Helping Siemens achieve high performance with a state-of-the-art data management solution based on Microsoft technologies

Siemens AG is a global powerhouse in electronics and electrical engineering, as well as the world’s leading provider of eco-friendly technologies. Operating in the industry, energy and healthcare sectors, Siemens employs more than 400,000 people around the world. For the 2009 fiscal year, the company reported revenues of €76.7 billion (~US$106.3 billion).

**Business challenge**
Like other companies engaged in active portfolio management, Siemens applies sophisticated risk management practices to help guide decisions related to business acquisitions or divestitures. For Siemens, effective risk management depends on having the right information, in the right granularity, at the right moment to assess the
situation and take appropriate action. This means the company continually looks for ways to strengthen its data management capability. As an example, Siemens recently set out to develop a system that would allow real-time, cross-business information search and retrieval via an easy-to-operate interface.

For help in developing such a capability, Siemens turned to Accenture. Several factors influenced the decision, including Accenture's extensive experience in building complex data management systems and its rigorous project management capabilities. Also important was Accenture's long-standing relationship with Siemens. Over the years, Accenture had repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to helping Siemens become a high-performance business.

**How Accenture helped**

Accenture recognized that Siemens' new search and retrieval system needed to meet several key requirements, including strong data security, interoperability and scalability. In addition to accommodating scanned paper archives from various businesses and locations, the system needed to integrate a huge volume of electronic documents—from contracts and order confirmations to product information—that constituted at least 100 terabytes of data. Importantly, the solution needed to be based on Microsoft SharePoint technologies, which were used throughout Siemens to manage enterprise content.

Accenture tapped Avanade—a company majority owned by Accenture with unique insights and expertise in Microsoft technologies—to co-design and co-develop an innovative search, retrieval and archiving system. The joint team, in close collaboration with Siemens' IT organization, ultimately decided to integrate the FAST RetrievalWare enterprise search engine into Siemens' existing environment, using Microsoft SharePoint as the Web portal. RetrievalWare software from FAST, a Microsoft subsidiary, emphasized natural language processing, statistical relevance ranking and semantic networks to improve search accuracy. It also included several notable features such as a strong security model, document categorization and multi-lingual search. With the integration of the intelligent search engine complete, the Accenture and Avanade team selected a NetApp® storage solution to serve as the long-term data repository.

Compliance conformity was particularly important to the decision-makers at Siemens. As a result, the team made user monitoring a fundamental component of the solution. The moment an employee signs into the new system, his or her actions are logged. Most users are now granted read-only access rights in the SharePoint portal, meaning that data can not be altered retroactively. Also important was knowledge transfer. The team documented the overall solution to help Siemens' IT professionals understand the system's administrative and technical components. This effort helped ensure that Siemens would be able to extend the data search and retrieval solution to new businesses, as needed.

Throughout the solution's design and development, the Accenture and Avanade team applied the Accenture Delivery Methods to help ensure the project was managed in a highly productive, reliable, predictable and cost-effective manner.

**High performance delivered**

With the help of Accenture and Avanade, the electronics and electrical engineering giant has developed a highly innovative and effective approach to finding and retrieving the information. With this new capability, Siemens is better positioned to mitigate risks associated with active portfolio management. It is also enabling Siemens to act like a high-performance business. The company's decision to make data management a cornerstone of its risk management activities is supported by the most recent Accenture Global Risk Management Study. That study suggested companies with the most advanced risk management capabilities have also attained a high degree of granularity in the risk data that supports their information reporting and decision making.

The new Microsoft SharePoint-based solution offers several advantages:

- **Usability.** The new system's exceptional ease of use keeps the time and effort required to train employees to a minimum. A short, five-minute demonstration is all it takes to understand the system's numerous information search and retrieval features.

- **Speed.** When searching the data material, a result now appears within seconds. Before the Accenture and Avanade team implemented the new system, searches used to take several minutes—with no guarantee that the desired information would be found.
• Effectiveness. The system enables fast, full-text searches across multiple data inventories. It also provides an opportunity for users to define specific data inventories precisely. This is not always necessary, however. By using fuzzy logic, even vague queries can yield desired results. What’s more, preliminary or complete searches can be saved or forwarded to an authorized colleague.

• Scalability. The solution is highly scalable, capable of handling large numbers of user groups and petabytes of data.

• Security. Access rights are strictly enforced. The new system enables monitoring of activities regarding data search and browsing. It displays executed search inquiries, as well as detailed information regarding which documents were retrieved and downloaded when and by whom.

These benefits have been fully embraced by the Siemens team. According to Thomas Kippe, project manager at Siemens, “The team from Avanade and Accenture did a first-rate job. The quick search function and practical features surpassed our expectations.” Mr. Kippe’s enthusiasm is an indicator that the new system is doing what it was intended to do. In addition to being a highly effective tool for information management, the solution is giving Siemens’ managers the piece of mind of knowing that any information that might be needed—even years down the road—can be easily and quickly retrieved.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 236,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$25.5 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2011. Its home page is www.accenture.com.