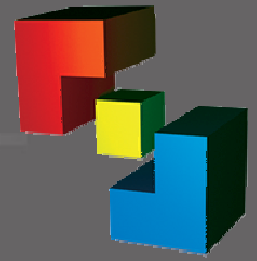




Case Study AXA Financial Inc.



Identity Management Solutions

Faced with the daunting challenge of providing partners with critical information from numerous sources internally, AXA Financial, Inc. approached award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner **The Henson Group, Inc. (THG)** to design a custom solution that would enable it to extract information from its Microsoft Metadirectory Services 2.2 databases.



AXA FINANCIAL

Project Vitals

Industry: Financial Services

Customer Profile: With more than \$450 billion in assets under management, AXA Financial, Inc. is one of the world's premier financial services organizations.

Business Situation: A processing challenge arose in regards to how AXA uses MMS to dynamically supply third-party vendors with information about employees from the MMS metadirectory, which collects and pools all identity data from various internal repositories.

Solution: THG architected an MMS 2.2 Management Agent Script that automates the extraction of user attributes from the company's MMS hierarchy, compiling the user fields specified by each vendor.

Results: AXA Financial's senior IT management team reported that the custom MMS 2.2 Management Agent Script that THG created for the company eased administration immediately, made delegation significantly more effective, and provided a seamless way in which to effortlessly feed each vendor the full data set of information required. This script is now able to scan thru more than 18,500 AXA Financial users and extract the necessary data within seconds.

BUSINESS SITUATION

With more than \$450 billion in assets under management, AXA Financial, Inc. is one of the world's premier financial services organizations. A member of the global AXA Group, AXA Financial includes such brands as The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U.S., AXA Advisors, LLC, Alliance Capital Management L.P, Sanford C. Bernstein & Co., and its premier wholesale distribution organization, AXA Distributors, LLC.

With such a wide range of business lines and geographically diverse operations, AXA Financial relies on Microsoft Metadirectory Services 2.2 (MMS) to govern the identity management requirements that dictate how thousands of employees, partners, and customers access its IT systems.

Considering the sheer volume of directories and systems that AXA Financial has already deployed—each one of them unique, in terms of identity attributes and levels of accessibility—AXA is forced to manage a significant amount of related information in many different places. Therefore, MMS is used to provision, manage, and keep a repository of all information uniquely identifying users. This includes providing identity management-related support to network operating systems and directory services (Active Directory/Windows 2000, Novell eDirectory, SunONE/iPlanet Directory), e-mail systems (Lotus Notes and Domino), application systems (PeopleSoft), and database systems (SQL Server, Oracle).

These systems not only contained information on AXA HQ employees, but also the company's contacts, field workers, and independent advisors as well. For instance, MMS serves as a "Hire & Fire" solution, allowing AXA to quickly propagate information about newly hired employees to all systems that require identity data, and quickly perform the same processes in reverse when employees leave, while ensuring the integrity of the data. MMS also serves as the company's global address book, synchronizing mailbox information between different e-mail directories used within the company, namely Lotus Notes and iPlanet mail.

However, a processing challenge arose in regards to how AXA uses MMS to dynamically supply third-party vendors with information about employees from the MMS metadirectory, which collects and pools all identity data from the internal repositories listed above. Essentially, these vendors began requesting specific user information that needed to be extracted from AXA's MMS database in a plain text format. With each vendor requiring different information, AXA experienced significant difficulty complying with such requests, basically because it lacked an automated process for accommodating these varying requests.



With the majority of AXA Financial's infrastructure based on Microsoft technology, the company approached Microsoft for a solution. Reaffirming its confidence in The Henson Group, Inc. (THG), Microsoft recommended THG perform the project.

SOLUTION

A leading Microsoft Certified Partner based in New York and specializing in developing highly customized Microsoft-based solutions for financial services companies, THG boasts a number of top identity management IT experts fluent in MMS modification.

Working closely with AXA Financial's IT professionals, THG architected an MMS 2.2 Management Agent Script that automates the extraction of user attributes from the company's MMS hierarchy, compiling the user fields specified by each vendor. Basically, a custom MMS script and a Visual Basic script were coded to accept configuration settings from each individual vendor, specifying the exact details they wanted and retrieving that info from MMS's metadirectory. *(For clients who wish to customize or extend the capabilities of MMS 2.2, THG offers expertise using any of the languages supported by Visual Studio .NET, such as Visual Basic.NET, Visual C++.NET, Visual C#.NET, Visual J#.NET, or a third-party language such as Perl.)*

AXA's identity management technology now not only manages information by receiving identity information from the connected data sources, but makes that information more easily accessible to the many vendors that need it. For instance, healthcare insurance provider Blue Cross Blue Shield may request an AXA employee's Social Security number and full name on a weekly basis to keep its systems updated in case there is a change *(such as like someone getting married and changing names)*.

With THG's MMS 2.2 Management Agent Script in place, vendor feeds can now be automatically run daily, weekly, or monthly according to the requirements of the vendor.

RESULTS

AXA Financial's senior IT management team reported that the custom MMS 2.2 Management Agent Script that THG created for the company eased administration immediately, made delegation significantly more effective, and provided a seamless way in which to effortlessly feed each vendor the full data set of information required. This script is now able to scan thru more than 18,500 AXA Financial users and extract the necessary data within seconds.

Furthermore, THG's MMS 2.2 Management Agent Script was coded in such a way as to dynamically allow modifications in the fields being retrieved, based on the vendor's requests. Essentially, THG's solution reduces the manual work previously required to seconds.

Microsoft initially acquired the metadirectory technology AXA Financial relies on when it purchased Zoomit Corp. in 1999, renaming it and enhancing it with the release of MMS 2.2. Subsequently, Microsoft released Microsoft Identity Integration Server (MIIS) 2003, which is the next generation technology. While AXA Financial has yet to commit to a full MMS 2.2 to MIIS 2003 migration, THG provided the company with a preliminary report outlining a specific strategy based on THG's extensive product knowledge and practical deployment experience.

About The Henson Group



Founded: June, 2000

Headquarters: New York City

Consultants: 37 (including both full-time and part-time professionals)

Partners: MS, HP, IBM, Cisco, Avicode, Dell, EMC, eXc Software, K2.net, Netscaler, Network Engines

Certifications: Microsoft Gold Certified and Cisco Certified

Official Microsoft Competencies:
Advanced Infrastructure Solutions
Information Worker Solutions
Integrated E-Business Solutions
Learning Solutions
Networking Infrastructure Solutions

History: Founded by former Microsoft employees from the development teams in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services

Consultants: All MS Certified, most former Microsoft engineers, and each have a minimum of three years of vertical-specific experience

Annual Client-Retention Rate:
(2000 through 2004) 98%

Annual Client-base Growth:
(2000 through 2004) 50%

Company Description: THG is an award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner specializing in deploying Microsoft technologies for U.S. and international companies across 20 industry categories.

Founded by former Microsoft employees from the development groups in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services, THG offers clients direct access to Microsoft's product groups and technical information often not publicly available.

THG's competencies include .NET application development, infrastructure deployments, Line-Of-Business solutions, security, product training, and strategic consulting.

Delivering projects in a fraction of the time it takes competitors, THG's proprietary project management process and attention to detail consistently produces a 98% client-retention rate.

Everywhere clients need THG to be, the consultancy has operations, engineers, and partners located in countries around the world that are committed to the highest level of client satisfaction.

To learn more about THG, please visit www.HensonGroup.com. For more information on how THG can deploy this type of solution in your environment, please call 800.980.1130 or e-mail Info@HensonGroup.com.

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