

# SYSTEM INTEGRATION

A powerful sorting decision system is being implemented at PostNL

Flexibility, efficiency and agility are watchwords for success in any business, especially so in today's rapidly changing postal market. Major businesses such as postal operators can yield massive savings just from sharing business process data more efficiently between IT systems and operational departments. However, this is a world of various software applications, differing requirements and processes.

PostNL has commenced a landmark project and has discovered the power of rationalising computer systems throughout its organisation. The benefits of doing this are: massive potential for cost savings; process-time reductions; greater efficiency; and the development of new services and revenue streams.

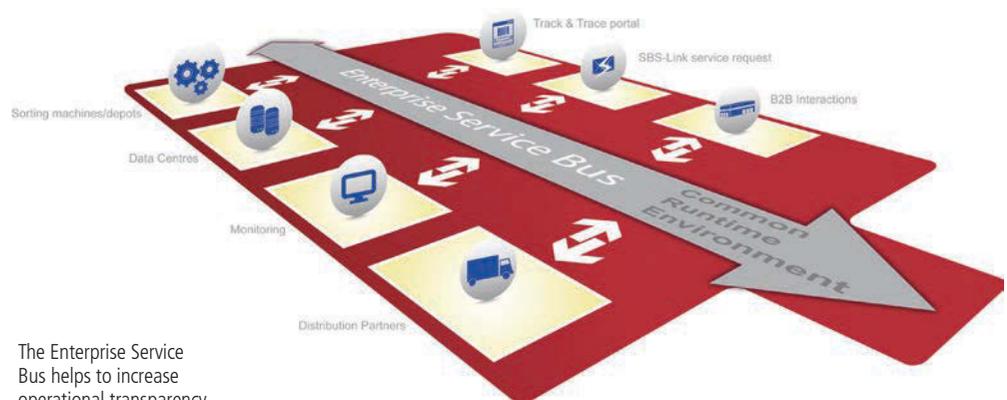
This landmark project has been delivered by integrator and developer Prime Vision in partnership with GloMidCo, a specialist in Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) architecture.

## Efficient strategy

The post's current IT infrastructure consists of custom business applications, and overall the infrastructure is difficult to modify and expensive to maintain. To help promote efficiency, facilitate growth and reduce costs, PostNL decided to implement deep integration across various business platforms, right down to the mail operations and sorting processes.

When the company's computing technologies began to hinder its efficiency and growth, it decided to implement a strategy that would enable it to reduce the time required to connect to dissimilar systems from months to days, while increasing its operational transparency, efficiency and flexibility.

Adding flexibility to PostNL's IT environment is one of the major drivers for implementing an integrated platform; this is delivered with a software base layer that allows for faster adoption of applications or specialised application programming interface (API) from cloud vendors, etc.



The Enterprise Service Bus helps to increase operational transparency, efficiency and flexibility

PostNL was concerned about availability and meeting service level agreements. With growing transaction volumes and an increasing dependency on IT to meet customer expectations, the post needs its systems operating consistently around the clock, even during peak times. For this, GloMidCo is providing a managed services solution around this enterprise system that is committed to maintaining the tight service level agreements that have been defined for this environment.

## Flexible solution

It's still early days for this innovative programme; however, the post exchanges thousands of packages with third-party companies that service parcel delivery to international locations every day.

Prime Vision's sorting decision solution was already flexible because:

- External systems could be integrated in a scalable manner;
- The sorting decision system is configurable to the customer's demands in terms of configuration speed (changes are possible within two sorting runs) and special sorting decisions (for business reply, special customers, sorting days, weight/dimensions of parcels);
- Modern web-based monitoring, configuration and data-entry systems are

used, which offers the advantages of central updates instead of local updates.

With this solution, the Prime Vision sorting decision system is connected to the ESB, which makes life even easier, especially for future modifications. In terms of the central decision application, it doesn't matter which specific local sorting system is employed at the hubs; the ESB takes care of communication to all hubs. Vice versa, local systems at the hubs provide information in a transparent way to the central system with a loose coupling. Transferring the results to other systems is not something that the sorting decision system needs to do as the ESB takes care of this, including the mapping of data.

The system also provides a set of services that are critical to the customer not only for this project (address validation, for example). By connecting the service to the ESB, the service can be easily reused by other applications.

## FIND OUT MORE

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