

GROHE enjoys integrated solutions on tap with IBM service-enabling software.

Overview

■ Challenge

Integrate SAP applications with existing plant operations, business processes and logistics systems

■ Why IBM?

Excellent results from previous project with IBM company SerCon GmbH providing application development support

■ Solution

Enterprise Service Bus solution for SAP integration

■ Key Benefits

Decreased average integration time by up to 84% (two to four weeks versus up to six months); reduced time and cost for integrating legacy applications with new SAP modules compared to a hand-coded, point-to-point integration technique; more reliable and highly available data transfers; service-enabling legacy systems for reuse of assets on demand



GROHE adds elegance to the delivery of water where and when it is needed.

In the beginning, there was water, a basic building block of life as we know it. Much later, there was indoor plumbing, one of the innovations that made modern civilization possible. And then there was GROHE.

Making plumbing fixtures functional as well as attractive is the overriding goal of GROHE AG (GROHE), the largest water technology solutions provider in Europe, and the largest exporter of faucets, bath mountings and other household and commercial fixtures worldwide.

“Using the older method of point-to-point integration, it would have taken up to six months to program one interface. With the IBM WebSphere integration solution, it took two months to complete all 14 projects. This was a stunning success for our team and our company.”

– Armin von Dolenga, Software Manager, GROHE AG

Speedy integration of SAP with legacy business systems

Key Components

Software

- IBM WebSphere® Adapters
- IBM WebSphere Adapter for mySAP.com
- IBM WebSphere Adapter Framework
- IBM WebSphere Adapter for JDBC
- IBM WebSphere Message Broker
- IBM WebSphere MQ

Servers

- IBM System p™ 670

IBM Services

- SerCon GmbH, an IBM company

“The WebSphere Adapters for mySAP and JDBC have allowed us to standardize the SAP and database interfaces. In fact, we have service-enabled our legacy systems, which will facilitate future business integration projects.”

– Armin von Dolenga

The 5,600-employee company is based in Hemer, Germany, and has 20 subsidiaries and 12 sales offices across more than 130 countries. Annual sales in 2005 were 865 million EUR (1.1 billion USD), with exports comprising 80 percent of sales.

While getting water to flow where and when it's needed is GROHE's stock in trade, getting data to flow on demand was a different story. In gathering requirements for a new SAP enterprise resource planning system, the company was chartered with figuring out how to exchange data between the new SAP modules and several legacy applications that were crucial to the company's business. These included duty and plant applications and delivery, invoice and product catalog systems, as well as bar coding, logistics and inventory management software.

In total, the company identified 14 interfaces that would need to be created to integrate older applications with the newer SAP modules. As the project had to be completed quickly, GROHE needed to determine whether it was more cost-effective to perform hand-coded, point-to-point integration or purchase a packaged solution designed for speedy integration and continued consistency of business processes.

That was an easy calculation for Armin von Dolenga, software manager for GROHE. “We have performed many point-to-point integrations over the years to connect applications with our IBM mainframe servers. We calculated the time, cost and effort that would be needed to manually program our 14 SAP interfaces, then compared this to solutions recommended by IBM and other vendors.” GROHE chose IBM because IBM WebSphere business integration software had an easy-to-use developer interface and IBM company SerCon GmbH could provide excellent application development support.

GROHE chose SerCon to design and implement a service oriented architecture (SOA) with an enterprise service bus because it was the fastest and most reliable way to meet their deadline. The solution is based on the following IBM WebSphere business integration software:

- *IBM WebSphere Adapters*
- *IBM WebSphere Adapter for mySAP.com*
- *IBM WebSphere Adapter Framework*
- *IBM WebSphere Adapter for JDBC*
- *IBM WebSphere Message Broker*
- *IBM WebSphere MQ*

The IBM software runs on an IBM System p 670 with two domains. Chosen for its high performance and capacity, the hardware has lived up to its promise with unremitting availability and speed. In addition, the IBM integration software has helped bridge the disparate systems to enable a viable SAP solution for GROHE.

"Not only did we have 14 interfaces to program, but we also had to do this within two months to meet the deadline of the launch," says von Dolenga. "IBM WebSphere Message Broker and the WebSphere Adapters gave us the data exchange that we needed to make the system work. Using the older method of point-to-point integration, it would have taken six months to program one interface. With the IBM WebSphere integration solution, it took two months to complete all 14 projects. This was a stunning success for our team and our company."

Efficiently managing the flow of information

The WebSphere business integration software weaves together the web of crosstalk that keeps GROHE business processes running smoothly. WebSphere Message Broker runs on a dedicated server within the company's Gigabit local area network and is used to control message flow by distributing incoming business objects to several queues. It also transforms messages into the format required by the recipient systems. WebSphere MQ provides scalable, assured delivery of messages.

Passing and transforming between 5,000 and 25,000 messages per day, the Enterprise Service Bus solution enables a global exchange of information with a string of services between decoupled front and back ends. This SOA incorporates standardized interfaces that use common message formats such as XML and SAP Intermediate Documents, so GROHE is ensured that its business services can remain stable and well-defined, yet easy to change in order to meet the fluctuating needs of the business. Because of this building-block approach, von Dolenga estimates that his IT group can bring a new service online within two to four weeks.

Service-enabling assets for on demand integration

SerCon was on site to help GROHE plan and implement the software on the System p server as well as to provide coaching on using the WebSphere Message Broker.



With an enterprise service bus based on IBM WebSphere software, GROHE now has integrated information on demand.

"With the IBM integration solution, we can respond to the innovation of our own employees by integrating new software within two to four weeks, and have it available for them before their new hardware gets to them."

– Armin von Dolenga

The new WebSphere software-based solution significantly reduces the time and cost required to integrate older applications with the new SAP modules compared to a hand-coded, point-to-point integration technique. By enabling reuse of existing resources with an open standards-based solution, GROHE is preserving its investment in its existing assets.

“The WebSphere Adapters for mySAP and JDBC have allowed us to standardize the SAP and database interfaces,” says von Dolenga. “In fact, we have service-enabled our legacy systems, which will facilitate future business integration projects.”

Additionally, data transfers are more reliable and available.

The WebSphere solution suits GROHE's fluid culture of innovation and growth because it offers integration on demand. “With the IBM integration solution,” says von Dolenga, “we can respond to the innovation of our own employees by integrating new software within two to four weeks, and have it available for them before their new hardware gets to them.”

For more information

Please contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner.

Visit our Website at:

ibm.com/websphere

For more information on GROHE, visit:

www.grohe.com

For more information on SerCon, visit:

www.sercon.de



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2006

IBM Corporation
Software Group
Route 100
Somers, New York 10589
U.S.A.

Produced in the United States of America
09-06
All Rights Reserved

IBM, the IBM logo, System p and WebSphere are trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Java and all Java-based trademarks are trademarks of Sun Microsystems, Inc. in the United States, other countries or both.

This case study is an example of how one customer uses IBM products. There is no guarantee of comparable results.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.