

LANSA Case Study

Wilson Bowden generates a wealth of leads with LANSA

Wilson Bowden, the commercial development division of Barratt Developments PLC, is one of the U.K.'s leading house builders and property developers. Using LANSA, Wilson Bowden has implemented an end-to-end integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM), sales and lead generation solution. LANSA Integrator uses XML to provide content to an outsourced Web site and map sales leads from the site to the Visual LANSA-based CRM system.

Bev Weston, David Wilson Homes group marketing manager, says, "Barely five months after going live we had over 7,500 leads and 400 successful sales from our CRM system. This shows how powerful the new CRM system is. We now have a proven strategy in place to handle leads."

The Rise of Inner City Development

"Historically we were aiming at families and building larger properties," explains Weston. "But now inner city apartments, three storey homes and flats are on the increase. This shift in business comes with new challenges both for the business and IT. A more pro-active marketing and sales approach is needed to maintain our leading position in the future. We needed to generate more sales leads and better manage those leads for follow up."

"In the old system, we couldn't do much with customer inquiries when we didn't have a matching home first time around. These of paper. We needed more control over incoming leads and enquiries."

Weston adds, "We also wanted to reduce the time between marketing staff processing an enquiry and a sales person getting back to that prospect. It is important that we action inquiries faster than our competitors. We needed to automatically match buyers with properties and pass the lead to the mobile phone of the sales advisor on the development site."

"Marketing wanted a lead-generating Web site where buyers could search online for suitable offerings by entering their criteria such as preferred location, number of bedrooms and budget. We have all the property information in our iSeries database, but we didn't want our team to be responsible for the creative design of the site. We wanted to outsource Web development, but have real-time control over the contents."

Paul Astbury, Wilson Bowden systems development manager, says, "LANSA had already proven itself when the Sales module was redeveloped for modernization and Y2K compliance. It was a natural step to use Visual LANSA for the very graphical CRM module and LANSA Integrator for sending and receiving information to and from the outsourced Web site."



Wilson Bowden
Developments

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Real-time Sales and CRM Solution

The CRM module is the centerpiece that pulls information together and distributes information to the appropriate party via LANSA Integrator. Information flows automatically and in near real-time from one module to the other. Customers who leave an enquiry on the Web site, can expect to be called by a sales advisor 15 minutes after pressing the submit button. And, as soon as property information is updated in the Sales module, it is available for marketing additions and XML upload to the Web site.

The 500 PCs in Wilson Bowden's 20 regional sales offices run all Visual LANSA applications from networked servers. All database requests are via call server functions to the central iSeries.

"We have made the system as host-centric as possible," says Astbury. "We don't have to maintain anything on the individual PCs."

The CRM module holds all customer leads, whether generated by the Web site or entered by the call center. Customer profiles are created for all leads and are available from anywhere in the business.

New leads are automatically matched with current offerings and the system also allows manual matching by marketing staff. If there is a match, a LANSA built-in function sends an email message to the sales department in the closest regional office and a SMS message to the mobile phone of the sales advisor on site.

When suitable properties become available, new matches are made automatically. For people who have registered future interest, or if no exact matches are made, marketing follow-up is automatically triggered on scheduled dates.

The Sales module, developed in LANSA for iSeries, is integrated with the CRM module and holds all property information and manages the actual sales transaction.

The Web site manager, developed in Visual LANSA, accesses property information from the Sales module and stores marketing information about the properties and campaigns. With the help of Visual LANSA and ActiveX, this information can be reused in MS Word letters and advertising. Using LANSA Integrator, the Web site Manager creates outbound XML, which is uploaded directly into the database that dynamically drives the Web site www.dwh.co.uk.

Visitors to the Web site enter search criteria such as preferred location, number of bedrooms and budget to find a suitable property. The site sends customer leads and inquiries back in XML format as email attachments to a Novell GroupWise Mailbox. Wilson Bowden's iSeries triggers a LANSA Integrator job every 15 minutes to map the incoming leads into the CRM module. And so the CRM and Sales cycle starts again.

Thousands of Quality Sales Leads

"Previously there were a great many leads that we could not action," explains Weston. "Now all leads are followed up, even if a prospect is not looking to buy until next year. The CRM system puts these leads in a diary for a sales call and includes them in future relevant marketing campaigns."

"Running campaigns is now easy. The CRM system generates personalized letters and email messages directly from the iSeries database, using standard campaign frameworks set up by marketing. For example, if we open up a new development in Manchester, we campaign to all the people who registered an interest in living in or around Manchester."

"The system automatically detects so called hot leads where a property matches a prospect's requirements exactly. The sales adviser can contact a hot lead customer within 15 minutes, because the Web site integrates with the CRM system and the CRM system sends an SMS message to the sales adviser."



Wilson Bowden plc, headquartered in Leicestershire, is one of the U.K.'s leading house builders and property developers.

Company and System Information

- Wilson Bowden Developments is the commercial development division of Barratt Developments PLC. As part of one of the largest UK house builders, WB's nationwide product portfolio includes a wide range of commercial property, comprising offices, retail, leisure, industrial and distribution; one of the few developers with both commercial and residential expertise.
- For more information about Wilson Bowden visit: www.wbdevelopments.co.uk
- For more information about David Wilson Homes visit: www.dwh.co.uk

"LANSA allows us to respond very quickly to business changes."

"Because we better understand and remember what each particular prospect is looking for, we get more people to our development sites and we get them there sooner than our competitors."

"With the new CRM Database we have thousands of good quality sales leads available. Now we have a facility to extract these customers for endless scenarios, it makes all the work worthwhile. The fact that these campaigns can be sent by many different methods improves our target marketing and reduces our marketing costs," says Weston.

Gareth Braithwaite, Barratt Developments PLC IT director, says, "The management of all this information is now both smoother and far more efficient. The overall result is the seamless sharing of information between our Sales, Construction and Marketing Teams. We are now far more responsive in handling important marketing enquiries."

"We were awarded with the 'Most Innovative Use of Technology Award' at the U.K. Housebuilding Innovation Awards, for a mobile safety inspection application built with LANSA Integrator. Safety advisors can carry out on-site inspections, print reports for immediate action by site managers and update the corporate system in real time. The data is also logged and tracked via a Web Portal", continues Braithwaite.

"Using LANSA has allowed us to integrate our systems in to a single extensive and scalable platform. Our systems are no longer locked in a back-office environment. The facility to use mobile devices will enable faster and smoother communication between our mobile work force and regional offices. More importantly it makes us a safer employer and company to work with."

Technology Proof Development

"Our business decision in 1996 was to get a development tool that we could use to rapidly develop 5250 applications and would also offer portability to a PC environment. We chose LANSA for Windows, which evolved to the more graphical Visual LANSA," says Astbury.

"In the years that we have been using LANSA, we have seen many technologies emerge and disappear. LANSA always stayed ahead and made good decisions about which technologies to adopt."

"The LANSA Object Repository assists us greatly with putting in place the business rules and ensuring that our data model is correct. We are big believers in the repository approach. With LANSA, we create quality applications quickly. Maintenance is easy as well."

"LANSA allows us to respond very quickly to business changes, quicker than we could in any other development environment," concludes Astbury.

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