IBM

Jibes creates dynamic demand planning for semi-conductor industry using enterprise mashups from IBM

Overview

■ **Challenge**
   Provide real-time, customizable manufacturing information for semiconductor supplier

■ **Solution**
   Enterprise mashups of information from semiconductor manufacturer's portal and supplier's ERP system

■ **Key Benefits**
   — *Reassigned one full-time employee to higher value work; significant decrease in planning and production mistakes; reduced total cost of ownership by 40%*

Powerful business-to-business tools for building portals and business intelligence solutions exist in the marketplace today, and IBM is a well-known leader in the marketplace for such enterprise software solutions. It's no surprise, then, that IBM is also at the forefront of Web 2.0 development initiatives, empowering users to access, manage, visualize and reuse assets without the need for IT expertise.

"The ability to program an Excel® spreadsheet is all that is necessary to customize robust mashups that provide a flow of real-time information to users, whether those are employees or customers," says Ivo-Paul Tummers, CEO

of Jibes, an IBM Business Partner specializing in enterprise mashups using IBM Websphere® sMash and IBM Mashup Center (composed of IBM InfoSphere™ Mashup Hub and IBM Lotus® Mashups). Jibes is based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

A mashup is a lightweight Web application created by combining information or capabilities from more than one existing source to deliver new functions and insights. "Companies don't want to be compelled to undertake major reengineering projects that involve heavy IT investments," says Tummers. "Mashups provide quick, relatively inexpensive situational solutions that can grow and even become part of upgrades to larger projects. Once we implement them using IBM software, business users can adapt them to their changing needs."

Enabling creativity and control
IBM has a complete portfolio of tools to create and manage enterprise mashups—IBM Mashup Center for the assembly and information centric aspects of mashups and WebSphere sMash for dynamic scripting of mashup components. IBM Mashup Center is a new commercial version of the Alpha Works QED Wiki solution that proved to be highly popular with users. WebSphere sMash emerged from

Project Zero, a community-driven development site that brings IBM's considerable development resources to the Web 2.0 market. Project Zero represents the people that build and use WebSphere sMash and the incubation of new technology that will deliver in future versions of WebSphere sMash. Why did Tummers think that IBM would be the right partner for his venture?

"IBM has the ability to enable users to be creative in structuring their own information assets, while ensuring that the data is absolutely accurate and secure," says Tummers. "You have to be certain that only authorized persons will access the data and that the data will be complete. Enterprise mashups have to provide both creativity for the user and control for the owner of the information, and IBM has the skills to bring those together."
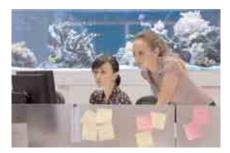
Leveraging information for better business performance
Jibes's work with a major semiconductor manufacturer illustrates how serious big business is about adopting mashup solutions and how IBM is helping Jibes meet that need.

The semiconductor industry adjusts production goals on an hourly basis, which creates a volatile situation for subcontractors. Jibes's client, the semiconductor manufacturer, needed to be able to feed its suppliers information on its "reschedule-ins" and "reschedule-outs"—its information on rescheduling more or less product to meet a fluctuating market. One of the suppliers was Aalberts Industries, which supplies precision engineered components and frames.

"For Aalberts Industries, the impact of this information could be tremendous," says Erik Zantinge, Division Director Industrial Services. "It's not just a question of putting in or taking out one machine. The re-ins and re-outs of the bigger company can force changes in the whole value chain. Aalberts Industries has to analyze the information, simulate various scenarios and recalculate its own plans before it puts information into its ERP system. It did this using huge Excel sheets, and doing a lot by hand, which is inefficient, fault sensitive and does not allow the company to respond to the data in real time."

The semiconductor company uses portal technology to provide all its employees with access to the information they need to do their jobs. This portal technology can also be extended to

partners, but Aalberts Industries doesn't have a portal or any vehicle for making the information accessible to its needs. Nor was it about to undertake a lengthy and expensive integration project.

"Aalberts Industries wanted to throw away the spreadsheets and work with real-time information, but there was no infrastructure to attach the information to," says Zantinge.

From spreadsheets to intuitive graphics
Jibes put together different widgets in a graphical user interface, which combines the flow of information from the semiconductor manufacturer's portal and the ERP system of Aalberts Industries.

"We got rid of the Excel spreadsheets, and we got Aalberts Industries comfortable with the idea of the one-screen solution," says Rob Guikers, CTO of Jibes. "But then Aalberts Industries said, 'Every time we have a question,

the parameters change—we're looking at different factors. We have to be able to combine and recombine different information streams from the two sources.' What they are actually saying is that most solutions are too static. That's where the mashups came in."

Using IBM technology, Jibes integrated the information from the semiconductor company's portal with the ERP system of Aalberts Industries using a graphical building-block approach that enables users to combine the two as they like. "The users mash up the data from their own ERP system and the semiconductor company's portal, choosing from business intelligence feeds and internal databases as well as the re-ins and re-outs," says Guikers. "One block is the re-ins and another block is the forecasting information. They can choose a graphical tool which shows a timeline widget to create their own timeline and then show their work orders or their sales orders on a daily or hourly basis. And when the semiconductor company changes one of its demands, Aalberts Industries can analyze the impact on its work orders and its sales orders and connect to its own ERP system. The IBM technology ensures that the data is

pure and given only to the people who should have access to it in a simplified manner, and that's actually the unique selling point."

InfoSphere Mashup Hub provided the connectors that enabled Jibes to feed data from several data sources in the portal to the widgets. Staff can easily tag and rate the information assets so that data can be used and reused as needed WebSphere sMash enables Web developers to create new feeds or widgets that Mashup Center does not provide and store them in the IBM Mashup Center catalog, where business users working can then visually assemble a browser-based application for their specific needs. WebSphere sMash and IBM Mashup Center provide browser-based assembly and scripting tools instead of requiring extensive coding, which provides the productivity we need in dynamic, situational applications. This has been essential in helping the staff of Aalberts Industries unlock the value of enterprise information and optimize business results.

Saving $400,000 per year

The ability to access the information it needs in real time has saved Aalberts Industries one full-time employee (FTE), whose job it was to produce daily and hourly spreadsheets. That FTE now does more valuable work in the planning department.

In addition, Aalberts Industries is using the information available from the IBM and Jibes solution to avoid production overruns and other errors that occurred previously due to mistakes in calculations. The savings are not calculated yet, but may amount to $400,000 per year.

"Enterprise mashups are producing good business results for Aalberts Industries," says Tummers, "and if Aalberts Industries is happy, the semiconductor company can be happy, too."

Enterprise mashups are designed to be simple to get up and running, but real savings come after the mashup is live—helping users quickly solve specific problems. As shown here, Mashups complement Portals—leveraging content in new ways for even greater return on investment. "The user makes changes at will, with no need for consultants or other IT help. That pushes down the total cost of ownership by about 40 percent for these projects. Creativity is up to the people who use the mashups," says Tummers. "IBM makes them secure for the owners of the information."

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