

Customer Case Study

Goldsmith Williams Solicitors

Using Technology to Change an Industry

Solution:
Enterprise wide
portal

Products:
BEA AquaLogic™
User Interaction

Industry:
Finance

Business challenge

Goldsmith Williams Solicitors is a niche legal practice in the UK specializing in remortgages, conveyancing, and traffic accidents. Competitive pressures, regulatory initiatives, and strategic goals forced the firm to rethink its internal and external technology offerings. Goldsmith Williams desired to be the first firm in its industry to provide a complete online experience for its customers while providing its internal and external management with real-time business performance information.

Solution

Using the BEA's AquaLogic User Interaction (ALUI) product suite Goldsmith Williams, along with the BEA's professional services team, developed the *GWLive.co.uk* portal. The portal provides the firm's employees and customers with a shared view of the processes end to end from instructions to completion. The system allows for real time management and control as well as ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements.

Results

The *GWLive.co.uk* portal has changed the way Goldsmith Williams and its customers do business together. Over 1,500 brokers use the portal to collaborate more effectively in the process. Currently more than 40 percent of all business comes through the portal and the number of new portal applications is growing at 10 percent per month.

Customer brief

Goldsmith Williams is one of the largest direct conveyancing firms in the UK and the number one choice for the intermediary market. With over 20 years experience in the mortgage market, the firm understands the needs of its customers. Goldsmith Williams is on the panel of every leading lender in the UK. The firm has 230 employees and works with a network of over 7,000 broker companies.

Business challenge

The practice of conveyancing is a very paper driven process. For many years, Goldsmith Williams used a Fax/Mail system for processing new applications. This meant that a broker would manually fill out an application with a customer and then either fax or mail the documents to Goldsmith Williams. The firm would then take the documents and process them through their case management system. This case focused process created significant limitations on the firm's quality of service and ability to grow as it was very difficult to track the bigger picture of the total service being delivered.

New regulations in the UK require all firms in the mortgage industry to upload their data to the Financial Services Authority. This rapid increase in technological capability within the market created an opportunity for Goldsmiths to take service delivery to the next level.

Goldsmith Williams experiences strong competitive pressures in the mortgage industry. The firm's management realized it needed to differentiate itself from its competitors and could facilitate this through the strategic implementation of new technology. "Goldsmith Williams is devoted to using technology to provide the best service and fastest turnaround for its customers" commented David Cannell, Director of Information and Communication Technologies for Goldsmith Williams. By being the first to offer its clients a online experience tailored to their exact needs, Goldsmith Williams would reduce its turnaround times, increase data accuracy, and gain competitive advantage.

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David Cannell, Director of Information and Communication Technologies, Goldsmith Williams

Goldsmith Williams outlined six business drivers for the portal implementation:

- 1) Increase market share by providing the leading online offering
- 2) Focus on service delivery to the customer and their clients
- 3) Allow staff and customer teams to work more effectively together
- 4) Establish clear and leading portal/collaboration capability in sector to establish higher quality business
- 5) Exceed customer expectations
- 6) Increase internal integration between operations and support functions

Goldsmith Williams guarantees application turnaround time in less than ten days. If the service is not provided in that time the customer does not have to pay for the services. In order to provide its services in this amount of time, the firm needs to have constant contact with its customers as well as have an efficient application process in place. "In our business, it's all about turnaround time. The faster we complete the better service the broker is providing to his/her customers. This in turn increases customer satisfaction and strengthens the bond between Goldsmith Williams and its brokers", added David Cannell.

Solution

Using the BEA's AquaLogic User Interaction G6 Suite Goldsmith Williams, along with BEA's professional services, created the *GWLive.co.uk* portal. Goldsmith Williams began this process by meeting directly with its customers and asking them what they needed from a

legal services supplier to be successful with their customers. In addition to getting direct feedback from customers, the IT staff performed a complete assessment of the firm's internal business process. Armed with this information, Goldsmith Williams created a list of requirements for their new technological solution. The firm solicited bids from numerous vendors including Microsoft, Seagull Systems, and BEA. "BEA understood our issues at every level. The portal implementation was as much about change management as it was about technology. In the end, BEA provided a proof of concept that was better than everyone else," added Cannell.

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Within 3 months, Goldsmith Williams dedicated team of developers created a pilot program. By continually soliciting feedback from both internal and external users, the development team ensured that every feature increased value and was user friendly. The IT team became as customer oriented as the marketing and sales team. Cannell commented on this fact. "Our customers struggle to see the difference between sales and marketing and IT in our organization. We (the IT department) are out there listening to our customers as much as anyone else. We are providing our customers with the information they need in the format they want." This development process allowed the team to create a customer oriented solution that addressed many of the organization's business problems. Instead of Goldsmith Williams telling its customers how to do business, the firm listened to its customers and adapted its business using the BEA technology.

Personalization is a crucial feature in the Mybook portal. When entering the portal, the user submits his/her unique User ID and Password. Immediately, the portal knows who the user is, what their role is and provides relevant information regarding his/her accounts. The portal provides an efficient way to distribute information from Goldsmith Williams to its customers. Additionally, the portal serves as a convenient way for larger brokers or mortgage packaging companies to manage their portfolio of brokers. For example, they can compare the end to end performance of all of their contributors within a business stream. "We are providing our customers with new ways to view their business that they themselves may find difficult," mentioned Cannell.

Personalization allows users to see only information that is relevant to their own work. Goldsmith Williams provides this information at three levels. The personal level provides relevant information regarding case progression case milestones and audit trail. The organization level allows a manager to see service levels graphically in real time. Lastly, the industry level allows users to benchmark their organization's performance against others in the industry. This competitive information is invaluable for the firm's customers. Brokers and mortgage companies are extremely interested in how their services rate in comparison to their competitors.

The entering of all application information online ensures 100 percent data completion and improved accuracy as well as faster review and processing. Once the application has been received and reviewed, the information is automatically routed to the case management system. The system helps with all the back office legal work. It is kept completely separate from the portal due to the fact that it is very useful for the fee earners, but does not provide

any significant value for the customer service. By allowing the fee earners to maintain the usage of their current applications, the IT staff ensures high adoption rates and minimal technical support for its internal users. "The Eclipse system is good at what it does but it only recognizes the lawyer. The portal provides the front office interaction the customers desire," stated Cannell.

The *GWLive.co.uk* portal provides users with real-time case tracking that works like a radar system. Before the portal, a broker would receive an inquiry from a customer and then would call Goldsmith Williams or use existing online facilities to see what had happened. A broker could have hundreds of cases open at any one time making it nearly impossible for that broker to see anything coming. Goldsmith William's staff or the broker would track down the case to provide the necessary information. This process of course is retrospective and took time which slowed the application process and reduced customer satisfaction. With access to the portal, the broker can immediately see the progress of a particular customer's application and head off problems before they become an issue. Furthermore, if there is a problem with the case the broker can call Goldsmith Williams and sort-it out at the earliest opportunity. When the error is fixed the broker can immediately see the changes on his/her screen. Thus, the customer and the broker are immediately satisfied and small problems can be proactively caught before they become big problems. By providing the brokers with a self service way to track their applications, more of Goldsmith Williams resources can be devoted toward the processing of applications and service delivery.

"We thought up a solution that we believed was impossible. BEA came in and said 'We can do that' and they exceeded our expectations. The portal provides us with the capability to listen and to respond to the needs of our customers. We are totally dedicated to providing the best service possible. "

David Cannell, Director of Information and Communication Technologies, Goldsmith Williams

Results

Approximately one year after the first introduction of the pilot project, the *GWLive* portal accounts for over 40% of new business for Goldsmith Williams. This accounts for approximately 3,000 new cases each month. The firm hopes to have 100% of new applications come through the portal by the end of 2007 only 25 months after the original pilot was implemented. "By being the first to market with these capabilities, Goldsmith Williams is making a considerable impact on the industry by driving up expectations of what good service should look like," mentioned Cannell.

The online application process is almost 100% reliable. With the old system of receiving applications by Fax, Goldsmith Williams experienced error rates that were simply unacceptable. The online application form reduces the chance of brokers providing incomplete or illegible information. When an application is submitted an email is automatically sent back to the broker summarizing the application information. This allows the broker to quickly review the data they just submitted. Additionally, online instructions are immediately posted to each case. This helps to combat the prevalent issue of inaccurate data and missed instructions. This process reduces errors and speeds up application turnaround time.

By providing users with real time statistics, Goldsmith Williams provides its customers with invaluable tools for helping them maximize their business. The primary KPI in the mortgage industry is turnaround time. Turnaround time is important because many brokers don't get

paid until the process is finished. Thus, the amount of time an application is in process directly impacts the broker's revenue stream. "We have reduced our average turnaround time for some of our bigger customers to 5-6 days in comparison to an industry average of 15 to 20 days," commented Cannell. By providing its customers with powerful tools and quick application processing, Goldsmith Williams increases customer loyalty and its competitive advantage in the marketplace.

The portal provides major advantages for Goldsmith Williams internal operations as well. Every application must be approved for regulatory compliance. This is a manual process that prior to the portal took an average of 48 hours. With the portal each application is reviewed within 45 to 70 minutes of its submittal. The portal provides an extremely powerful and adaptable quality management system. Each user can see if their job was done correctly. Cannell commented, "The portal has brought to light internal issues that were not easily seen before."

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The feedback regarding the portal from Goldsmith Williams's partners and customers has been overwhelmingly positive. Many individuals in the industry see the type of online service that Goldsmith Williams is offering as the new standard of how one does business in their industry. One of the firm's customers commented, "To be able to track a case at any time of the day, not just in business hours makes my life so much easier and whilst a client is on the phone I can relay to them the update position of paperwork outstanding, only adds to my credibility and the service I am able to offer my clients." Another customer adds his own praise for the portal, "The functionality is exceptional and there is always strong support when needed. It's easy to use and is expected to help reduce completion timescales for us which is excellent!". This type of feedback is a true testament to the power of the BEA AquaLogic User Interaction product suite and what it can do when put in the hands of a creative team.

The [GWLive.co.uk](#) portal has changed the way Goldsmith Williams does business. "Our business is to make our customers look good to their customers. We thought up a solution that we believed was impossible. BEA came in and said 'We can do that' and they exceeded our expectations. The portal provides us with the capability to listen and to respond to the needs of our customers. We are totally dedicated to providing the best service possible. Good service is not a revolution, it is mandatory. This is the essence of our SOA strategy. We use the combination of tools that we have at hand to provide a seamless experience for our staff, fee earners, and customers. Everyone involved benefits from this solution." David Cannell.

About BEA

BEA Systems, Inc. (NASDAQ: BEAS) is a world leader in enterprise infrastructure software, delivering unified SOA platforms for business transformation and optimization. Customers depend on BEA Tuxedo®, WebLogic®, and AquaLogic™ product lines to help reduce IT complexity and leverage existing resources—for achieving a state of Business LiquidITy™ where enterprise assets are freed up to deliver maximum business value and grow new revenue streams. Find out more at [bea.com](#).

Join the BEA community

At BEA, we understand that developers need different kinds of resources than IT managers. And that architects face different challenges than executives. That's why we've created four unique communities that give you exclusive access to a formidable group of your peers, to a world of shared thinking, and to the kind of meaningful information that can make you more effective and more competitive. To join one or more of the BEA communities, simply register online at [bea.com/register](#).

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