



Customer: Dillon Gage Metals
Web Site: www.dillongage.com
Customer Size: 1-99
Country or Region: USA
Industry: Precious Metals Trading
Partner: Hitachi Consulting

Customer Profile

Dillon Gage Metals is the most diverse company in the precious metals industry. The company provides dealers with FizTrade, an online exchange for the instant trading of physical precious metals.

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2005
 - Windows Server 2003 Standard Edition
- Technologies
 - Microsoft .NET Framework

For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit:
www.microsoft.com/casestudies

Precious metals trader provides real-time trading with new online portal

"Our online trading platform provides the precious metals business with quick and reliable service using SharePoint and our Lawson software. Speed and accuracy are the key business points in a market that changes by the second. This system enables us to provide bid/ask spreads in precious metals (gold, silver, platinum and palladium), involving hundreds of inventory items, globally, at lightning speed."

Terry Hanlon, President, Dillon Gage Metals

Dillon Gage trades precious metals using a new trading portal that provide reliability, ease of use, and speed for their customers. The portal is developed in Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 using a Lawson ERP backend for processing. The SharePoint portal and Lawson communicate through a flexible services layer developed using Microsoft WCF.

Business Needs

Dillon Gage Metals is a wholesale trader and refiner of precious metals. In addition to its diverse array of more traditional metals services—from bullion trading and numismatics to jewelry liquidation and specialty minting—the company also offers dealers FizTrade (www.fiztrade.com), an innovative online trading exchange for instant buying and selling of physical precious metals.

The trading portal the company had in place, custom-developed on top of an open-source application framework, offered very limited flexibility and poor response time. Simple things like changing header images on a web page involved custom development resources at great expense. In addition, the portal only interfaced with the legacy version 8 of the Lawson accounting suite, which provides all back-office functionality for Dillon Gage (e.g., Order Entry, Procurement, etc.). Customer and

industry interest in the FizTrade concept was strong, including opportunities for Dillon Gage to offer private-labeled versions of FizTrade to institutional customers. But in order to scale to meet those opportunities, as well as to integrate with a planned upgrade to the Lawson System Foundation 9 (LSF9) suite, it was clear that Dillon Gage needed a new system platform to better execute the industry-leading concept.

Solution

Hitachi Consulting worked with Dillon Gage to create a new and improved portal. Using Hitachi Consulting's structured methodology, the company developed specific requirements definitions, detailed process design specifications and a structured development methodology to produce an integrated result. The Hitachi Consulting solution allows Dillon Gage's corporate procurement, inventory and order entry data to be stored in the Lawson back-office system while retaining Microsoft Office SharePoint Server as the portal.

The re-platforming of Dillon Gage's trading portal involved the use of Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 and full integration to the upgraded Lawson System Foundation 9 (LSF 9) suite.

Hitachi Consulting developed a flexible and loosely coupled service layer in conformance to a Services Oriented Architecture (SOA) framework using Microsoft Windows Communication Foundation, allowing the integration of SharePoint Server with the Lawson back-office suite, which is integrated with Microsoft SQL Server 2005. Much of the previously portal-based data storage and computations were reconstructed in the Lawson system while SharePoint provided a

flexible user interface layer for the Dillon Gage look-and-feel branding as well as extensibility for business-to-business (B2B) partnerships, providing a true Model-View-Controller architecture. The project leverages the large collection of web user interface components available in SharePoint as well as other applications such as Help Desk, Change Management, and Bug Tracking, combined with the powerful feature called Windows Workflow Foundation (WF) for addressing complex business processing requirements. The full integration of SharePoint portal authentication with LSF 9 was completed providing sub-second response where previous portal authentication took more than 20 seconds to complete. In addition to the authentication performance, the flexible authentication service layer provided support for Lawson as the authoritative source of credentials while providing membership and role-management integration to the SharePoint security layer.

The SharePoint-to-Lawson integration services provided a collection of loosely coupled interfaces to access the Lawson services directly for performance utilizing a widely adopted industry standard messaging format called eXtensible Markup Language (XML).

Benefits

This project removed complex and non-systematic portal code from Dillon Gage's systems and replaced it with a manageable system from look-and-feel development to effective and flexible content management of all assets (graphics and documents) to create for the first time a functioning portal that meets requirements for speed, reliability and flexibility.

As a result, Dillon Gage will experience improved processing; greater control over inventory; extensible support to order entry and procurement business rules conformance; substantial flexibility through the flexible services layer for extensibility to future integration support for ERP platforms other than Lawson (e.g., SAP); improved authentication using Windows Server 2003 Active Directory as the authoritative source for dealer sign-ons; and workflow that improves Dillon Gage's internal ability to manage the customer sign-up and help processes.

Dillon Gage expects improved trading volume on the new portal, flexibility to adapt to future needs, and agility to respond to the rapidly changing market conditions of the precious metals trading industry.