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— PHIL CRESSWELL

PROJECT MANAGER, ROYAL MAIL



Royal Mail Posts eBusiness Integration Success

Enterprise System from GXS Boosts Agility for Mail Services Company

Corporate Profile

UK Mail Services Provider

Royal Mail group owns the Royal Mail, Parcelforce Worldwide and Post Office™ brands. It is one of the largest employers in the UK with approximately 200,000 people involved in its mail services and running the nationwide network of Post Office branches.

Wholly owned by the UK Government, the company has annual sales in excess of £8 billion (US \$13 billion). Royal Mail and Parcelforce Worldwide handle some 82 million items to 27 million addresses each day.

The Business Challenge

Boosting Business Agility

Royal Mail, Parcelforce Worldwide, and the Post Office branches use different systems to host critical data, such as product catalogs, customer details, invoices and parcel tracking. Therefore, integrated communications play a key role in the business. Steve Lucas, Delivery Support Director, Business Systems explains:

“As we enter an increasingly commercial environment we need to be even more flexible and responsive. Integrating our systems will improve Royal Mail’s ability to adapt to change, such as offering new products or services, and the ability to handle high volumes of data globally.”

The priority areas for integration were two gateway systems, which were running in parallel, one under expensive third-party maintenance and the other running on obsolete, unsupported software.

The Solution

A Complete Integration Framework

Royal Mail group chose GXS Enterprise Gateway to handle the messaging between all their external business partners and across internal applications and Application Integrator™ to handle data translation. This solution replaced the existing External Data Gateway, which primarily notifies non-UK Postal Services of movements of international mail and reconciles these with the International Post Corporation (IPC).

Royal Mail also replaced a Customer Data Interchange Gateway with the GXS solution that now uses a variety of communication methods, such as EDI, XML, Kermit and leased lines to manage the exchange of electronic data from over 1,000 trading partners.

“ After an extensive evaluation, we selected GXS to migrate the EDI system off the legacy platform and on to the Unix-based GXS solution.”

— JOHN GREENLEES, IT MANAGER,

ROYAL MAIL

Enterprise Gateway manages data in and out of the business without the need to change the communication protocols. It uses maps to transform the data and retain its original format, then routes the data to its destination. In addition, it links to business applications such as Siebel, SAP and bespoke systems for track and trace and network management.

This integration framework also provides the platform for future business-to-consumer communication across the Royal Mail and Parcelforce Worldwide divisions as well as the network of Post Office branches.

The Results

Increased Agility, Enhanced Customer Service

Moving to a complete integration broker has dramatically changed Royal Mail's business operations. Phil Cresswell, Project Manager at Royal Mail elaborates:

"We had two completely different IT environments which have now been merged so they act as one communication system. We can therefore manage information more effectively, and improve the efficiency of our business through implementing new interfaces faster, shortening payment cycles and enhancing customer service."

Royal Mail can now handle high volume messaging more effectively between all external business partners and internal applications worldwide. The company has an increased capacity and agility to implement new interfaces, and therefore deliver new or improved products or services and respond more quickly to new business initiatives.

"Now that interfacing activities have been brought into one, smaller and effective team focused on all business areas, we have also significantly reduced our support costs," adds Cresswell. "In the future, there will also be the opportunity to decrease costs to existing customers as message volumes rise."

GXS Wins Business Integration Journal Award with Royal Mail



In 2003, GXS and Royal Mail were awarded the prestigious Best e-Business Solution award from Business Integration Journal (formerly eAI Journal). The judging panel consisted of top industry analysts and, according to the criteria, the Best e-Business Solution must dramatically improve an existing business process or establish an entirely new approach to reach new markets. The solution must be strategic to the end user organization and deliver significant competitive advantage.



About GXS

GXS is a leading global provider of B2B e-commerce solutions that simplify and enhance business process integration and collaboration among trading partners. Organizations worldwide, including more than 70 percent of the Fortune 500, leverage the on-demand services on GXS Trading Grid® to extend supply chain networks, optimize product launches, automate warehouse receiving, manage electronic payments and gain supply chain visibility. GXS Managed Services, GXS' B2B outsourcing solution, empowers customers with the expertise, technical infrastructure and program support to conduct B2B e-commerce with trading partners globally. Based in Gaithersburg, Md., GXS has an extensive global network and has local offices in the Americas, Europe and Asia-Pacific regions. GXS can be found on the Web at www.gxs.com.

ACHIEVING AGILITY:

- Increased capacity to develop new products and services
- Improved responsiveness to new business initiatives
- Reduced support costs
- Increased implementation speed for new interfaces
- Shortened payment cycles
- Enhanced customer service

"By winning the Best e-Business Solution... GXS has continued its pattern of excellence in this year's Business Integration Journal awards. For their past and present performance in our awards, GXS is now recognized in our Hall of Fame, which is an exceptional accomplishment."

— TONY BROWN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,
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