



Bell TV and Thoughtcorp Develop an Integrated Compensation Payment System to Automate and Streamline Dealer Commission Structures

“The solution is very flexible as Bell TV requires it to be extensible for future changes, and therefore changes that were requested throughout the phased implementation were added successfully. The CPS project started in July 2003 and continued to include five complete releases that reflected changes made internally.”

Bell Executive, Bell Canada

Customer Profile

Bell Canada provides a wide range of advanced telecommunications services to consumers, small and medium-size businesses and large enterprises. BellTV, one of Bell Canada's key product brands, provides the highest quality and most comprehensive direct-to-home (DTH) services across the country.

Technology Used

- Oracle Server
- Microsoft .NET

The Business Problem

Bell TV promotes its service offerings through dealers who are compensated for sales, leases and rentals. Dealer remuneration is the business practice of tracking, calculating and paying multiple types of compensation to eligible dealers.

Previously, Bell TV dealer compensations were calculated through a combination of a compensation system and a manual process with little automation. Payment tracking was a laborious task, with frequent discrepancies between Bell TV numbers and those of its dealers, resulting in costly reconciliation settlements. The company was quickly discovering that the business, systems and reporting architecture of its legacy system did not adequately support its present or future needs.

A close examination by Bell TV discovered the following:

- Key dealer channel information was housed in many different systems and any changes had to be manually keyed into each of these systems.
- All commission and promotion files are manually extracted and uploaded into SAP.
- Promotion and bundle payments were calculated manually (a 1- to 2-day process) and some promotions could not be tracked.
- Dealers found the complicated reports generated by the system to be confusing.
- All inquiries were received and investigated manually resulting in over 65% outstanding inquiries (approximate value \$2 million).
- The returns process was overly complicated; adjustments were made manually, and uploaded into multiple systems for reimbursement.
- Substantial application changes were required when new promotions were introduced (a 5- to 10-day process) crippling Bell TV's ability to react quickly to market demands.

Bell TV wanted to automate and integrate its compensation process to eliminate mistakes, decrease laborious manual entry and increase its usability for the dealers. Automation would establish rules and provide a formatted approval process with commission structures. This would allow Bell TV to accurately track compensation, manage and coordinate the complex process of administering dealer contracts, and process the payments on a monthly basis.

The Solution

Bell TV performed a strict diligence process and discovered that off-the-shelf solutions would not meet all its requirements, and the customization needed would result in an expensive solution that did not have the necessary flexibility.

About Thoughtcorp

Thoughtcorp is a 14-year-old, Toronto-based consulting company that uses business performance improvement technology to solve complex business problems for large organizations. With experience in a wide array of technology platforms, Thoughtcorp focuses on business solution architecture, solution development, system integration, Data Warehousing, and Business Intelligence. Our clients are able to make educated and timely decisions, which is crucial for survival in today's competitive market.

Thoughtcorp has been a longstanding partner of Bell TV, has a good understanding of the business processes within Bell, and has conducted a thorough needs analysis, and provided a road map that illustrated future extensions to the solution. The company was able to demonstrate the real value of the reuse of this technology within other areas of Bell's corporation to greatly add to overall project ROI.

The team created an enterprise-wide, scalable solution with an open architecture for the organization. The new Compensation Payment Software (CPS) was modular and allowed for functionality add-ons as required. The Microsoft .NET Framework was selected to provide a programming model and infrastructure that would enable Thoughtcorp to create a secure and stable application. The Oracle server gave the team the ability to develop, deploy and operate Bell's IT infrastructure more efficiently.

The solution allowed Bell TV to:

- Create multiple commission structures for all sales channels at the dealer and store levels
- Fully automate inquiry tracking and accurately trace compensation payments
- Allow business units to process payments monthly
- Update and maintain dealer status and profiles through one access point
- Easily create performance and incentive based payments
- Integrate with other software components such as Prism, SAP, CSG and a rental database to ensure that all information across the company is accurate and in real time
- Apply a security-based access system for users that is process driven
- Provide compensation-related data for Cognos reports that are sent to dealers
- Add more functionality for different departments to simplify the process and present only information that is relevant to individual job requirements
- Better allocate resources as time consuming manual entry has been automated, allowing employees to concentrate on proactively developing dealer relationships

Benefits

The CPS provides an extensible, flexible and fully auditable process in which to efficiently manage and coordinate the complex process of administering compensation contracts at Bell TV. Now, a single global solution gives Bell TV the ability to manage its contracts, reduce the risk of missing an obligation and increase its commitment to dealers.

Through this solution, Bell TV has realized improved access to key sales data and enhanced operational efficiency. Bell TV is now able to use its technology more efficiently to streamline processes, and simplifying archiving and case tracking.