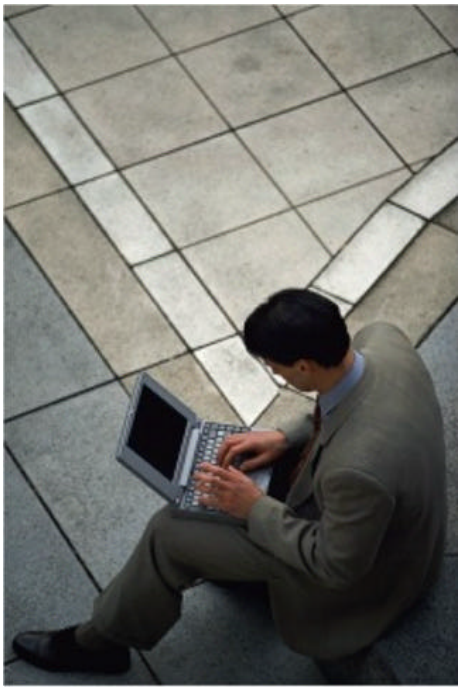
Mobile data services and internet access

Project Brief: Motorola

The global market for mobile data services and internet access is immense, and fast-moving. In this market, the major telecommunications equipment manufacturers need to be able to move with the same agility as their most lightweight competitors.



BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

Part of Motorola's strategy in the mobile data services and internet market was to add to its successful GSM mobile voice products by providing a capability for integrated voice & data services, internet access and e-business over second-generation and third-generation mobile networks. The ferocity of the market meant that to secure Motorola's market share, new products needed to be available for demonstration very quickly. The openness of the marketplace meant that the products demonstrated had to be effective, attractive and robust.

The combination of new technologies, rapidly changing requirements, short time scale and a need for high product quality adds up to the most severe of challenges for software development. Many software houses have failed to meet this challenge. Motorola came to IPL because of our track record of flexibility, speed and software quality.

IPL'S SOLUTION

IPL provided the integration software to combine components from Motorola's other partners into a coherent service platform. We also developed several applications to demonstrate the platform's power.

Mobile access was achieved through Java applications executing within the SIM smart card of a hand held GSM terminal. These applications were initially loaded by IPL into the SIM firmware, with the capability to move on to downloading applications over the air. The first applications developed included corporate and personal address books, a location-specific information service, schedule management and unified messaging.

The mobile applications operated in client-server mode, communicating with a web server, using standard internet protocols over GSM's Short Message Service (SMS). The server, also developed by IPL, provided managed access from the GSM network to the internet. It also operated as an internet portal, hosting the server applications and subscriber management. IPL's server software included integration with email, voicemail, search engines, teletext news feeds and LDAP databases.

MANAGING THE PROCESS

The project time scale was short, with fixed product demonstration deadlines to meet. To compound the project management challenge, Motorola's technical requirements needed to evolve continually and often radically, in response to market needs. IPL's project manager responded by quickly establishing a focussed team of very capable software engineers to take Motorola's business level requirements and turn them directly into software. IPL's attention to detail meant that even without a scaffolding of formal design documents, the resulting software was outstandingly robust.

The IPL team integrated closely with Motorola's organization, in a very interactive working model. Motorola staff worked within the team, at IPL's offices. IPL engineers contributed to the product management process within Motorola, and supported Motorola's presentation of the system across Europe and beyond.

THE OUTCOME

The IPL team's achievements greatly exceeded Motorola's expectations of what could be done in the short time available. The service platform was de-livered on time. It was very robust, and it included a much wider range of applications than had been thought possible.

The service platform will allow telcos, corporates and value-added service providers to offer radically innovative services to their network users, and so will play a significant part in Motorola's pursuit of the mobile data services market.

The project demonstrates IPL's ability to reliably deliver radical new software technology, to a demanding time scale and without compromise to quality.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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