



bluenog

CASE STUDY

“New application development time has been reduced by more than 20%. In fact, each project took no more than 4 months, with many of the newer projects completed in less than 3 months each.”

— VP, Application Development

Top 20 U.S. Bank: Reduced Development Costs with SOA The Business Challenge

The pressure to reduce the costs of operations and future development has become a fact of life for today's financial services institutions. To meet this challenge, one of the top 20 U.S. banks sought to break away from their historically turnkey, 'black box' applications. They wanted to provide an open and integrated approach to IT that would give them more control over how they interacted with and enhanced their business applications. An internal group was formed to investigate and define how the bank should consider using Services Oriented Architecture (SOA) to modernize its infrastructure. Their paramount goal was to create a road map to tangible business value and ROI.

Solution

The bank selected Bluenog services to help achieve this goal. Bluenog's veteran team of application architects has a successful track record of large-scale, enterprise-class implementations, using a variety of enterprise software products. Their unique Project Blueprint™ methodology delivered a practical approach to SOA within the bank. They leveraged existing projects to inject reusability, governance and best practices into their application framework. Bluenog also assisted in the rollout of the WebLogic Platform and AquaLogic Service Bus, the underlying technologies chosen to initiate the bank's SOA strategy. The bank has seen immediate results from this initiative, with several new reusable services already in production. As a result, the bank is able to bring new applications to market much faster. Their content and reporting teams are also much more agile and responsive to the changing needs of the business.

Background

This leading U.S. commercial bank embarked on an SOA strategy in 2005 when a team was formed specifically to address the reusability needs within the bank. The team initially focused on enterprise security and report publishing, both heavily used functions within the bank. The bank was also in the process of adopting a new enterprise LDAP standard and establishing an enterprise business intelligence (BI) framework.

The bank needed a partner to assist in the implementation of a security and reporting

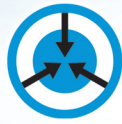
service that could be leveraged across several disparate applications. Support for single sign-on was another goal of the security service. With only a small internal development team, most of the existing applications were of the 'black box' variety utilizing vendor published APIs as their de facto interfaces. In fact, several groups within the bank had independently developed custom code to access BI framework APIs. This was not only redundant, but also led to significant administrative and maintenance challenges.

Bluenog Solutions Group

The Bluenog Solutions Group includes some of the world's most experienced enterprise portal and integration experts. The team has extensive experience working together to successfully implement many large-scale, enterprise-class portal projects, particularly those involving BEA technologies. In fact, Bluenog's founders are former BEA executives. Bluenog was also the Northeast's leading BEA reseller prior to BEA's acquisition by Oracle. The Bluenog team that led the bank's SOA initiative had collectively more than 90 years of experience creating reusable components with the relevant BEA technologies.

Bluenog architected this engagement based on its unique Project Blueprint™ methodology. Rather than take a 'big bang approach,' Bluenog's methodology enabled the bank to show "slow and steady" progress and ensured the rapid success of several well-defined projects. Project Blueprint guided the implementation team through incremental development, testing, and

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The Bluenog professional services team integrated a wide array of enterprise technologies to deliver the bank's SOA and portal solutions.

- Enterprise Content Management: FileNet
- Relational Databases: Oracle, SQL Server
- Business Intelligence Framework: Business Objects
- Search Engines
- Security and Authentication: Novell eDirectory

“Bluenog’s expertise - not only in architecture and design, but with Enterprise Java and the WebLogic products - made them an ideal partner to help implement our long-term SOA strategy. We couldn’t be happier with the results.”

— VP, Application Development

deployment of new features and functionality. Project scope was kept small to reduce complexity and drive higher quality results faster. This methodology delivered initial results almost immediately. Throughout the engagement, the bank could see with certainty that the project was progressing as planned.

Getting Started

In summer 2006, Bluenog started work with the bank’s SOA team to define and then architect the first set of services targeted for reuse. The bank had just selected their corporate LDAP standard, so the first priority was to create a reusable service for exposing authentication and authorization out of the new corporate LDAP. An existing small business loan application that required this service was the key business driver. In less than 8 weeks, using a combination of WebLogic Server and AquaLogic Service Bus, a security service was created that not only met the specific small business application’s need, but it made general purpose functionality available for other new bank applications.

The next service created focused on reporting. As with any bank, data is at the heart of their business. Reports that could grow to hundreds of pages were generated every day. These would be printed and mailed to the appropriate branches. Not only was this process slow, but highly wasteful. Bluenog worked with the bank to create a reporting service that leveraged the bank’s corporate enterprise reporting environment. Through this service, reports were able to be viewed securely and online. Delegated administration rules were established to determine which users could see which reports. In this manner, the reporting service seamlessly interacted with the security service to enforce these permissions.

Enhanced Functionality

The next step was to create additional front and back-end functionality so users could consume these new services appropriately. Much of the functionality of the report publishing environment was built atop WebLogic Portal. Workflow services were created on the back-end using WebLogic Integration to connect with their primary RDBMS and other legacy systems. Bluenog Solutions architected, designed and developed each of these front and back-end services.

Business Impact

Bluenog successfully completed the initial integration project and subsequent enterprise portal implementation on time and on budget. Since the initial services were created, Bluenog has assisted the bank with several new applications. Their SOA strategy firmly in place, the bank has been able to seamlessly add new functionality to existing portals as well as create new portal applications.

Cutting development time by at least 20% for all subsequent applications enabled the bank to show financial payback after just the second application. Software quality has also improved. The bank has even been able to avoid further custom integration costs by having some of their third-party ISV’s add new functionality that leverages the bank’s new security and reporting services.

The bank’s growth through recent acquisitions has heightened the priority of issues related to merging technologies. The bank’s Service Oriented Architecture will help to greatly simplify these efforts. The reusable services built thus far provide a clean, standards-based, portable integration point. Additional opportunities for reuse are expected to surface in the new, larger organization. Possible future benefits also include the flexibility to easily migrate their internal reporting portal to other application servers with substantially reduced migration effort and cost. ●

Bluenog is an enterprise software and solutions company that specializes in integrated content management, portal, and business intelligence. Leading organizations rely on Bluenog products to build and deploy Rich Internet Applications (RIA), and manage dynamic website content at a fraction of the cost of traditional alternatives. Bluenog Solutions Group meets our customers’ unique challenges with pragmatic combinations of commercial and open source software. Headquartered in Piscataway, N.J., Bluenog is also an Oracle and Actuate reseller. For more information, visit www.bluenog.com.