



LOI: IMPROVE MARKETING AND UPGRADE CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH IBM AND SSA GLOBAL

Challenge

Become more proactive in marketing efforts, improve availability of accurate information to executive management and increase integration of business functions to more proactively drive and manage the business.

Solution

SSA Outbound Marketing, SSA Email Marketing, SSA Service; IBM TotalStorage® DS 4300, IBM @server® BladeCenter®, blade servers, IBM WebSphere®, IBM Content Manager

Why IBM?

IBM WebSphere helps companies maximize their return on IT investments to reach users in new ways, while supporting new business models, and integrating people, processes and information.

Key Benefits

Customer service transformed from inbound/ reactive to outbound/proactive; projected 50 percent increase in call center effectiveness (service levels up); new product development and deployment time vastly improved

INTEGRATED VIEW OF CUSTOMERS

Privately owned LOI is the market leader in distance learning in the Netherlands. The company writes all its own textbooks, develops courseware, and has a fully enabled Web site to help its customers plot their ongoing education choices. With more than 100,000 active students, and more than a million customers in its database, LOI needed a more unified view of customer information and knowledge management to extend its marketing efforts.



“We used to be a direct mail company, and we needed to become a fully integrated marketing company,” explains Richard Kalmeijer, IT Director, LOI. “We have 100 percent brand recognition in the Netherlands, and everyone knows our name. Yet, while we are well known for our language courses, not everyone knows about our fully accredited MBA program, or the 40 degrees and five Masters we offer.”

The company was using homegrown solutions, and all of its customer service and marketing efforts were based on these legacy systems. Additionally, the company was using a point solution for e-mails to customers. With disparate homegrown applications in use across different departments, the system was not at all integrated. As a result, the marketing department leaned heavily on IT whenever it launched a campaign.

“It was not time efficient. We were at the maximum of what we could do in-house,” explains Kalmeijer. “We needed a centralized overview; we understood CRM, we just needed better tools, with more speed, efficiency and control.”

SELECTING THE PROPER CRM SOLUTION

To revamp its customer service and marketing solutions, the company selected SSA Outbound Marketing, SSA Email Marketing, and SSA Service. “The SSA Global solution, since it was all J2EE-based, was able to connect to our legacy systems,” says Kalmeijer. “A lot of companies wanted us to throw out everything and start over; we could not do that, nor did we want to. Now, all our solutions are integrated. And we have achieved marketing channel integration—e-mail, phone, direct mail—in one connected solution.”

The solution is built on IBM WebSphere. “The IBM WebSphere Application Server enables our entire service-oriented architecture (SOA),” continues Kalmeijer. “It integrates well with everything. Other similar products offer less integration or are not supported. It’s flexible; we’re now in the process of implementing transactional systems based on WebSphere, and we will integrate it with our SSA CRM solution in the SOA. WebSphere in the long run offers increased flexibility for the end user, but that’s really just an IT thing. The end user only knows that he gets a unified view of what he wants quicker.”

MORE EFFICIENT MARKETING

In the past, LOI often found that its call center staff was not aware of all marketing communications customers had received. With SSA Outbound Marketing, LOI can create marketing campaigns that include outbound calling assignments, and the call center knows what the direct mail department is doing. “We can now send more mailings, do better customer profiling, and our service department has changed from inbound/reactive to outbound/proactive,” explains Kalmeijer. “We have also increased our focus on loyalty now that we have a better view of the customer, better complaint handling and better knowledge management.”

And the company is finding that it can increase its marketing efforts at no additional costs, due to inherent efficiencies in the solution. For example, due to integration of systems, the company has virtually eliminated interdepartmental mail.

“When you bring the solution closer to the end user, and give them more say, there are certain things they can do for themselves. The speed with which new products can now be developed and deployed made the whole company think more deeply about CRM. The whole IBM and SSA Global implementation made us realize we could do so much more cross-selling.”

—Richard Kalmeijer, IT Director, LOI

NEW SOLUTION SPARKS NEW PRODUCTS

LOI found that its employees began to generate new product ideas almost as soon as they implemented the solution. With IBM WebSphere extending functionality to the end user, LOI has found that employees are taking more initiative. "When you bring the solution closer to the end user, there are certain things they can now do for themselves. Before, when they had ideas for opportunities, we (IT) had to be the bad guy and say, 'well that's not the way the system works,'" says Kalmeijer. "Now they have an understandable solution, and are empowered to create new opportunities, and this has been a growth driver for us."

Specifically, the company used the new SSA Global and IBM solution to develop and launch I Coach – which sends students reminders via e-mail or cell phone about homework, tests and assignments, and a new product that organizes courseware in such a way that when students finish a course of study, the solution helps those students prepare for final examinations.

ONGOING VALUE FOR THE ENTERPRISE

The combination of IBM WebSphere middleware and SSA Global offerings can help simplify IT infrastructure, heighten productivity, accelerate time-to-value and reduce an organization's total cost of ownership.

SSA Open Architecture is SSA Global's enabling technology. SSA Global has embraced the concept of service-oriented architecture (SOA) and the use of open-standards middleware as the platform on which applications are built.

ABOUT SSA GLOBAL

SSA Global™ (NASDAQ: SSAG) is a leading provider of extended ERP solutions for manufacturing, distribution, retail, services and public organizations worldwide. In addition to core ERP applications, SSA Global offers a full range of integrated extension solutions including corporate performance management, customer relationship management, product lifecycle management, supply chain management and supplier relationship management. Headquartered in Chicago, SSA Global has over 50 locations worldwide and its product offerings are used by approximately 13,000 active customers in over 90 countries. For additional information, visit the SSA Global Web site at www.ssaglobal.com.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about IBM, IBM WebSphere and SSA Global solutions, please contact your IBM representative, or visit us at:

ibm.com/solutions/ssaglobal

KEY COMPONENTS

SOFTWARE

- SSA Outbound Marketing
- SSA Email Marketing
- SSA Service
- IBM WebSphere Application Server for Linux®
- IBM Content Manager
- Content Manager iSeries Web Enablement Kit
- Linux Red Hat

SERVERS

- IBM TotalStorage DS 4300
- IBM @server BladeCenter
- IBM blade servers
- IBM @server iSeries™



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