

IT-Services

# Billing & Loyalty Systems (BLS)

Efficient software development

## Background

Billing & Loyalty Systems (BLS) is an innovative IT solution provider for all areas of customer management. The main focus of its services is directed at customer lifecycle management, consisting of billing management, loyalty management and supporting customer relationship management. BLS supports its customers along the entire IT process chain: from the initial concepts through product introduction on to full operation.

BLS was formed in October 2004, emerging from the billing division of Vodafone Information Systems, and today is wholly owned by Loyalty Partner, a leading customer management enterprise that runs the biggest German bonus programme PAYBACK, for example. While Loyalty Partner generated sales of 159 million euros in 2006 with around 300 employees, there are currently some 50 staff working at BLS.

## The Challenge

As an IT service provider for its chief shareholder Loyalty Partner, but also for other customers, BLS is constantly taking on new development tasks. On the one hand there are always new releases of existing systems in the pipeline. On the other, BLS is also continually developing entire new systems from the ground up.

There are primarily two factors that are crucial to the success of BLS's services and the solutions that it supplies: firstly the pace of software development must be competitive. At the same time, though, the quality of the supplied products must not be allowed to suffer despite the speed of the work – especially, too, if BLS is expanding the software concerned and adapting it to meet new requirements.



## The Solution

This is why BLS puts its faith not only in systematic quality assurance that is independent of the development process but also in the automation of testing with the aid of tools. When BLS for example expands its in-house billing system Billit, the great majority of the tests for the new version run simply at the press of a button. In this case, quality assurance is downstream of development. The experts perform the software checks on the finished components via the user interfaces of the billing system.

In a major new project, involving development of a new loyalty solution, BLS moved the testing and automation of the testing further forward in the project cycle. Quality assurance now takes place in parallel with implementation, with tests on the development server. The tool chosen by BLS for automation of the (repeat) tests was SQS-TEST®/Professional from SQS Software Quality Systems AG. The tool properties that clinched it for SQS-TEST®/Professional were these:

- The tool is based on the wide-ranging experience gained over many years by the European market leader in services surrounding software quality management and software testing.
- The tool offers a great variety of opportunities for integration, with standardised interfaces for all commonly used software development and software testing tools.
- SQS-TEST®/Professional provides a powerful tool specifically for tests performed directly on the development server. Users find numerous functions which enable them to reuse previously executed tests. In the upcoming version of the test solution, SQS will also enable the reuse of test data as standard.
- Thanks to the modular technology of SQS-TEST®/Professional, testers are able to put their jobs together very quickly.

## The Benefits

- Test expenditure was reduced by around 30 per cent compared with the manual approach.
- The development team always delivered the respective product components at the agreed time, in some cases actually ahead of schedule.
- The delivered systems always matched the required quality.
- BLS did not have to expand the quality assurance department despite substantial additional tasks.
- The quality experts and development engineers can concentrate on their daily business while the actual tests run largely on an automated basis and over night.
- BLS achieved a test automation level of about 90 per cent in a new, large-scale Java project.
- Because the test runs on the server, the BLS project team detects errors significantly earlier, avoiding the need for repair work late in the day – which is therefore also costly.
- The repeat tests run automatically and smoothly, even when system components have been expanded to include numerous extensive functions.

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