

Complex Reporting for

Link Market Services

WebFOCUS Helps Link Market Services Improve Customer Service, Speed, and Flexibility

In 2000 Link Market Services (LMS) embarked on the first major software development in the Australian share registry industry for fifteen years. LMS developed the Online Shareholder Communications and Registry System (OSCAR™) and introduced its clients to an increased level of service while offering issuers across Australia a genuine alternative for share registry management.

LMS' commitment to clients and its goal to provide a quality service has enabled it to become Australia's premium registry services provider. Craig Paxton, team leader Business Reporting for LMS said, "We offer much more than just a registry service and we provide a dedicated relationship manager for every client, which is unique in this market. Our services extend to IPO's, investor relations, analytics, annual general meetings, and company secretarial services, as well as the management of employee share schemes for companies such as Telstra, Qantas, Coca-Cola, and Brambles; it's all there to ensure we can provide our clients with a complete service."

LMS' expansion strategy is to grow by acquisition and by providing an array of value-added services. Growth over the past three years has been derived through the acquisition of Ultra Share Registry in South Africa and the provision of Share Registry Services in New Zealand via a joint venture with the New Zealand Stock Exchange. Many high profile appointments by

Snapshot

Organization

Link Market Services is the premium service provider of share registry, investor relations, and analytics services to listed and unlisted companies in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Papua New Guinea.

Challenge

To produce over 4,000 complex internal and client ad hoc and management reports every day from two Oracle transaction databases containing up to 1.8 billion rows of data.

Strategy

Leverage WebFOCUS to provide enterprise-wide process-driven BI solutions that integrate the core COBOL/Java/Oracle application to supply pervasive reporting.

Results

Fast delivery of over 30,000 monthly reports and up-to-date information on trading activity and investor details has greatly increased customer satisfaction levels.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS, iWay Software, and Professional Services.



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Team Leader Business Reporting
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iconic Australian companies including Babcock & Brown, BlueScope Steel, Brambles Industries, Coles Myer, John Fairfax Holdings, Qantas Airways, Westpac Banking Corporation, and The Australian Gas Light Company (AGL) have complemented this growth.

These companies joined other blue chip Australian issuers who have chosen to work with LMS for many years – some since listing – such as Telstra Corporation (Australia's largest share register with 1.7 million shareholders), Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Orica, Suncorp-Metway, Boral, Lend Lease Corporation, QBE Insurance Group, and Origin Energy.

Major Software Development Leads to WebFOCUS

With more than 350 full-time staff and more than eight million holder records under management, LMS maintains the registers of more than 1,000 listed securities.

WebFOCUS was purchased to address the complex reporting requirements across the entire business. This includes the provision of all client reporting from OSCAR, together with general ad hoc and management reporting. As the core reporting engine, WebFOCUS links to the production Oracle environment from COBOL and Java™. The solution generates up to 4,000 reports every night. The size of the databases accessed is significant. The data is separated into “current,” which contains around

800 million rows, and “historical,” containing up to 1 billion rows. Both databases are accessed live.

WebFOCUS provides internal specialists with the ability to meet ad hoc reporting requirements effortlessly. An example may be: “provide details of a client's investors with dividends over a certain amount, who live in a particular [location], have at least one unrepresented check, and have elected to receive their annual report by e-mail.” There's also a large amount of effort put in on behalf of the clients to identify investors with multiple holdings, in the hope they can be merged, thus reducing administrative costs. This ad hoc reporting extends to a variety of business and executive measurement reports.

Flexibility Seals the Deal

When evaluating appropriate solutions, LMS had no previous systems to compare as the business was a start up. Since services had to be purchased from a competitor while a solution was sought, Paxton said, “We needed something that we knew would deliver rapidly. We had to select a solution that could be up and running very quickly, since we wanted to be independent from this competitor as soon as possible!”

After extensive market evaluation, LMS chose WebFOCUS because of its strong support infrastructure, ease of integration, PDF capability, COBOL API, and XML facilities. “Throughout the evaluation phase, Information Builders demonstrated a strong understanding of our business and where we needed to be,” said Paxton. “Reports were produced more easily than with the competitive products, and we felt comfortable the consulting services

from Information Builders would deliver what was required.

“The ease with which WebFOCUS can connect to a wide variety of data sources and consolidate information into a single report distinguished it from the other solutions that were considered.”

Core Production Reporting Engine for Entire Business

WebFOCUS manages the production of more than 30,000 reports from three separate Oracle systems every month – with this



figure tipped to rise by at least 50 percent over the next couple of months as new initiatives are released. Around 85 percent of these reports are for the Australian registry business with the remainder for the New Zealand, South African, and Papua New Guinea registry businesses.

WebFOCUS' primary role is to produce reports, which are sent to clients via e-mail, as well as being used internally by account managers for operational work. Each client receives a standard suite of reports on a regular basis. These reports include:

- Register lists
- Issued capital
- Investors broken down by country of residence, or number of shares held

- Details of daily sales and trades
- Significant trades and analysis of director's activities in terms of buying and selling
- Register profiles
- Trend analysis
- New investors

Clients receive PDF, Excel, or CSV files that are either automatically sent via e-mail, or are produced by a client relationship manager who may manually collate and/or summarize them into another format. Some reports are produced

WebFOCUS also provides the data for a Web interface that LMS' clients can access to view register summaries, significant trades, top holders, and download other standard reports. This interface is currently under redevelopment and will provide significant added functionality once complete.

The biggest benefit of the WebFOCUS solution is intangible and focuses on the high levels of customer service that can now be provided through speed of information delivery and

"The ability to access multiple systems and databases to combine results into one report is important for LMS," continued Paxton. "WebFOCUS makes this very straightforward and it's one of the keys to our success."

The benefits also extend to the variety of outputs available with the flexibility of offering reports in a number of different ways. And, some of the functionality with regard to formulas is excellent. "Being able to burst reports into separate worksheets has been

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daily and some monthly, with reports detailing the director's activities and unusual trades sent daily. The flexibility that WebFOCUS provides in being able to choose the most appropriate delivery method and timing is of utmost importance.

WebFOCUS also enables LMS to manage and report on many other processes it handles for its clients including register maintenance, dividend processing, check distribution, management of dividend redistribution plans, bank reconciliation for treasury teams, and operational risk management.

flexibility in accessing live data. "Data doesn't have to be transformed so there is no middle ground," said Paxton. "We go straight into live data and can respond to ad hoc requests very quickly."

Speed, Flexibility, and Variety

LMS needs to deliver reports as soon as a client comes on board, and WebFOCUS delivers these reports instantly. Many of LMS' clients rely on the daily information provided to understand exactly where they're at with trading activity. They need to know who is buying or selling significant parcels of their shares, reducing their holding, or increasing their stake with a view to making a takeover offer or a bid.

invaluable for us because a lot of our people want to work with Excel," noted Paxton.

Added Benefits of WebFOCUS

During the Telstra 3 share offer, WebFOCUS enabled LMS to provide some specific functionality for the offer with very little effort. This was an important self-service Web reporting application for T3 that was made available across Australia and New Zealand. The T3 call center was outsourced and the data they were receiving wasn't sufficient to effectively answer all of the questions they were receiving. "We were able to assist them by providing the outsourced Telephone Information Centre with a self-service application that offered more in-depth search functionality and detailed shareholder application

information,” Paxton said. “We delivered it in just one hour thanks to WebFOCUS.”

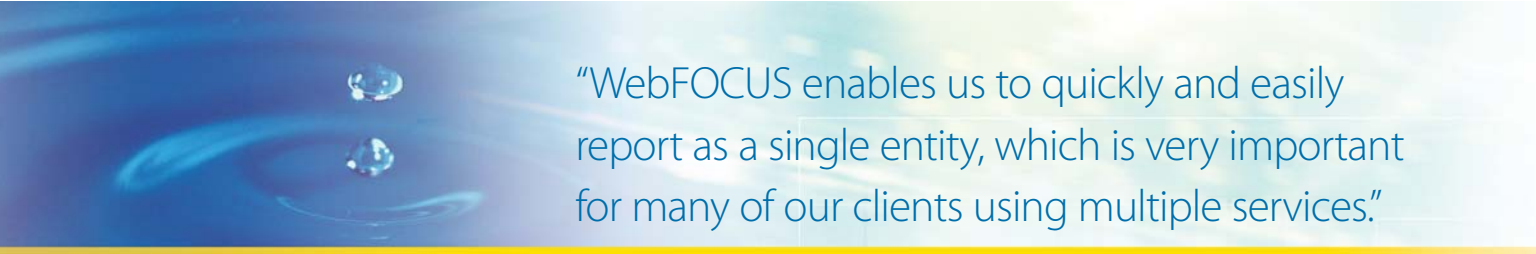
LMS also recently worked on a similar self-service solution for the employees of the multinational company BP. A report (pulling information from disparate databases) was made available online so that the employee share team could monitor not only manual applications, but those coming in from the Web as well, in real time.

What’s to Come?

Growth and expansion is on the agenda, with LMS seeking a more global presence, especially throughout the Northern Hemisphere and Asia. WebFOCUS will play an important role in this expansion providing easy extension whenever the business expands. “With growth through acquisition, you often end up with a number of systems that need to be accessed and reported from,” Paxton said. “WebFOCUS enables us to quickly and easily report as a single entity, which is very

development,” Paxton commented. “WebFOCUS BI Dashboard provides us with a great solution, and feedback from the business has been excellent. Currently, output is via PDF or Excel, however in the future we will implement the functionality to provide drill down and live interaction with the data. This will be very easy for us to do with WebFOCUS and the users will gain significant added benefit.”

In terms of general reporting across the business, the aim is to harness WebFOCUS to provide more



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The LMS development team worked closely with Information Builders Professional Services on all aspects of the solution. While overnight processing, the COBOL API and surrounding infrastructure was a challenge, the teams worked very well together to make it work. “We have always had a great relationship with Information Builders in Australia,” Paxton said. “They delivered on promises made during the evaluation phase and have continued to provide us with great support.”

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LMS is currently testing a dashboard application that makes a number of ad hoc reports generally available to the business. Client relationship managers or capital market teams are the primary users, with reports used for improved client management or to meet a specific requirement or request. They are standard parameter-driven reports, which can be changed when required to suit individual needs. “We actually purchased the Managed Reporting Environment to do this type of reporting but found the size and complexity of the underlying data made it unsuitable for end user

active online reports with drill-down functionality for users, as well as dashboard and executive reporting for the Web, which will potentially extend to clients. 🌀