

Skoda Auto Deutschland GmbH Yields New Efficiencies in Their Ordering Process with LegaSuite Integration®



Skoda Auto Deutschland GmbH, a division of Volkswagen, was founded in 1991 and has 130 employees. Skoda manufactures and sells three automobile models—Fabia, Octavia and Supberb.

Challenge

In the automobile industry, car dealerships are at the mercy of their manufacturers for the delivery of product. Unlike many other industries, where a product can be supplied by multiple independent providers, car dealers typically rely solely upon the manufacturing line of one or two automobile companies. Because the success of automobile manufacturers relies heavily on the success of their dealerships, it is imperative that they maintain a healthy business relationship. This involves opening a seamless communication path between the two that provides dealers with adequate access to inventory data and the capability to quickly and easily order cars and parts.

Based in Germany, Skoda Auto Deutschland GmbH, a division of the Volkswagen Group and importer of automobiles, wanted to provide its customers, 500 car dealers throughout Germany, with faster, more professional service. Skoda's dealers were accessing a mainframe to exchange information with the manufacturing plant via Telnet communication, which offered slow log-in times—sometimes one to two minutes. Skoda wanted to modify its architecture, leveraging Web technology, to provide dealers with a thin client that would significantly reduce connection times. The IT team decided to create a Web portal that would serve as a single point of contact for the dealers and the manufacturing plant, yielding faster access and more seamless communication.

Solution

To accelerate the project, Skoda selected Seagull Software's LegaSuite Integration technology, a component of LegaSuite®. LegaSuite Integration is an innovative software technology that automates the process of integrating Web-based applications with legacy systems and helps connect business processes across the value chain. And because LegaSuite Integration requires no changes to the host application, there is zero risk of disrupting core business operations.

Using LegaSuite Integration, Skoda now has real-time, integrated access to back-office order management and inventory parts systems through a portal called Skoda Extranet. LegaSuite Integration has allowed Skoda to seamlessly integrate legacy applications running on IBM S/390 and iSeries platforms with newly-developed Web applications. And LegaSuite Integration's support for multiple industry standards enabled Skoda to quickly and easily deliver legacy application functionality to both J2EE and .NET environments. Dealers access the mainframe and iSeries applications in combination with other Web-based applications through the homogenous entry point of the Skoda Extranet portal.

One facet of the project is "Bremer Modell," which is Skoda's online parts ordering system. The back-end is a mainframe application built in-house. Using LegaSuite Integration, Skoda encapsulated key legacy functions into business objects with COM interfaces, and makes



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IT Manager
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them available to Skoda Extranet users via Active Server Pages (ASPs). Skoda has also used LegaSuite Integration to generate business objects from its legacy iSeries application, and publishes them via industry-standard J2EE interfaces. These objects are seamlessly integrated with the company's online order management system for retailers, "DispoShop," which was built in Java Server Pages (JSPs).

"With LegaSuite Integration, we were able to reuse the critical parts of our legacy applications in new Web architectures without any modifications to our existing systems, saving us time and money," says Oliver Gottwald, IT manager for Skoda Auto Deutschland. "The reliability and performance of the resulting composite applications were critical factors for user acceptance, and LegaSuite Integration has excelled in both areas. The Skoda Extranet is extremely reliable and performance is excellent."

Results

The Skoda Extranet is accessed through a Virtual Private Network (VPN), ensuring efficient and secure connections for employees, partners and suppliers. Skoda's portal environment simplifies and streamlines the purchasing and distribution processes, reducing costs and shortening cycle times for procuring parts and materials.

Skoda chose LegaSuite Integration because it could deliver the capabilities they needed affordably. "We looked at other solutions, but decided to go with LegaSuite Integration. It has the functionality we needed and it costs less. Plus, Seagull Software had a good team that worked well with us," says Gottwald.

Since deploying LegaSuite Integration, Skoda has gained several advantages by providing their dealers with a fast method of communication. By utilizing LegaSuite Integration's integration capabilities to launch legacy business functions to the Web in a thin client, connection times that once took one to two minutes are now only one to two seconds—giving dealers virtually immediate access to inventory and order status information. "By interacting with the legacy applications in real-time, we have delivered a robust solution that enables dealers to do their jobs more quickly, reliably and with greater accuracy," says Gottwald. "The Skoda Extranet gives us a competitive advantage by providing innovative business capabilities that directly benefit our dealers and their customers."



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