

Countrywide Financial Corporation Migrates to .NET, Improving Performance, Stability, and Customer Service

Keane Helps Mortgage Administrator Stay on Top as Financial Services Innovator

Abstract

To support its commitment to superior customer service, Countrywide Financial Corporation decided to migrate its Global Origination System from an obsolete Quasi-J2EE implementation to the stable, scalable Microsoft .NET platform. To meet Countrywide's needs, Keane collaborated with Countrywide architects and developed a ground-breaking technology solution — enabling Countrywide to port the application to .NET without interrupting customer service. With Keane's solution, Countrywide gained a significant time-to-market advantage, increased the stability and scalability of one of its most critical applications and, ultimately, enhanced its ability to serve its customers.

Client

Founded in 1969, Countrywide Financial Corporation (Countrywide) is a leading provider of consumer and business-to-business financial services in domestic and international markets. Headquartered in Calabasas, California, Countrywide is a member of the S&P 500, Forbes 500, and Fortune 500. In 1999, Countrywide established Global Home Loans (GHL), a subsidiary created to provide mortgage processing and

servicing to third-party customers in the United Kingdom. GHL is now the UK's largest end-to-end third party mortgage administrator, receiving nearly 23,000 applications per month and servicing over 760,000 loans valued at nearly £5 billion. GHL's core activities are supported by two mission-critical systems — the Global Origination System (which leads the borrower through the home loan application process) and the Global Servicing System (which handles payments going forward, for the lifetime of the loan).

Challenge

To continue its commitment to customer service and advance its position as a financial services innovator, Countrywide needed to ensure that GHL's Global Origination System was architected on a scalable, maintainable platform that could support its long-term growth initiatives. The system's current Java platform had been rendered obsolete, so Countrywide decided to migrate the system to the Microsoft .NET infrastructure — a set of Microsoft software technologies that ensure greater system interoperability and improve the management of applications.

When it came time to select an IT partner to perform the conversion, several top software solution providers said that the systems would need to be "frozen" while the conversion took place, while others said the applications would need to be rearchitected entirely. For Countrywide — a company built on providing the highest levels of service every day — an interruption in service was out of the question. Countrywide continued its search for an IT partner that could

"Our move to the .NET platform is a key initiative that will enable us to stay at the forefront of the financial services industry. Keane's expertise in converting from multiple platforms to .NET, combined with its project management experience, made Keane the ideal partner."

Jim Pierce, Executive Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, Countrywide Global Technology

develop a workable solution — and selected Keane.

Keane has worked with Countrywide Financial since 1995, on a variety of projects, across multiple divisions. For this initiative, Jim Pierce, executive vice president and chief technology officer, Countrywide Global Technology, had a vision to abstract the display page, business, and data objects — allowing the business to add functionality while the port to the new technology was being done "under the covers."

Solution

To meet Countrywide's needs, Keane collaborated with Countrywide architects and came up with an architecture that would enable the application to be ported in phases:

- First, Keane piloted a pass-through from the Java platform to Microsoft .NET and back from the Microsoft .NET to the Java platform.
- Then, the team built a "data abstraction layer" — that pulled out the complexities for the application developers, making it easier for them to port.

"Keane was able to do what others said couldn't be done. I'm amazed at the elegance and simplicity of their solution. They were not only innovative — they were fast."

Richard Jones, Managing Director and, Chief Information Officer, Countrywide Financial Corporation

Client Story: International Financial Services Provider

- Next, we built a series of tools that ported the Quasi-J2EE code to the Microsoft .NET equivalents. These tools significantly enhanced the productivity of Keane's developers by converting basic types and constructs.
- Once the code was converted, the team built the appropriate pass-through and integrated it with the rest of the application.

With this approach, Keane was able to port the entire application workflow by workflow, feature by feature, and component by component, which eliminated the need to freeze the application while conversion takes place. The result? Countrywide has the

ability to add ongoing features and functionality to the Global Origination System — while it is being ported from its original platform to the .NET platform — without any interruption in customer service.

Benefit

Countrywide gained a tremendous time-to-market advantage, as Keane's approach enabled the team to convert components more quickly than originally projected. The application is scalable and, since the amount of code has been reduced, it is maintainable. Countrywide is already seeing dramatic performance improvements, including better throughput. With the new system,

GHL's customers will also benefit from significantly improved levels of service and quality.

Keane's approach, techniques, and tools, will also enable Countrywide to seamlessly port other applications — making it significantly easier to achieve its enterprise-wide initiative of migrating all applications to the .NET platform. As this goal is achieved, Countrywide will retain its position as a savvy, ebusiness innovator, while keeping superior customer service as its top priority.

Keane is a global services firm that specializes in enabling transformation of its clients' business and IT functions.