

CASE STUDY



'YOUR ACCOUNT' PORTAL ENABLES WEB SELF-SERVICE

CUSTOMER: POWERCO

Utilities providers are under relentless pressure to deliver better shareholder returns by reducing costs and increasing efficiencies. At the same time, they need to deliver consistent, secure supply and fast, effective customer service.

The Your Account portal lets the company's 500,000+ customers securely access and update their account details, record their own meter readings, view invoices and pay their bills online, whenever and wherever they wish.

Now that customers can easily track their own usage and billing history, they can make sure their invoices are correct and can also track upcoming payment due dates to ensure they always get their prompt payment discount. The portal also provides a perfect channel for the company to deliver information on new products and services to targeted audiences, and to gather intelligence on customer preferences through the use of online surveys.

For this utilities business, the benefits delivered include:

- Reduced customer service costs as inbound calls have decreased
- A more accurate and efficient billing system which uses real-time meter readings instead of estimated readings
- More productive customer service staff as they are able to focus on high priority issues such as faults rather than routine account and billing enquiries
- Reduced customer churn because customers are happier
- An online channel that is ideal for targeted marketing of products and services

BUSINESS BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

- Reduced customer service overheads
- Improved accuracy and efficiency of billing systems
- More productive customer service staff
- Improved customer satisfaction and reduced churn
- An online channel for effective target marketing and customer research
- A robust, high-performance platform to support further development of internet-delivered services





Integration expertise makes Optimization the logical choice

When it came to designing, building and rolling out the Your Account portal, Optimization was the logical choice for IT expertise as it had previously worked with the company to implement an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB). This project used an SOA web services-capable middle-ware solution to integrate a variety of disparate legacy applications, creating a secure and flexible IT environment that could effectively respond to rapidly changing business requirements. At the same time, it allowed the business to make much better use of existing hardware, software and infrastructure investments.

How we did it

The portal solution is built on two products - Sun's SeeBeyond ESB (now known as Sun Java Composite Application Platform Suite or JCAPS) and the LifeRay Portal. These are both Java Platform Enterprise Edition (J2EE)-compliant.

SeeBeyond/JCAPS provides seamless application-to-application integration, business-to-business integration and business process management, giving customers a complete composite application development platform built on a single, unified and standards-based Service Oriented Architecture (SOA). Functionality includes integrated human workflow, portal, ETL (Extract, Transfer and Load), business activity monitoring and composite application development capabilities.

LifeRay is an open source enterprise portal server which is fully standards-based and cross-platform. An Application Server provides web interfaces to Your Account users to interact with the application. Built on top of the LifeRay portal framework, this component consists of JSR168 portlets and business logic. The built-in LifeRay portal security model was also extended to support Your Account-specific authentication and authorisation requirements.

WE DELIVERED:

- A standards-based web portal solution for customer self-service
- Complex integration with back-end billing and transaction engines
- Custom Java-based software development to extend standard functionality with the customers' unique business rules and processes
- Consultancy on optimal software architecture and infrastructure
- Security, authentication and identity management

TECHNOLOGIES AND METHODOLOGIES

- J2EE
- Sun JCAPS
- LifeRay Portal

Want to know more? Talk to our team.

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