

Mobitor

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

“USERS NEED TO BE ABLE TO WORK OFFLINE AND TO SYNCHRONIZE WHEN THEIR DEVICES DETECT A SIGNAL. THE ABILITY TO PERFORM COMPLEX OFFLINE TRANSACTIONS IS A KEY DIFFERENTIATOR FOR SOPIC, AND ANOTHER REASON WE SELECTED SQL ANYWHERE FROM SYBASE.”

—LAKSHMAN WATAWALA, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER AND CO-FOUNDER, MOBITOR

INDUSTRY

- Software

SYBASE TECHNOLOGY

- SQL Anywhere[®]
 - UltraLite[®] – data management for smartphone devices
 - MobilLink[™] – session-based synchronization

BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

- Mobitor is now able to meet customer requirements for multi-platform support, enabling those in the field to use iPhones[®], iPads[®] and Android-based devices, and to slash data synchronization times, enabling sales representatives and others in the field to be more productive.

KEY BENEFITS

- Meets customers' requirements for multiple platform mobile device support
- Increases field force productivity
- Slashes synchronization time from minutes to seconds
- Improves customer service
- Opens new markets for Mobitor

Mobitor, a leader in on-demand mobile business solutions, needed to enhance its mobile solutions for the life sciences, retail, and consumer packaged goods industries by moving from a Microsoft-centric platform to a platform that would support iOS- and Android-based mobile devices as well. To achieve this in a short period of time, it replaced the Microsoft SQL Mobile database and Merge Replication technologies embedded in its SOPIC and STOREX solution suites with the data management and synchronization technologies in Sybase SQL Anywhere.

STREAMLINING CRITICAL BUSINESS PROCESSES ON MULTIPLE MOBILE PLATFORMS

Mobitor is a leader in on-demand mobile business solutions. It provides mobility, visibility and business insights to companies primarily in the life sciences and consumer packaged goods industries that depend on timely and accurate field-based communication. Mobitor's mobile and Web-based solutions deliver measurable improvements in profitability by streamlining business processes and enhancing field force performance. Additionally, the company's software-as-a-service (SaaS) approach significantly reduces licensing, hardware, maintenance and human resource costs.

For companies in the life sciences industry, Mobitor developed an application suite called SOPIC (Scheduling, Order Processing and Inventory Control). SOPIC was created to help medical device manufacturers and distributors improve their field sales operations and inventory management. The SOPIC suite provides these companies with the case tracking, inventory management and post-surgery processing platform they need to streamline sales administration, reduce errors, improve inventory utilization, achieve faster payment cycles and decrease dependency on in-house human resources assets.

For example, in the life sciences industry, while orthopedic device manufacturing and distribution has matured into a modern, robust and fast growing industry, many sales operations and administrative procedures are still anchored in paper-based and error-prone processes. Mobitor's SOPIC system, however, helps organizations in this market space maintain a sustainable competitive advantage by providing real-time visibility into case scheduling, resource load, order status and quality. The system harnesses the power and convenience of mobile devices to improve sales representatives' efficiency and accuracy while integrating them with back-office business processes including case administration, inventory management and order processing. It also enables more timely, accurate and comprehensive analytics to facilitate better business management.

CUSTOMERS WANT MULTI-PLATFORM SUPPORT

SOPIC was originally developed as a Microsoft-centric solution, supporting only Microsoft CE-based mobile devices. As iPhones, iPads and numerous Android-based devices have grown more popular among mobile workforces, however, Mobitor was approached by customers to enhance SOPIC to support those devices as well.

COMMON ARCHITECTURE NEEDED TO SUPPORT MULTIPLE MOBILE DEVICE TYPES

“We knew that in order to enable SOPIC to work with iOS and Android devices,” explains Lakshman Watawala, Mobitor’s Chief Technology Officer and Co-founder, “we would need to implement a common architecture on which all of these devices could run. In particular, we knew we had to find an industrial strength mobile database and a very robust and efficient synchronization technology that would support the three mobile platforms. At the time, SOPIC was using Microsoft’s SQL Mobile database and merged replication technologies. Because of our customers’ expanded requirements, we needed to find a replacement for those Microsoft products.”

Mobitor researched a number of mobile database and replication solutions in search of one that would meet its customers’ cross platform requirements and provide it with a platform on which it could further evolve. After a thorough investigation, it chose the Sybase SQL Anywhere technology to meet its cross platform operating requirements.

“The determining factors for our selection of SQL Anywhere,” says Watawala, “were their cross platform compatibility, ability to synchronize large amounts of data very efficiently, and the fact that they are industrial strength and would integrate very easily with our SOPIC application and our SQL Server back-end database. We also needed database and synchronization solutions that would work in environments in which there was no connectivity or only spotty connectivity. Users needed to be able to continue working offline and to synchronize when their devices detected a signal. This ability to perform complex offline transactions is a key differentiator for SOPIC, and another reason we selected SQL Anywhere from Sybase.”

Mobitor’s customers also wanted to see increased synchronization efficiency so sales representatives would not have to wait for extended periods of time for synchronizations to complete before being able to continue their work on their devices. By implementing UltraLite and MobiLink technologies included in SQL Anywhere, Mobitor has been able to reduce synchronization time from six to eight minutes with unacceptably high failure rates to less than 30 seconds on iPhones and as little as three to five seconds on iPads with virtually 100 percent success.

SOPIC AT WORK IN THE REAL WORLD


Pinnacle West Orthopaedics is a medical device distributorship with a strong relationship with Johnson & Johnson’s DePuy division that provides a broad range of healthcare solutions in orthopedics and other areas of medicine. Pinnacle West services hospitals, surgical groups and surgi-centers in a territory that comprises California as far north as Eureka, south to Fresno and Bakersfield, Greater Sacramento area and into Reno and other towns in western Nevada. Some 179 customers in this territory are serviced by 30 mobile sales representatives as well as in-house staff based out of Sacramento.

Pinnacle West works with its customers to ensure they have the orthopedic solutions they need to perform total joint replacements as well as repair injuries sustained in trauma situations. Sales representatives stay in regular contact with customers to obtain information on scheduled procedures and the specific product they will need for those procedures. That information is then transmitted to the company’s home office in Sacramento where the orders are processed, scheduled and delivered, usually one to two days prior to the procedures.

Prior to implementing SOPIC, the communication between the sales reps and the home office was paper and phone-based. Request forms were completed by sales reps and faxed to the home office, but mainly via phone request. All in all, it was a less than efficient and accurate system. Communication errors could be made and information would arrive late, requiring the company to scramble at the 11th hour to assemble the order and deliver it via courier, and tracking the processes from order to implant and beyond was difficult at best.

Lisa A. Castro, Vice President of Logistics for the company explains, “The request method we received varied throughout our territory teams and caused a less than efficient internal operation. It was not unusual for some information to be missed, which meant we had to circle back to the sales rep to get clarification. Also, we’d get phone calls with order information that was not complete. It was a less than perfect system that often meant we had to scramble at the last minute to deliver the implants and instruments to a hospital in our service territory. The bottom line was that we had to make it happen. But it was quite a challenge at times.”

Since Pinnacle West implemented SOPIC, particularly the version of SOPIC that supports the use of iPhones and iPads, “it’s been like night and day,” says Castro.



“All of our sales representatives have iPhones or iPads on which the SOPIC client is running,” explains Castro. “As they meet with their customers throughout the day, they can enter the information on the spot, right into the SOPIC application — the doctor, the type of surgery, the hospital, the date, and the specific orthopedic systems that will be used. That information is transmitted to the server at Mobitor that we access via the Web. We check it often throughout the day, which makes it much easier for us to coordinate surgeries, order product and track usage through the actual implantation. During a typical week, we receive about 170 scheduled surgeries, so there is a lot of information that has to be gathered, processed and tracked to make sure our customers have what they need when they need it. SOPIC gives us a level of visibility and real time information we didn’t have before with the paper and phone-based systems. It makes us more efficient, more accurate and will enable us to reduce costs.

“As far as the technical aspects of the solution itself,” Castro adds, “we don’t have to worry about them, because it’s a hosted solution. We haven’t experienced any downtime at all and it’s allowing us to be more proactive rather than reactive, as we were in the past.”

IT’S ABOUT SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCY

Whether in the life sciences or consumer packaged goods industry, the driver leading organizations to adopt Mobitor’s business solutions is ultimately supply chain efficiency. As it has done with SOPIC, Mobitor has also implemented Sybase SQL Anywhere in its STOREX (solutions to optimize retail execution) solution for the retail and consumer packaged goods industries to provide them with the same cross platform support.

“The business drivers behind the adoption of our solutions,” says Audie Hofmann, Mobitor’s Vice President of Sales and Marketing, “is that organizations need effective, reliable, mobile solutions that enable them to increase supply chain efficiency by getting rid of paper-based solutions that can hobble them in today’s real-time business environments. They need to replace those old solutions with leading edge mobile technology that enables them to be more efficient and competitive by providing them with real-time data and enabling them to react more rapidly and appropriately to provide their customers with superior service.

“Sybase’s mobile technologies have given us the ability to deliver solutions that meet our customers’ business requirements,” Hofmann adds. “With Sybase, we can deploy enterprise ready, high performing, and reliable solutions across all major mobile platforms. In addition to helping our current customers be more successful, we believe the use of Sybase technology will open new markets for us.”