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Mike Wylie, Section Manager
- Supply Chain
Nissan Europe,
Systems Development



Nissan chooses innovative IT solutions from hyfinity

When Nissan Europe decided to re-engineer its supply chain systems they set themselves an aggressive target of reducing pipeline stock by 30%, while improving lead-times by 30%. hyfinity, a company with an innovative approach to building and deploying large distributed solutions, was taken on board as a partner to develop a key element of the solution – the *Nissan Vehicle Order System (NIVOS)*. The multi-lingual solution, complete with powerful track and trace facilities, is already helping Nissan to achieve its ambitious business objectives.

“Like so many multinational operations with manufacturing plants in different parts of Europe, plus a network of national distributors and dealership chains, our legacy IT solutions were disparate. The systems couldn’t provide real-time visibility across the supply chain,” explains Mike Wylie, Section Manager - Supply Chain Nissan Europe, Systems Development. “Hence our initiative, Supply Chain Optimisation for Partners *in Europe* (SCOPE). hyfinity was selected to develop the dealer-linked applications as a thin-client solution, allowing deal-

ers to perform searches for a specific model, review their own pipeline, explore availability from other dealers and place orders - providing, what is believed to be, the first real-time build-to-order system in the volume automotive sector. We chose hyfinity because of their integration skills as well as their approach to developing distributed systems that are fast and easy to roll out. Just as important, was the fact that they shared our own philosophy of ‘teamwork’ when working on such projects.”

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The system is already live in a number of languages – German, Italian, French, Spanish, English and Dutch. Mike comments: “hyfinity’s approach to multi-lingual systems meant that roll-out was very fast. Adding a new language can be done at country level, without any IT skills, using a prompting technique that is as simple as cutting and pasting local language phrases. Implementation of the software across country boundaries is no longer part of the critical path.” As an added complication, hyfinity has to accommodate two different browsers to meet Nissan’s own corporate standards and those of Renault, who have an alliance with Nissan. “Rather than having two parallel systems, though, hyfinity developed a single solution that seamlessly incorporates both Netscape and MS Browser. Again, the objective was simplicity.”

From concept, the comprehensive NIVOS solution was developed to talk via middleware to Nissan’s mainframe as an integral part of the overall SCOPE solution.

There have been benefits all along the way, as Mike explains: “Dealers benefit because they now have a comprehensive view of what is available and when – improving their service to customers. Feedback from dealers has been very positive, even in countries where dealers already had web-based systems. Nissan benefits by making better use of pipeline stock and by being able to move more production into a build-to-order regime.”

“The hyfinity quote offered good value for money and I am delighted to say that roll-out was completed to schedule without NIVOS be-

ing a constraint. They can be flexible, which is necessary in the real world. As an example, after the initial specs had been drawn up, we needed to change the whole look-and-feel of the system to accommodate new requirements from our marketing and branding people. hyfinity were able to do this in a matter of days. We also hit a connectivity problem outside their remit, which meant that it was not possible to move into the testing phase when we needed. Their reaction was to develop a low cost, innovative simulator that mimicked input and output to the mainframe, allowing us to continue testing without having to wait for the connectivity issues to be resolved. It all comes back to the way that both Nissan and hyfinity like to work. They are very professional and they adopted a Nissan methodology, working as part of the team, rather than as suppliers. That’s the real secret of success.”

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hyfinity specialises in XML and Web Services technology, enabling rapid construction of distributed Business Solutions.

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