

HYS Enterprise

Successful Development Of
An integrated MVNE platform
(CRM, Enterprise Bus and Billing)

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HYS Enterprise used a mixture of Agile methods and industry approaches (e.g. eTom, SOA) to develop and deploy a new customer relationship billing system with backend integration to core GSM networks for a leading Mobile Virtual Network Enabler giving competitive advantage due to unprecedented time to market.

An intensive three-week workshop both identified and quantified work related to the functional requirements architecture and design considerations. The process allowed the team to agree on the minimum subset of requirements for replacement of the existing system, and enabled fastest time-to-value with the first release. Rapid follow-on releases added additional value at the planned times.

The Client

The client is a market leader in enabling mobile virtual operators which service millions of subscribers and has strong reputation in the industry for innovation, quality and speed. The client has seen rapid growth in its revenues and markets. It continually invests in an innovative and highly-scalable technology platform that will support future rapid growth, while maintaining the highest levels of service quality.

The Situation

The client had in-house developed and purchased systems that did various parts of crm, billing, inventory management and interfacing to the GSM network. During rapid growth, various systems were duplicated to provide new clients with identical services. After repeated copying of the components, maintenance needs of the system park presented constraints in responding to business changes and dealing with increased sales volumes. Old systems required full attention of the engineers who built them. New features would demand even more or would take years to implement. A far quicker response to market conditions was needed. The client first to market advantage was coming to a deadline. Improvements to reliability in the face of increased customer traffic were necessary, along with new features for the new channel. The project was to provide flexibility and cost-of-ownership improvements. A decision was made to fundamentally re-architect the system.

The Benefits

- A more reliable online self service system deployed in time for launch of new channels.
- Faster, more efficient reporting system for higher and middle management, with features tailored to the channel.
- A highly-adaptable system allowing IT to respond faster to changes in the business workflow.
- Reduced cost of ownership through a reduced learning curve for any new developers, and streamlined test and deployment dependencies.

The Challenge

The primary objective of the project was to stop cloning old systems and raise reliability. The new system had to provide a defined feature-set from the previous version, plus some new features including new interfaces to core networks and billing. There were also three key concerns to be addressed:

The first concern was extensibility of the platform, and the ability to respond to business process changes, rapidly altering workflows and quickly delivering new or changed features.

The second concern was cost-of-ownership. The legacy product's complexity carried a steep learning curve for new developers and significantly lengthened the break-to-fix cycle.

The third concern was cost-of-change. The elaborate dependencies for the application significantly impeded deployments, and this increased cost. This further impacted the time required for IT to respond to business changes.

An Agile approach, from the intense project inception phase through to incremental releases, helped the team achieve both the desired technological improvements, as well as support the necessary business process flexibility.

Working Towards A Solution

In order to build business value as early as possible and to realize the advantages of a more reliable product, a decision was made to employ an incremental approach throughout the project. This began with a highly-collaborative and intensive project workshop where high-level requirements were captured, prioritized and broken into releases that would deliver business value as early as possible.

Following the latest in Agile software development methodologies, the team identified approximately 200 different activities that the users of the system needed to perform. These were subsequently broken down into over 500 work items which were used to determine the project's scope. In this way, the team created an objective basis for release planning and scheduling. This helped manage the expectations of the various project stakeholders and allowed tracking progress week-by-week.

The system was developed in iterations, with the highest-value functionality being developed first. New features were shown to business users every two weeks in prototyping sessions thus ensuring smooth change management. Any change requests were easily adopted, ensuring that the system delivered the expected value and ease of use to the business.

The Future

The MVNE platform now works better for all of its stakeholders, handling increased volumes more reliably, and with new interfaces to core GSM and billing processes. Future business benefits will derive from the reduced learning curve for new developers, the reduction of the complexity of deployment, and the client's experience in Service Oriented Architecture. Combined, these factors will allow IT to have faster time-to-release for new features as the business continues to respond to market changes and opportunities.

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