

Customer Case Study

## Cingular Wireless

Cingular Builds Web-Based Sales and Support Application on BEA WebLogic Server to Empower Dealers by Pushing More Account Management to Channel

**Solution:**  
Unified Commerce

**Product:**  
BEA WebLogic Server®

**Industry:**  
Wireless Communication

### Business challenge

Eliminate manual processes and data entry to reduce costs and processing time, strengthen relationships between Cingular and its dealers to encourage more aggressive selling, empower dealers to improve customer satisfaction and generate more revenue per customer by pushing account-management capabilities out to retail locations

### Solution

POS.com in-store application for Cingular retailers built on BEA WebLogic Server®

### Results

“This is another example of Cingular IT doing everything expected of it, and more, in a very short period of time. Not only does the application strengthen Cingular’s competitive position, its rapid time to market enabled Cingular to apply more pressure on its competitors sooner than many people would have predicted.”

–Thaddeus Arroyo, Chief Information Officer, Cingular

---

### Highlights

In the past, Cingular’s processes for core business activities have been handled through a combination of phone calls, faxes, mail, and millions of pieces of paper. These inefficiencies posed significant risks to customer satisfaction, dealer productivity, and Cingular’s bottom line. As one of the country’s true technology innovators, Cingular realized that there was a better way to conduct business.

### Customer brief

Cingular Wireless is the second-largest wireless carrier in the U.S. The company is a joint venture of SBC (NYSE: SBC) and BellSouth (NYSE: BLS), and serves over 22 million voice and data customers. Cingular's annual revenues are more than \$14 billion.

### Business process challenge

In the past, Cingular's processes for core business activities such as service activation, account management, bill payment, and customer upgrades to new service plans have been handled through a combination of phone calls, faxes, mail, and millions of pieces of paper. Activating a phone for a new customer could take three-to-four hours and the paperwork required to finalize the transaction and allow a dealer to receive his commission could take days or even weeks.

These inefficiencies posed significant risks to customer satisfaction, dealer productivity, and Cingular's bottom line. As one of the country's true technology innovators, Cingular realized that there was a better way to conduct business. Of critical importance was the need to integrate the agent community with the remainder of the Cingular organization and create an environment driven by touch-point consistency. This structure would ensure the same level of service regardless of the customer's access point. Cingular wanted every customer transaction to mirror a consistent workflow and attention to detail geared towards higher customer satisfaction. By leveraging the ubiquity and scalability of the Internet, Cingular could substantially cut costs, improve the timeliness and quality of customer service to reduce churn, and drive increased revenue by making it easier for dealers and customers to transact business when and how they preferred.

The key would be laying an extensible, flexible foundation that would be reliable enough to give dealers the confidence to do business online, scalable enough to handle millions of transactions per year, and flexible enough to evolve with both Cingular's business needs and the ever-changing state of Internet technologies. This wouldn't be an easy challenge to tackle, but it would be necessary in order for Cingular to implement an effective Web-based Point-of-Sale (POS) application.

### Solution

After evaluating numerous platforms from various companies, Cingular selected BEA WebLogic Server. The criteria used in making the decision included:

- Ease of use to expedite time-to-market
- Ease of management and administration to lower total cost of ownership
- Aggressive standards support to lengthen technology life-cycles and simplify integration
- Security and quantitative measurements of high availability, performance, and scalability.

*“POS.com has been so successful that we're planning to expand the application by adding portal functionality, that will provide dealers with more capabilities designed to deepen their relationships with customers and make them even more effective as salespeople.”*

*Charlotte Wright, Vice President of IT Application Development at Cingular Wireless*

Working against a very ambitious delivery schedule, Cingular's IT Applications Development Organization built POS.com. The new Web-based application empowers Cingular dealers to handle nearly every aspect of sales and customer account management in real time with point-and-click simplicity. POS.com facilitates credit checks, activations, changes to customer profiles, upgrades to service plans, bill payment, and the addition of new features to existing accounts. It even supports Cingular's multi-tier channel program that provides dealers with various incentives and entitlements based on the type of relationship they share with Cingular.

And because most customer engagements with Cingular are contract-based, the POS.com application supports e-signatures to eliminate the need for almost all paperwork. Entire transactions can be initiated, processed, approved, and concluded electronically. This has a ripple effect throughout the organization by reducing physical storage and archival requirements, cutting costs dramatically, reducing the time and human intervention necessary to get customers up and running, and accelerating payments to dealers, which encourages them to sell Cingular products more aggressively.

"POS.com has been so successful that we're planning to expand the application by adding portal functionality," said Charlotte Wright, Vice President of IT Application Development at Cingular Wireless. "That will provide dealers with more capabilities designed to deepen their relationships with customers and make them even more effective as salespeople. Dealers will have access to customer payment histories to help resolve billing questions without having to involve our customer call center. They will be able to order sales tools and equipment, and they will gain access to the latest literature and campaign information."

The benefits that Cingular is realizing from POS.com include:

- Dramatically decreased processing time related to customer activations
- Lower customer-acquisition costs and reduced overhead
- Improved customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Touch-point consistency that ensures Cingular customers will receive the same quality of service regardless of the access point
- Reduced administrative burden on Cingular
- Reduced opportunity for error by minimizing human intervention and manual data entry
- Expanded opportunities to "up sell" existing customers
- Timely and responsive customer support in an industry plagued by a public perception of poor service.

## Results

One of the most remarkable and innovative aspects of POS.com application is how much it is enabling Cingular to accomplish with so few people. For example, the application supports thousands of retail locations nationwide, yet only two engineers are required to manage it. The leverage of such a ratio is truly remarkable. In a challenging economic climate that has many companies scaling back business models and head-counts, Cingular is able to pursue aggressive goals through the smart use of technology.

POS.com was built by just eight people, and it has become a repeatable template for new projects at Cingular. A telesales application will be the next project built on the template. Every company says that it uses technology to do more with less, but many companies fall short of that goal. Cingular has actually achieved it, growing its business and generating more revenue without having to increase payroll.

Cingular took the POS.com project from initial design through production rollout in just six months. This is an extremely aggressive schedule for a project of this scope and strategic importance. In the nine months since going live, Cingular has delivered two new iterations. That's three generations of POS.com in less than a year, and dealers and consumers are the big winners.

For Cingular's IT Applications Development Organization, the project has been a big internal success story. Business executives are often skeptical of promises made by IT departments to improve the business.

"Combined fax, paper, and phone processes that forced customers to wait three to four hours for activation can now be done in real time while customers are in stores," said Wright. "Contractual paperwork that took weeks to process in the past has been eliminated, and Cingular now receives the information electronically at the time of activation."

As for Cingular's dealers, not only are they getting paid faster and servicing their customers in a fraction of the time that used to be required, they are also able to develop stronger customer relationships by providing more services. POS.com lets retailers handle many functions that they couldn't previously. For example, retailers can input address changes, they can change customer-billing options, and they can add features and options to existing contracts. This encourages more interaction between dealers and end-users, and increases the lifetime value of those relationships.

Among the most significant challenges of the POS.com project was integration. Like most carriers, Cingular has a variety of legacy systems and databases, many housed on inflexible mainframes that must be integrated with new applications, such as POS.com. The integration challenge was one of the primary factors in Cingular's decision to build on BEA WebLogic®. Cingular understood that a standards-based platform would simplify integration with legacy systems as well as prepare the company for the rapid, easy addition of new applications in the future.

Another significant challenge that every company faces when it rolls out new resources for channel partners is adoption. Partners are frequently resistant to change and slow to adopt new business processes. Cingular understood this and made usability and high availability priorities in the project. This ensures that the new application is easy to use, which reduces the fear factor and shortens the learning curve, and is always available when partners need it, to build channel confidence and encourage rapid adoption.

#### About BEA

BEA Systems, Inc. (NASDAQ: BEAS) is a world leader in enterprise infrastructure software, providing standards-based platforms to accelerate the secure flow of information and services. BEA product lines—WebLogic®, Tuxedo®, JRockit®, and the new AquaLogic™ family of Service Infrastructure—help customers reduce IT complexity and successfully deploy Service-Oriented Architectures to improve business agility and efficiency. For more information please visit [bea.com](http://bea.com).

BEA Systems, Inc.

2315 North First Street  
San Jose, CA 95131

+1.800.817.4BEA (US)  
+1.408.570.8000

bea.com



Copyright © 1995-2006 BEA Systems, Inc. All Rights Reserved. BEA, BEA JRockit, BEA WebLogic Portal, BEA WebLogic Server, BEA WebLogic Workshop, Built on BEA, Jolt, JoltBeans, SteelThread, Top End, Tuxedo, and WebLogic are registered trademarks of BEA Systems, Inc. BEA AquaLogic, BEA AquaLogic Data Services Platform, BEA AquaLogic Enterprise Security, BEA AquaLogic Service Bus, BEA AquaLogic Service Registry, BEA Builder, BEA Campaign Manager for WebLogic, BEA eLink, BEA Liquid Data for WebLogic, BEA Manager, BEA MessageQ, BEA WebLogic Commerce Server, BEA WebLogic Communications Platform, BEA WebLogic Enterprise, BEA WebLogic Enterprise Platform, BEA WebLogic Enterprise Security, BEA WebLogic Express, BEA WebLogic Integration, BEA WebLogic Java Adapter for Mainframe, BEA WebLogic JDriver, BEA WebLogic Log Central, BEA WebLogic Network Gatekeeper, BEA WebLogic Personalization Server, BEA WebLogic Personal Messaging API, BEA WebLogic Platform, BEA WebLogic Portlets for Groupware Integration, BEA WebLogic Server Process Edition, BEA WebLogic SIP Server, BEA WebLogic WorkGroup Edition, Dev2Dev, Liquid Computing, and Think Liquid are trademarks of BEA Systems, Inc. BEA Mission Critical Support, BEA Mission Critical Support Continuum, and BEA SOA Self Assessment are service marks of BEA Systems, Inc. All other names and marks are property of their respective owners.

January 2006 CCS1112E0103-1A