Business Need

Dealership applications had developed over time and were dependent on on-site, legacy systems. The automotive OEM had over 4,800 dealers running different copies of dealer systems on custom hardware. This decentralized infrastructure could not support capacity or speed and resulted in excessive costs to support and maintain system variations across dealerships. In addition, the decentralized structure and variations increased the OEM’s costs when communicating or doing business with dealerships, since it was difficult to automate the same business transaction for different dealerships.

Management wanted to use emerging technologies (web services, XML) to decrease costs while providing high levels of security, commonality, and access to dealership applications.

Solution

Latitude created an open systems communication and application development framework that supported thousands of independent dealers. This framework resulted in a dealer-facing portal that used a single architecture and a single launch point for over 240 applications. The only hardware systems required by the dealerships were standard PC clients with an Internet connection and web browser.

Common components in the framework were developed for:

- Security and authentication services
- Context management support
- User and dealer profiles

Dealer Portal Framework

Automotive OEM

A major automotive OEM works with over 25,000 franchise and nonfranchise dealerships in the US, Canada, and over a dozen other countries. The OEM communicates and transacts business with dealerships through a wide range of computer applications. Many of these applications for parts, sales, accounting, and diagnostic operations are mission critical and have to be accessible by dealership personnel.
Results

The scalable and secure dealership portal, based on the open framework, centralized the support and maintenance of applications to provide the following benefits for the Automotive OEM and its dealerships:

- Single launch point for applications eliminated variations in systems and lowered application support costs
- Dealership portal replaced custom hardware with standard PCs, which significantly reduced maintenance and support costs related to dealership systems
- Single architecture and common interface reduced learning curve for end users and developers reduces training costs
- Single point of contact allowed OEM to more effectively communicate with dealerships and develop applications to automate and improve business transactions

Latitude created an open systems communication and application development framework that led to a dealer-facing portal supporting over 240 applications for thousands of dealers. The framework established a single architecture and a single launch point that replaced multiple, custom systems installed at and hosted by dealerships. Consolidating systems resulted in a significant cost reductions in application support, hardware maintenance, and training.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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