

Daisy Brand

AgilePoint

Business Process Management

:: Overview

Providing high quality cultured dairy products for over 75 years, Daisy Brand of Dallas, TX is a typical example of a firm that really understood the power of the Ascentn approach. Like any significant business today, Daisy Brand already has extensive IT investments—an ERP system (Protean), order management, logistics and shipping applications along with a variety of in house applications developed to support the day to day operations of the firm. A few years ago, Daisy Brand made a strategic decision to develop a Service Oriented Architecture for future applications based around the Microsoft .NET platform.

:: The Challenge

Kevin Brown, CIO at Daisy Brand put it like this: "While our applications themselves do a wonderful job, they often throw work over the wall to workers and expect that it is done and completed. As a result, things can fall through the cracks-between the workers and business applications, and between the different roles in the business itself. This is where business processes tend to breakdown."

So Daisy Brand looked for a solution—one that would help them to bridge the system-to-human gap, yet would allow them to leverage their existing investments in .NET and Web Services and work smoothly with their third party messaging platform. Daisy Brand was looking to process-enable their existing Microsoft applications without having to invest in high-end Java-based approaches.

"What I really liked was the way Ascentn had leveraged the openness of the .NET architecture," Brown said. "So while we could build process templates and deploy them, we also had an open platform based approach. AgilePoint provides me with a nice mid-level application environment that is still framework based, allowing us to develop code that leverages our existing Microsoft investments such as the Visual Studio development environment and other applications we have developed. Once we found that they had delivered the necessary low level capabilities in .NET and supporting object libraries, we knew that Ascentn had really understood and leveraged the

:: The Challenge (cont.)

internals of .NET properly, rather than merely slapping a .NET label on their product because it could co-exist with .NET as others do."

Their first project was a good example of that extensibility. They wanted to support the Accounts Receivables employees with better 10-30-60-90 day follow-ups by directly integrating Microsoft Exchange with the accounting application. Daisy Brand used AgilePoint to manage the new process by enhancing the Microsoft Exchange interface to allow them to automatically insert reminders and follow-up events directly into Outlook for the relevant staff members.

Having just completed a formal project review, Brown said: "We are really pleased with the result. The main benefit is a consistent follow-up on all of the deductions for accounts receivables. In the food business, it is not so much a question of collecting the monies, more a problem of clearing the deductions that customers take off the invoice. We now have a process that tracks changes, from the time the deduction is received to the time it is closed. Ascentn ensures that employees follow-up on customer commitments made during the resolution of deductions. Moreover, I can also measure that cycle time, allowing ongoing optimization. The bottom line benefit was a reduction in outstanding revenues by 2 days worth of sales (where the average figure is already less than 20 days). This is a 10% reduction which represents a significant benefit to the business. The Accounts Receivable project has provided a return on investment for the Ascentn purchase. Everything moving forward is additional savings for the company."

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