

## ENSEMBLE SUCCESS STORY: ATHENA DIAGNOSTICS



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### **Ensemble plays multiple integration roles at Athena Diagnostics**

Athena Diagnostics of Worcester, Massachusetts is a reference laboratory providing physicians with a wide variety of state-of-the-art neurological testing services. As a long-time user of clinical lab software from Misys Corporation (an InterSystems Application Partner), Athena Diagnostics is familiar with the Caché database and rapid development environment.

When they identified several integration projects that would allow them to streamline their operations, save money, and provide better customer service, Athena felt Ensemble was the natural choice for an integration platform. “There are so many different ways that we want to integrate our systems,” says Mark Smith, Vice President of IT at Athena Diagnostics. “We need an integration tool that excels at data coordination, composite application development, business activity monitoring – everything from soup to nuts. Ensemble gives us all that, and it’s easy for my developers to use.”

The laboratory currently has four integration projects under way, all of them expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2004. One of them, according to Smith, is destined to be very popular with Athena Diagnostics’ customers. “We perform over a hundred different neurological diagnostic tests,” he says. “Some of them can take up to six weeks to complete, so we needed a software tool that would assist us in notifying customers of specimen status. Doctors and patients sometimes get anxious waiting for results. Our call center handles thousands of calls a month, many of them requesting information about the status of tests. We’re using Ensemble to develop an automatic notification system.” The new composite application will recognize changes in status of lab tests in the Misys application. If a change notification is warranted, Ensemble will extract information from Athena’s customer database, construct an appropriate e-mail message, and submit it to their Microsoft Exchange mail system

for delivery to the customer. Explains Smith, "Customers will get more information about the progress of lab test submissions, and our customer service representatives won't get inundated."

Another integration project aimed at improving customer service involves letters created by Athena's lab test management application. Instead of using the form letters currently hard-coded in the system, Athena will rely on Ensemble to print the letters using the mail merge feature of Microsoft Word. "Our administrative staff can then manage the letters," says Smith. "That will ease the paperwork burden on the technical staff, and allow for more flexibility in the content of the letters."

Athena is using Ensemble's Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) capabilities to develop a monitoring and alarm dashboard for their system management team. "With Ensemble, we now have the capability to create a dashboard display," Smith says. "We're starting off checking two machines that run important lab test applications, but we expect to be monitoring over 15 servers by the end of the year." That doesn't mean someone has to constantly watch the dashboard though. Ensemble can monitor systems around the clock, and if an alarm occurs, it will page the on-call sys-

tem manager on their cell phone.

"Our fourth project is an exercise in data coordination," says Smith. "Our customer databases have some duplicate entries and conflicting records that need repair. We're using Ensemble to clean them up by comparing our data to information obtainable through various public Web sites. Eventually, this verification will become an automated part of our normal data entry process." Smith cites Ensemble's metadata capabilities as being key to the success of this project. "Ensemble stores metadata in its high-performance built-in database, where it can easily be accessed and analyzed. It provides us a very powerful way to filter and validate information," he says.

Athena Diagnostics is happy with their choice of Ensemble as their integration platform. "It was extremely easy for our developers to learn Ensemble, and we are able to complete projects very quickly," reports Smith. "Another major benefit is that it does everything. I can think of about 20 more integration projects where we can make use of Ensemble. If we tried to accomplish them with other vendors' technologies, we'd probably have to buy two or three separate integration tools, and the projects would take twice the time to develop."

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