, developed and implemented solutions for three core business processes, which resulted in significant savings. At the same time Solidsoft was able to transfer its knowledge so that Lockheed Martin could continue to automate over 45 more business processes.

Company background

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin Corporation employs 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

Based in Havant, UK, Lockheed Martin UK Integrated Systems is responsible for the Merlin Support and Spares Availability System (MSSAS). This innovative programme supplies spare parts and repair services as part of a holistic performance-based logistics contract for the Royal Navy's Merlin helicopter. Under the contract Lockheed Martin is paid on its ability to provide 'the right part in the right place at the right time'. The system has a stockholding of approximately 15,000 parts, worth more than £100 million, with a monthly turnover of nearly 5,000 items.

Responding to customer requirements

Over the period 1998 to 2003 Lockheed Martin's MSSAS programme was particularly successful, achieving an unprecedented accuracy score of one hundred percent from the Defence Procurement Agency stock and accounting audit. However Lockheed Martin did not sit on their laurels when the contract was extended to 2005.

"Defence budgets are shrinking significantly", says Andy Tamlyn, Support Engineering Manager. "Consequently defence departments are looking to obtain

Solution overview

Company

Lockheed Martin Systems Integration - Owego is a leader in providing advanced technology products, services and systems integration solutions to defence, civil and commercial customers worldwide.

Business situation

With defence departments wanting more value for less money, Lockheed Martin wanted to increase the efficiency of its MSSAS programme.

Solution

Integration of information from internal and external systems and the automation of manual processes using Microsoft BizTalk Server 2004.

Benefits

- Significant return on investment.
- On first process automated:
 - 90% of transactions automated.
 - process time reduction from four days to 2.5 secs.
 - 1,900% efficiency gain.
- Similar results expected from a further fifty business processes.



Andy Tamlyn, Support Engineering Manager, Lockheed Martin

greater value for less money. The MSSAS system had already generated a 20% saving, but we wanted to explore how we could achieve even greater efficiencies by automating more of our business processes.”

There was also another reason for looking at how Lockheed Martin could extract greater efficiencies from the system. Together with Westland Helicopters, Lockheed Martin has been awarded the Integrated Merlin Operations Support (IMOS) contract. The migration to this 25-year agreement would mean interfacing with the Government’s legacy systems. Lockheed Martin needed to know how they could do that successfully to reduce data duplication and manual intervention.

Staggering results

Andy Tamlyn came across Solidsoft quite by accident, but is glad he did. “I was trying to download a trial licence for a BizTalk to Oracle driver from Attunity. They contacted me almost immediately and I told them what we were trying to do. Within a day Solidsoft had called me and within two days they were on site demonstrating how they could help.”

To test out the solution Solidsoft was proposing, Lockheed Martin agreed to a proof of concept project. The business process chosen was the process for handling situations when parts were not available. Andy explains: “It doesn’t happen often, but there are occasions when we don’t have a part in stock. When that happens we have a number of options. We can look for alternative or superceded items. We can see if there are parts being repaired in our workshops or at naval establishments. We can go back to the original manufacturers. But whatever we do it demands a lot of human intervention.”

Using Microsoft BizTalk Server 2004 Solidsoft developed the proof of concept within three days. “The results Solidsoft achieved in such a short timescale were staggering”, says Andy Tamlyn. “Solidsoft proved that if the solution they developed was implemented, it would automate 90% of non-availability situations. It would not only save significant manpower but reduce the process time from four elapsed days to 2.5 seconds. It was more than enough to convince us that an investment in BizTalk Server 2004 and Solidsoft would not only achieve the efficiency gains we wanted, but provide a significant return on investment.”

Migrating technology and understanding

Based on the proof of concept Lockheed Martin engaged Solidsoft to kick-start the automation of the fifty processes associated with MSSAS. The initial brief was to implement three processes, together with the underlying security, infrastructure and integration with the government systems. A key part of this was knowledge transfer.



The Merlin helicopter

“It’s important for us to have the expertise in-house to develop the solutions our customers need”, explains Andy Tamlyn. “Consequently a major part of the project was the migration of the technology and understanding to the core Lockheed Martin team.”

In fact a major benefit for Lockheed Martin, has been BizTalk Server 2004’s user-friendly interface. “We’re pretty process driven as a company”, says Andy Tamlyn. “Not only have our technical people found it easy to use, but our Business Process Analysts have also made the transition quite easily.”

A future based on BizTalk

Andy Tamlyn is so impressed by BizTalk Server 2004, and Solidsoft’s work, and has presented the results of the MSSAS project to all the suppliers involved in the IMOS programme. He also feels that BizTalk Server 2004 can help Lockheed Martin in other areas. “With its capabilities for integrating disparate systems, and automating business processes, I think we should be exploring how BizTalk Server 2004 can help us in other areas of the company - Human Resources, Finance and Contract Management, for example. I’m convinced there are significant benefits to be gained.”

Summing up Lockheed Martin’s relationship with Solidsoft, Andy Tamlyn has been very positive. “I have been really impressed with Solidsoft’s responsiveness and willingness to support the migration of technology and knowledge to us”, he says. “With their in-depth expertise and experience they have been able to help us deploy leading edge solutions in a very short space of time.”

For more information about Solidsoft’s services:

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