

## Logistics Firm Finds OptimalJ Delivers in Developing J2EE Applications

### CUSTOMER

Intercontainer-Interfrigo (ICF) SA

### INDUSTRY

Transport and Distribution

### CHALLENGE

The pan-European transport company Intercontainer-Interfrigo (ICF) SA was faced with the task of revising its software applications to improve competitiveness and make possible its entry into e-business. Without a suitable development environment, this project could not have been accomplished. ICF had to develop Internet-capable applications that would be compatible with all browsers, to lower cost and increase flexibility.

### COMPUWARE ANSWER

Faced with the choice between .NET and Java, ICF opted for Java 2 Enterprise Edition (J2EE). It chose OptimalJ from Compuware for its support for the J2EE standard and independence of the platform of the application server. With OptimalJ, development teams can generate working J2EE code simply and quickly. Depending on the complexity of the application, ICF today saves between 30 and 40 percent of development time using OptimalJ.

### Compuware solution used

- OptimalJ
- OptimalFlow
- OptimalView
- Professional services

Delivering goods fast and on time is the core requirement of customers of a logistics company. The industry is particularly suited for the application of modern information technology to meet this requirement. However, the use of e-business applications also presents tremendous challenges. ICF had to revise the equivalent of 240,000 man-hours of applications and chose OptimalJ by Compuware to help achieve this.

ICF, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, is a pan-European network operator for rail/road combined transport and refrigerated transports. Today, it is the only corporation linking the ports and economic centers all over Europe with regularly scheduled block trains, with 5,266 rail cars employed in combined traffic covering an average of 1,152 km (720 miles) per run. ICF is also active in the traffic with and through the CIS (the former Soviet Union).

In the fiscal year 2001, approximately 840,000 20-foot units were transported. ICF generated sales of more than 450 million Swiss francs (roughly \$300 million U.S.).

At the end of 2000, ICF began to make e-business applications available to its first customers. This entry into the Internet presented a big challenge to the company. "We had to fundamentally revise our application landscape," says Jean-Michel Varoqui, manager of IT development and maintenance with ICF, summarizing the situation. "Over 90 percent of our applications are customized solutions for our customers. The problem is that they are proprietary solutions. They run on heterogeneous platforms requiring a large number of interfaces. The use of these applications is subject to a number of limitations and requires a high volume of communications."

### Deciding on Java

To further increase its competitiveness in the fiercely embattled transport market, ICF looked for a development environment for the revision of its applications. The goal was to remove the limitations during use and to develop Internet-capable applications compatible with all browsers, lowering cost and communication efforts while increasing flexibility.

## intercontainer – interfrigo

Varoqui and his colleagues studied the market carefully and realized they had to choose between Java and .NET. In comparison with .NET, Java offered the advantage of platform independence. Finally, ICF opted for Compuware and its advanced development environment, OptimalJ. "Support for J2EE and independence from the platform of the application server were two key requirements of the new development environment. OptimalJ meets both to our full satisfaction," Varoqui explains.

"In addition, Compuware is a healthy, established company with a great support offering; a partner, then, with whom we can work together on a long-term basis."

ICF places great reliance on the Optimal products by Compuware. Besides OptimalJ, the company uses OptimalFlow as a workflow engine and OptimalView as an enterprise portal.

ICF developers analyze the applications with the Objectteering modeler using UML (Unified Modeling Language). UML-class diagrams are generated and transferred into the development environment through XMI (XML Metadata Interchange), a standard for exchanging XML (Extensible Markup Language) documents.

With OptimalJ and the use of integrated patterns, the developer generates a first prototype of the application dialogs. After reviewing the prototype with

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the user, the developer fine-tunes the interface, complements the application with specific business rules and optimizes its performance. The application is implemented on the OptimalServer and integrated into the OptimalView portal where the access mechanisms are activated.

Critical for the success of this project was the interaction of Compuware's products and professional services. The staff members of ICF received basic training

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in OptimalJ. In addition, a Compuware consultant supported the enterprise on site. ICF was able to profit from the know-how and experience of Compuware.

The simple and quick generation of J2EE code with OptimalJ is, from the perspective of Varoqui, the main advantage of the development environment. “The use of the patterns pays off in the analysis and prototype phases,” he says. “Correction can already be performed at this point if necessary. Changes in later development stages that may be elaborate and expensive can thus be avoided.” Depending on the complexity of the application, ICF saves between 30 and 40 percent of the development time, Varoqui adds.

At the beginning of the year the staff members received training in Java and OptimalJ. In the fall, the first J2EE applications were already running in production. These included a multi-purpose messaging system allowing for the processing of messages from railway terminals/stations and ports on the arrival of a container/swap-body, as well as an application called “Rail Car Inquiry and Positioning.” It provides information on the location of a rail car. In scope, both are smaller applications, but in terms of significance for the daily business they are critical for ICF.

## KEY FACTS

Intercontainer-Interfrigo (ICF) SA

- formed from the 1993 merger of transportation companies Intercontainer and Interfrigo
- operates 5,266 rail cars (combined traffic) in all European countries
- moved roughly 840,000 TEU (20-foot equivalent units) in fiscal year 2001
- began an e-business offering for customers at the end of 2000.

Only the use of OptimalJ allowed ICF to tackle the task of revising a large volume of software applications. Without such a development environment, the project would not even have been launched.

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