

ENSEMBLE SUCCESS STORY: Hyphen Solutions

Hyphen Solutions Uses Ensemble for Faster and More Reliable Customer System Integration

In an ideal world, home construction would always proceed as planned, finishing on schedule and on budget. But the unpredictability of weather, labor, workloads, orders, communications, deliveries, and other factors wreck havoc on homebuilding schedules and costs. To better manage this variability, Hyphen Solutions, an innovative technology company headquartered in Addison, Texas, has created a Web-based scheduling and supply chain software service (BuildPro and SupplyPro) for improved schedule management and collaboration between homebuilders and their suppliers. When Hyphen needed to replace existing integration software with a higher performing, more reliable, and easier to customize solution, they turned to InterSystems Ensemble®.

Serious issues call for a better integration solution

Hyphen delivers its products using an application service provider (ASP) or software as a service (SaaS) model via the Web. With the success of its products bringing greater numbers of customers on board, Hyphen could not integrate BuildPro and SupplyPro with new customers' back office software (typically the JD Edwards EnterpriseOne package – now part of Oracle Corporation) fast enough. The JD Edwards XPI integration software was too difficult to install and configure, sometimes taking as long as six weeks, and too unreliable as a long-term solution.

“Sometimes the XPI service at a customer site just died without notification,” says Randy Stewart, integration architect at Hyphen Solutions, “or even worse it appeared to be running but ignored all messages. Meanwhile, the JD Edwards application would send out messages to BuildPro and they just dropped into a black hole and were lost.”



“Choosing Ensemble clearly has given our business a boost. We can bring new customers on board much faster. In the past, integration set-up took weeks, and now it only takes a few days. And our software development productivity gains have been impressive.”

*Randy Stewart
Integration Architect*

Seeing an Ensemble proof-of-concept is believing

Hyphen wanted to create a single integration architecture for its BuildPro and SupplyPro products that would eliminate the problems with XPI, and also easily adapt to integration variants when customers use other back office packages. After a successful proof-of-concept project, Hyphen chose InterSystems' Ensemble rapid integration technology as the foundation for a Hyphen-branded integration solution.

Ensemble met Hyphen's evaluation criteria with:

- Ease of installation and configuration at customer sites
- "Set and forget" reliability, including guaranteed message delivery between the back office software and BuildPro and SupplyPro
- A built-in, high performance database, based on InterSystems Caché®, for message persistence and logging
- Built-in monitoring of integrated systems with alerts sent to Hyphen and the customer if a problem occurs
- Built-in event logging and message tracing for troubleshooting
- Rapid accommodation of the different business practices and data needs of each customer via configuration changes, not programming
- A unified, easy to learn environment for development, integration, deployment, and management

Building better integration with Ensemble

Using Ensemble, Hyphen rapidly designed and implemented an integration solution that it is marketing to its customers as AIM (advanced integration manager). AIM serves as the integration backbone between BuildPro and the builder's back office software, and between SupplyPro and manufacturers.

Ensemble has given Hyphen the higher reliability it was looking for. "With all messages stored in Ensemble's database it's a trivial task to resend

messages if a problem occurs, such as a network outage," states Stewart. "And Ensemble's monitoring is light-years ahead," Stewart adds. "We created a dashboard display that uses meters and buttons to track message traffic, and color to convey state of the system. If an error is strong enough, an email is sent to us and to the customer."

Once notified, Hyphen can easily locate the source of a problem without having to reproduce it. "To debug," Stewart explains, "we just use Ensemble's event log browser and Visual Trace facility."

Ensemble also has improved the utility of Hyphen's SupplyPro software with painless integration between manufacturers and building material suppliers. Hyphen used Ensemble to Web-service-enable SupplyPro so that it functions as an XML-based Web service consumer to a major appliance manufacturer's order processing Web service. This business-to-business connection also benefits from the same real-time monitoring and dashboard display functions that BuildPro customers enjoy.

Building better business with Ensemble innovations

"Choosing Ensemble clearly has given our business a boost," Stewart notes. "We can bring new customers on board much faster. In the past, integration set-up took weeks, and now it only takes a few days. And our software development productivity gains have been impressive. Instead of software engineers programming our products to account for integration variation between customers, we just use the Ensemble management portal to change configuration settings."

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