

## Solidsoft Secures Integrated Future for UK Cash Solutions Company

Published: July 2003

**securicor**

***Securicor Cash Services, a leading UK cash solutions company, needed to integrate its operational systems to ensure excellent customer service and responsiveness. Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Solidsoft delivered a messaging solution based on Microsoft BizTalk Server 2002. This replaced existing point-to-point interfaces between the two main operational systems. With BizTalk now in place, Securicor is ready to think about its future integration plans.***

### Solution Overview

#### **Customer Profile**

Securicor Cash Services, a subsidiary of Securicor Group, is one of the UK's leading cash solutions companies.

#### **Business Situation**

Securicor needed a messaging solution to integrate its central contracts and administration system with its operational management systems. At the same time it wanted to lay a solid foundation for long-term IT projects.

#### **Solution**

Microsoft partner Solidsoft implemented a Microsoft® BizTalk® Server 2002-based messaging solution. This automates the distribution of customer contract details to relevant branch systems, and is paving the way for Securicor's future systems integration plans.

#### **Benefits**

- Faster request processing enhances customer service
- Further integration projects make for a future-proof investment
- Systems integration leverages legacy IT infrastructure
- Incremental pricing structure minimises expense
- With BizTalk Server in place future development times will be shorter

#### **Software and Services**

Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2000  
Microsoft BizTalk® Server 2002

#### **Partners**

Solidsoft

### Situation

Securicor Cash Services, part of the Securicor Group, is a leader in the UK cash solutions industry. The company's services include the secure collection of cash from high street retailers and other high-turnover premises, cash processing and counting, and delivery of cash to banks.

The IT systems underpinning Securicor's business need to be watertight in every sense of the word, yet also responsive and flexible enough to cope with frequent alterations to its customers' cash requirements.

Securicor holds centrally details of its enormous collection and delivery schedules on an Oracle-based contract administration system called ACE. This system also holds contract details for all the company's customers. Details from this system are then sent to operations management systems at the company's 53 regional branches, where the customer collections and deliveries are fulfilled.

These customised local systems, called VIPER, are SCO UNIX-based Progress databases. They track and trace all the essential work to be undertaken at each branch each day, with hand-held terminals used by Securicor crews.

Until recently, data transfer between headquarters and local branches was done using point to point interfaces. For instance, a customer would phone Securicor headquarters with a pick-up request, which would be entered onto ACE. ACE would generate the necessary paperwork, and this would be manually faxed in turn to the relevant branch. Pick-up and delivery details then had to be entered onto VIPER in an accurate and timely manner.

Moira Nairn, IT Director, Securicor Cash Services, explains: "Over the years a number of systems evolved at Securicor Cash Services that weren't fully integrated. The lack of integration between ACE at the centre and VIPER locally meant there was a risk of delays.

"We wanted to speed up the process and enable the systems to communicate directly with each other. That way, any changes to scheduled contracts could be transferred immediately to branches."

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Securicor also wanted to build a strong foundation for its future IT infrastructure. It needed an integration solution that would not only link ACE to VIPER immediately, but would also enable high levels of connectivity between other systems.

## **Solution**

Securicor decided on a messaging solution because, unlike point-to-point systems, this would accommodate its long-term requirements. The company carried out an evaluation of potential middleware products, looking at how well each product met their needs, how scalable and future-proof the technology was, and how cost-effective it was. Nairn says: "Microsoft® BizTalk® 2002 came out strongest in this evaluation, and Microsoft introduced Solidsoft to us as our software partner." The first thing Solidsoft did was work to understand Securicor's long-term vision. Liam Kelly, Sales and Marketing Director at Solidsoft, says: "To perceive the value of integration work, companies really have to look at their overall business vision for IT systems. If that vision involves integrating a number of systems, the next step is to select a project to start with which will begin to lay the foundations. Thereafter, they'll be reaping the benefits."

Solidsoft applied a unique project process derived from the Microsoft Solutions Framework and aimed specifically at meeting the demands of integration projects. This high-level project philosophy comprises inception, design, development, stabilisation, and final deployment. Solidsoft developed additional detail around the complex issue of integration, to ensure that the company's multi-vendor IT infrastructure could be successfully linked up.

Securicor's messaging solution is based on BizTalk Server 2002, which acts as a hub between the ACE and VIPER systems. It also uses Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000. The BizTalk interface deploys Extensible Markup Language (XML) to relay messages between the two types of database. When a customer requests a change in a scheduled service, the information is fed into an Oracle table in ACE, then picked up and transferred to BizTalk in XML, and transported from there to the right branch.

Performance and message speed were tested in two successive pilot phases, first connecting ACE with one regional branch, then adding another three branches. After a three-month deployment process the full solution was rolled out in late 2002, on time and within budget.

Now, Securicor's entire end-to-end scheduling system has been accelerated, resulting in up to the minute information on required customer pick-ups and deliveries. Declan Hunt, Head of Systems Strategy, at Securicor Cash Services, says: "BizTalk has more than enough capacity for our messaging needs. It's even faster than the network connection that delivers the information to and from it."

## **Benefits**

### **Reduce Administration**

Integration between Securicor's central and regional databases has automated some manual processes. Paperwork no longer has to be printed and faxed to different branches, nor re-entered onto local systems. Instead, Securicor's employees are freed up to attend to other tasks. This automation also dramatically reduces the risk of a human error which could result in a missed or delayed delivery or pick-up.

*"We wanted to put in place a standard technology 'highway' based on a recognised industry product. BizTalk Server simplifies the interface between our legacy systems and newer systems that are based on different technologies."*

Declan Hunt  
Head of Systems Strategy  
Securicor Cash Services

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### **Improve Customer Service**

With the right information being passed on to the right branches in a timely fashion, Securicor's schedules are no longer at risk of error or delay. Rather, customers receive the services they've requested when they want them, subject to the agreed notice periods.

Hunt says: "It's likely in the future that we may use the BizTalk solution to connect to external customer interfaces." This will drive an even more seamless and fulfilling customer experience.

### **Future-Proof Investments**

Securicor's BizTalk system has given the company a solid foundation for future IT integration developments. Hunt says: "We wanted to put in place a standard technology 'highway' based on a recognised industry product. BizTalk Server simplifies the interface between our legacy systems and newer systems that are based on different technologies."

Links between other internal systems, such as Cash Management, are now under consideration.

BizTalk will also deliver external integration between Securicor and its suppliers. "We hope to create a link between our financial systems and our e-procurement system," says Hunt.

### **Optimise Existing IT Infrastructure**

Avoiding a complete systems upgrade or standardisation onto a single platform was a major relief for Securicor.

Nairn says: "That was absolutely fundamental to us. The systems that we have linked are pretty unique—they're niche rather than mainstream technology—and we weren't going to rewrite either one of those to match the other. It was very important that we find a mechanism that could achieve the same thing in a simpler way."

### **Minimise Capital Outlay**

Microsoft's pricing structure for BizTalk Server means Securicor can start small and scale as it needs to. Kelly says: "Securicor can start with a standard edition of BizTalk Server on a small box and get the performance it needs, but also know that it can add licences and hardware incrementally as its vision develops."

### **Accelerate Development Times**

Securicor was looking for a rigid development time, and BizTalk delivered this. More importantly, the solution reduced development and maintenance costs for similar interfaces in the future. Says Nairn: "It wasn't necessary that the first implementation drive a much reduced development time, but it was essential that we be able to build future interfaces more quickly. And that's exactly what we'll do."

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For more information about Microsoft BizTalk Server, go to:  
<http://www.microsoft.com/biztalk/>

### ***For More Information***

For more information about Microsoft products or services, call the Microsoft UK Contact Centre on 08706 010100. To access information via the World Wide Web, go to: <http://www.microsoft.com/uk>.

For more information about Solidsoft's products and services, visit the Web site at:  
<http://www.solidsoft.com/>

For more information about Securicor's products and services, visit the Web site at:  
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