

BGE HOME is a consumer products and services company based in Baltimore, MD. The company is the largest HVAC, appliance, and electronics repair firm in the region. BGE Home operates ten home appliance and electronic retail stores in Maryland that successfully compete against national chain "Big Box" consumer products companies. BGE HOME is an affiliate of Baltimore Gas and Electric Company.

Focus on growth and scalability

The combination of company growth, an expanding customer base, and a broad range of services prompted BGE HOME to look carefully at emerging technologies as it selected a new programming standard (J2EE) and database platform (Oracle) that was appropriate to its unique business requirements.

The first development effort to use one of these standards (J2EE) was WebServ, a browser-based program that would improve customer satisfaction and allow customer service representatives (and others) to schedule and monitor service calls more effectively. BGE HOME customer service reps process over 1,000,000 phone calls a year and schedule 100,000 service calls for its 250,000+ customers.

WebServ powers customer service

The new WebServ application would replace the proprietary CICS-based system and allow anyone on the BGE HOME Windows NT network (customer service reps, service dispatchers, call center customer care managers, and retail store staff) to schedule and view service calls for customers. This was an improvement over the CICS system that was only used by the call center and others with mainframe access.

Seeking a technology partner

BGE HOME needed a technology services partner with industry expertise, strong project management capabilities and sound J2EE capabilities. BGE HOME selected HMG Technologies to provide overall project management, technical architecture and software development, technical infrastructure advisement, business analysis, test plan development, and task management of all project resources.

HMG developed and delivered the architectural framework and the custom application software within five months. Additionally, HMG trained the BGE HOME IT staff and transitioned maintenance responsibility to BGE HOME's internal organization, minimizing cost and exposure. The baseline J2EE application and technical architecture designed by HMG (an implementation of the Model-View-Controller (MVC pattern)) has provided BGE HOME with a flexible, reusable, testable, extensible, and component-driven architecture that will serve as the basis for all J2EE development.

Technologies

Java/J2EE Development Framework; IBM WebSphere Application Server; JDBC; IBM MQ Series middleware; XML, Oracle, IBM DB2/UDB, Microsoft SQL Server, and CICS/COBOL; IBM VisualAge for Java (3.5); Borland JBuilder 5.0; Dreamweaver; Microsoft VisualStudio and Visual SourceSafe.