

THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY



LOCATION:
Brussels, Belgium

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
Transportation

NOMINATING COMPANY:
Progress Software

ORGANIZATION:

Volvo Cars Belgium

PROJECT NAME:

XDMS Implementation

Summary

Volvo has standardized all of its regional dealerships in Belgium and Luxembourg on one SOA-enabled dealer management system (DMS). The new system, XDMS from Xpower, will allow all 65 of Volvo's regional dealers to automatically share information with Volvo's regional headquarters, as well as integrate with Volvo's corporate systems in Sweden. This will make it easier for Volvo to diagnose any issues with its car, as if the Swedish engineers were right in the dealership, and it also makes it easy for dealer's to quickly order cars for customers and track servicing for the cars. The system also allows Volvo to accommodate the latest trends in the industry as well, namely, letting the product, the car itself, dial into the network and schedule its own maintenance.

Introductory Overview

Web services help Volvo dealers throughout Belgium and Luxemburg provide their customers the premium services they expect, and 98 percent of all Volvo parts ordered are delivered overnight—guaranteeing that a Volvo customer will never have to wait long to get back behind the wheel of their car.

Dealers can now respond to customer demands very quickly. For example, if a customer ordering a car decides on an extra towing hook, a single transaction can update the purchase price and order parts immediately—and they will probably be available the next day. The system will also update the dealers accounting records to reflect this change in the sales order.

Benefits

Web services help Volvo dealers throughout Belgium and Luxemburg provide their customers the premium services they expect, and 98 percent of all Volvo parts ordered are delivered overnight.

From customer order through vehicle delivery and customer service, dealers are able to track a vehicle through its entire lifecycle to ensure a consistently superior customer experience.



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This new system has delivered tremendous business benefits to Volvo and increased its ability to offer an enhanced purchase, support and service experience for their customers.

In Volvo's case, dealers have to focus on the sale and maintenance of cars and can't afford to invest in IT every few years. XDMS takes the guesswork out of IT for dealers by handling all aspects of running a dealership, as well as using a car's VIN number to track the car throughout its entire lifecycle. From the sales process of ordering the car directly from Volvo by integrating with Volvo's Global Car Configurator, to delivery of the car. XDMS follows a car through the car's entire maintenance history, including scheduling service appointments, allowing mechanics to track their time on a particular car, what parts were used, inventory, ordering of the parts, invoicing the customer for the maintenance or repairs, and handles the back office accounting function and reporting for the dealer. Any monthly reporting that needs to be sent back to Volvo is done through the system. It is a CRM/ERP system uniquely designed for this sector of the automotive industry.

The Importance of Technology

The Xpower dealer management system is based on Progress® OpenEdge® and uses Sonic ESB® to connect the DMS to Volvo's corporate car configuration system and its Vehicle Information and Diagnostics for after sale system (VIDA). The tight coupling of OpenEdge with the Sonic ESB creates an industry-leading infrastructure for distributed business systems. The Sonic ESB, which is the world's first enterprise service bus, is a powerful and efficient approach to application integration. Combining XML, enterprise-grade communication services, and an SOA based on Web services standards, the Sonic ESB provides a cost-effective way to integrate applications and manage services distributed across an extended enterprise.

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Originality

Our dealers now have the tools to act quickly to respond to customer and prospect inquiries. Dealers and their employees have to listen carefully to customers, and dealers have to closely coordinate their resources to serve customers. For example, a customer coming in for a simple repair will likely communicate with a receptionist, a workshop manager, and a parts shop manager, and they each need flexible access to the same information so they can track the repair and manage customer expectations.”

“We worked with our dealer council and selected Xpower to deliver this platform because they understand the importance of translating the soul of the brand into processes and systems. The power of Progress OpenEdge and the Progress development tools allowed Xpower to rapidly deploy the dealer management system we needed that would be flexible enough to allow dealer



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personnel to efficiently communicate with customers to provide the premium experience customers expect from Volvo.”

The need for change in dealer management systems is enormous, and Progress provides the technology that allows vertically focused developers to build and deploy flexible applications that reflect business logic and allow customers to gain a business advantage. We can continue to evolve our XDMS application to meet evolving dealer requirements and reuse business logic to meet the evolving demands of our customers.

This dealer management system was the first dealer management system to be deployed in 65 dealers in Belgium and Luxemburg and they were all online in just eight months. It took only two weeks for the new dealer management system to be integrated with central Volvo business applications by using the Sonic ESB.

Success

Serge Wielandts

Van Kasteren Volvo - Dealer

For me as a dealer, the best feature of this system is the way everything has been linked together. We don't have an IT specialist in house but we don't need to since the system is very user friendly and has a lot of clearly defined user defined settings. For me as a manager, this means that everything is in one database and we have a lot of tools to export data and to generate reports. We have ended up eliminating all the other tools, spreadsheets, etc because I can easily get anything I need from the system.

Since the dealers were a crucial part of the search and selection process, they fully understand the technology and were quick to embrace XDMS' capabilities.

Difficulty

Christoph Cordier, Volvo Cars Belgium Customer Service Manager, stated that “the evolution of the automotive sector has a tremendous influence on our dealer systems. For every demand of the customer—from product evaluation to configuration of cars to diagnostics and maintenance—Volvo has a system in place. It is important that we link these corporate systems with dealer management systems, and Volvo Belgium conducted an evaluation to identify the applications vendor best equipped to provide us with a robust dealer management system with the flexibility to link to corporate applications.”

This was a group effort undertaken by the dealers and VolvoCars Belgium - so we were all in agreement that the project needed to happen to eliminate integration points with Volvo's Corporate Systems.