



IMPLEMENTATION STUDY: 3Com

Enabling Rapid, Custom and Adaptable
Sales Processes Through Savvion BusinessManager

COMPANY

3Com
Santa Clara, CA

PRODUCT SOLUTION COMPONENTS

Savvion BusinessManager

INDUSTRY

Computer networking manufacturing

CHALLENGES

A leading networking products manufacturer, 3Com has an extensive, global staff and sales force. The company wanted to revise its special price quotes (SPQ) system to reduce lag time it was experiencing from the current Lotus Notes replication process. Since all special price quotes require rigorous and timely approval, 3Com needed to develop an integrated process for handling special price quotes (SPQs) that would expedite the process and enable the company to meet its customers' needs in a timely manner.

SOLUTION

3Com chose BusinessManager from Savvion to build a process for enabling its special price quotes. The resulting system connected a Siebel sales force automation application through to a back-end SAP system, providing the company with an end-to-end process that saved time and reduced human errors.

Overview

Time is everything in the business world today. Customers want information and product faster than ever, and with the global nature of business, they often require around-the-clock service. 3Com, a leading provider of voice and data networking products, services and solutions for enterprises, is working hard to respond to its customer demands for timely access to information. The company has a globally diverse staff with locations worldwide. To accommodate the 24x7 nature of 3Com's business, processes such as placing orders have been moved to web-based applications in recent years.

3Com was finding that one of its critical processes, obtaining a special price quote (SPQ) was taking upwards of four days to complete using the existing Lotus Notes application the company built. This time frame was unacceptable to its sales staff that was trying to close deals, and to its customers that wanted to place orders in real time. As a result, 3Com turned to a business process management (BPM) solution that would provide the workflow and application integration necessary to automate parts of the SPQ process, and offer real-time access to back-office inventory systems. The company chose Savvion's BusinessManager to handle the end-to-end process, and after six months was able to get the new SPQ process up and running. 3Com uses the tool today to process all special price orders. Often, orders are now put through the same day the request is received.

Business Problem

In 2001, 3Com used a Lotus Notes application for the SPQ process, which was slowing down business.

“It was taking up to four days to receive approval on SPQ’s, a lag time that was completely unacceptable to our sales staff and our customers,” says Kathleen O’Neill, Director of IT with 3Com. “Our Lotus Notes application was holding up the process, and by the time a sales person received an approved quote, it was often too late to close the deal.”

The Lotus Notes application was also not connected with the other internal applications that were part of the SPQ process. This meant that for each SPQ request, a sales person had to manually enter customer information that already existed in a Siebel sales force automation system into Lotus Notes; wait up to four days for the approval (which required the controllers to manually access credit systems to determine whether to authorize the request); and then manually enter the approved order into the back-end SAP system to create the contract. In addition to the lag time issue, there were also greater chances for human error and unnecessary time spent re-entering information into separate systems.

3Com already had an enterprise license for Savvion in-house, and had recent success using Savvion as the backbone for its revised web content management system. Therefore, IT recommended using Savvion for the SPQ process and received internal management approval to begin the process. Since 3Com wanted to create an end-to-end process that connected several existing applications and required the system to move beyond the intranet for part of the process, it was breaking ground in 2002 for the emerging BPM market with Savvion’s solution.

Solution Details

Because 3Com had already used Savvion in-house for its web content management project, the company had trained individuals with product experience, a plus in the SPQ project. 3Com implemented the project using a project manager and two resources that knew Savvion, one full-time employee and a contract developer based out of Singapore. Rounding out the team was an SAP and Siebel developer who were able to help with the application integration, and a data warehouse developer to assist with integrating with Business Objects Universe, the system that stored all of 3Com’s historical sales data. 3Com benefited from the location of its developers, because the developer in Singapore worked the opposite hours of the developer based in the US. This enabled rapid development, where the Singapore developer would hand-off his work at the beginning of the US developer’s day, and the iterations happened twice as fast as traditional development. The total project time, from requirements analysis to system deployment, was six months.

RESULTS

As a result of the BPM project at 3Com, the standard time for processing a SPQ request was significantly reduced from up to four days to as fast as several hours. This dramatically reduced lag time and made 3Com more competitive in the market. In addition, the end-to-end nature of the process, which integrated several back-office systems, reduced time previously spent manually entering information. The initial roll-out of the project highlighted the global nature of 3Com's business, when the IT staff received positive feedback from around the world.

ABOUT SAVVION

Savvion is a leading global provider of automated business management solutions. Founded in 1994, the company released its flagship product, Savvion BusinessManager™ in December 1999. BusinessManager is a Java-based software system that enables companies to quickly transform business processes into flexible, distributed Web applications accessed and managed over intranets, extranets, and the Internet. Headquartered in Santa Clara, CA, Savvion has international offices in Europe, Japan, and India.

ABOUT 3COM

3Com is a tier-one provider of innovative, practical and high-value voice and data networking products, services and solutions for enterprises of all sizes and public sector organizations. For further information, please visit www.3com.com, or the press site www.3com.com/pressbox.

Savvion's easy-to-use modeling and development environment has made it easy for Kathleen O'Neill to find qualified developers to assist with the product. Her requirements were for Java experience and an understanding of web technology. O'Neill has found that her developers are able to train quickly on the Savvion environment. Because 3Com was pushing the envelope with Savvion by creating an end-to-end process that involved several tight integrations with SAP, Business Objects, and Siebel, the integrations were a little trickier than the previous web content management project. However, the SAP developer helped by using SAP's BusinessConnector to pass the variables between Savvion and SAP. O'Neill's Savvion developers had to write the components that were executing the external calls to the applications using SQL.

3Com had the application up and running on schedule, but experienced some challenges with bugs the initial week the application was used. Thanks to the fast development environment of Savvion, the team was able to debug and quickly make the necessary changes to the process with minimal interruption to business.

Today, all 3Com's products, which require a special price quote, are sold via the SPQ system. The end-to-end nature of the system means that when a request is made, the customer information is pulled from the existing Siebel customer record, populated into the SPQ system, then routed to the appropriate controller, who has real-time access to pricing and inventory systems to approve the request. Once the request is approved, it is passed off to the SAP system, which automatically creates the contract that the sales person can use. SAP also can

handle credits from customers that are set up to handle their accounts that way, and the results are available on-line through 3Com's e-connect system.

The enterprise strength of the Savvion environment has been tested by 3Com, most recently in a necessary maintenance event. Due to year-end processing, IT staff at 3Com needed to recycle the databases and bring down the database that was being used by the SPQ system. IT contacted the worldwide SPQ team, which is the business team that works with sales to facilitate the SPQ business process. Worldwide SPQ informed IT that the database couldn't be shut down unless they could drive through a number of critical orders that day. The Savvion system rose to the challenge, because as soon as that dictate was shared, within minutes all necessary SPQ requests were generated, passed through the multiple approval steps, and went all the way through creating the contracts in SAP and shipping out the product that very day. Once these critical orders went through the SPQ system, the database was brought down for one hour, then restarted for business as usual. The entire exercise illustrated the power of the new SPQ system, and the strength of the Savvion environment.

Business Benefits

- Savvion provides 3Com with an enterprise-strength platform for automating critical business processes.
- The ability to create an end-to-end process that integrates several important back-office systems has provided 3Com with a streamlined business process that has saved time, reduced errors, and increased customer satisfaction.
- The SPQ system has resulted in a reduction from four days of processing to less than a day with real-time insight to profit margin and inventory availability, a significant benefit that directly impacts sales.
- The stability and enterprise processing features of Savvion enable 3Com to operate its SPQ system in a global, fast-response environment that can immediately respond to business needs.

Upside Analysis

Much of the talk about BPM of late has led to a typical hype surrounding this emerging technology. Many companies think they are doing BPM but are often only doing a part of BPM, such as application integration or multi-step workflow. 3Com, however, has done it all with its SPQ project. The company is one of the early adopters of true BPM technology that blends business-level processes with workflow, end-to-end processing, and application integration. In 2002, 3Com broke ground in the emerging BPM space with its end-to-end SPQ process powered by Savvion. Working with a global business environment was challenging and rewarding for 3Com, and the company's experiences, best practices, and lessons learned can be used by other companies that are considering BPM projects.

The tangible business benefits of significantly reducing the time to process a SPQ will impact the bottom line at 3Com as more orders are completed and approved. Upside Research sees 3Com's experience with Savvion and its SPQ system as an exemplary best practice for understanding how best to execute a business process by adding automation, workflow, and application integration. When the IT department receives feedback around the world, in foreign languages, that the application is a success, it knows that it has done something right. Thanks to Savvion and a well-structured project plan, 3Com has set the standard for business process automation.

Upside Research strongly believes that having an appropriate integration and BPM testing strategy is crucial for successful deployment (and on-going maintenance) of BPM and integration applications. Any organization undertaking such projects should ensure allocation of adequate planning, resources, and coordination (key for any project that crosses corporate or departmental boundaries).

About Upside Research

Upside Research is a research and consulting firm focused on helping clients put application development, Web services, business process management, integration, and enterprise infrastructure challenges in perspective. Upside Research helps organizations find practical ways to achieve their IT goals and profit from the diversity of a changing technology landscape.

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