



eCommerce systems
integration and optimisation

SARATOGA

The client

Our client of a number of years, is a prominent South African retail chain store group, which has been JSE-listed since 1941 and has over 3 000 stores.

The organisation provides innovative products and creative customer experiences by leveraging their portfolio of diverse brands which include clothing, jewellery, mobile phones, cosmetics and homeware.

The challenge

One of their product offerings includes the retail group selling mobile airtime and data contracts to their existing customer base through agents working in outbound and inbound call centres.

This process required the sales agents to go through a number of separate systems to successfully complete sales, including credit management and contract management systems.

With the goal of realising more revenue from their mobile product stream, the retail group needed to have a new contract management system developed. The new system would need to enable a more efficient sales process and tap into a wider range of product providers.

The system would also need to cross-sell and combine other products on offer by the retail group, in particular phones and phone accessories, within their existing ecommerce platform.

Call centre agents also required the new system to enable both self-service and call centre facilitated sales.

The solution

Developing an entirely new contract management system would be an expensive and time consuming initiative. Therefore, the Saratoga team was tasked with integrating and optimising the existing contract management system to achieve the required functionality and streamlined sales processes.

The existing airtime contract management system was an Angular App hosted in Azure, Microsoft's cloud platform. The dedicated team of Saratoga developers needed to integrate this management system into a number of other business process systems using Windows Communication Foundation (WCF).

The systems integrations required included:

- Omni-Channel – (eCommerce)
- Contract Management System
- Credit System (Vision)
- OTD via Biztalk
- Call centre systems

For the first time, the contract management system was configured to allow customers to conveniently make payments for phone or data contract purchases with their retail group Account Cards.

In addition to the integration work, existing functionality from several other of the retail group's systems including order processing, credit payment, stock management, product catalogue and fulfilment were also optimised by the Saratoga team to close any process gaps.

The fulfilment and logistics were a crucial part of the overall solution as activation of customer contracts would only take place upon successful fulfilment.

Therefore, a crucial exercise for the project team was testing the system integrations between the retail group's Omni-Channel, fulfilment partner and the contract management systems.



The results

Making use of the retail group's existing systems for the optimised and integrated solution created the following benefits for our client:

- Reduced time to market for the streamlined sales solution.
- Significant budget savings compared to developing an entirely new custom eCommerce site.
- Greater systems stability by using existing organisational platforms which had already been extensively tested by sales initiatives such as Black Friday.

The integrated contract management system also provided the following benefits to call centre agents and customers:

- Call centre agents were able to process contracts much quicker with the new system.
- The system provided increased capacity for mobile phone and airtime sales.
- Customers now had the ability to purchase phone contracts from the retail group via the eCommerce store online.

