



Ameren Corporation Powers Legacy Customer Data Integration for Smooth Merger & Acquisition Transition with Informatica Enterprise Data Integration Platform

CHALLENGE

Convert and migrate large volumes of legacy data, through a standardized and reusable platform, to achieve a single view of customer information

INFORMATICA SOLUTION

- Informatica PowerCenter®

BENEFITS

- Reduced data migration costs by 30 percent
- Established repeatable, automated migration processes
- Delivered reliable and high quality converted data
- Improved customer service, marketing, and field operations

NUTS AND BOLTS

- Data Integration: Informatica PowerCenter
- Sources: IBM OS/390 mainframe, DB2 database
- Target: Oracle database
- Platform: HP rp8400, sixteen 875 MHz CPUs, 64GB RAM, HP-UX

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— Eric Middleton, Senior Manager, Accenture

Ameren Corporation, based in St. Louis, Missouri, has 2.3 million electric and 900,000 natural gas customers in Missouri and Illinois and is the second-largest utility in Illinois. It was created in 1997 by the merger of Union Electric and CIPS Inc. Ameren has 9,400 employees and net generating capacity of 15,200 megawatts.

The Challenge

When Ameren acquired CILCORP Inc., the parent company of Central Illinois Light Company, in January 2003, its task was not just to continue delivering reliable electric and natural gas service to CILCORP’s 275,000 customers and create value for shareholders. It also needed to rapidly integrate large, diverse volumes of CILCORP legacy data into its customer information system.

Ameren had faced a similar challenge in 1997 when it was created by the merger of Union Electric and CIPS Inc. In partnership with systems integration consultant Accenture, Ameren embarked on an extensive project to convert and migrate legacy data covering commercial, industrial, and residential customers into a single customer information system, called CUSTOMER/1.

The data movement mechanism selected -- hand-coding a suite of more than 100 COBOL modules -- required intensive and costly development. In addition, data conversion processes ran slowly, legacy information was fraught with data integrity problems, and processes were not easily repeatable. While yielding positive results, it proved to be a less than optimal solution for a missioncritical customer information system covering order processing, billing, accounts receivable, meter reading, customer inquiry, cash processing, and more.

To integrate the CILCORP data in 2003, Ameren and Accenture began exploring data integration software from Informatica and other vendors to:

- Integrate all systems within a one-year timeframe
- Reduce development cost over COBOL hand-coding
- Access nearly 10 business system interfaces and mainframe data
- Deliver scalability and performance for large 100GB+ data volumes
- Create a reusable, automated system for future projects

Compared to earlier COBOL processes, PowerCenter's superior data visibility enabled the team to refine the data and reduce volume from 100GB to 48GB, for a total of 80 million source rows and 100 source tables.

The Solution

After rigorous proof-of-concept testing, Ameren and Accenture selected Informatica PowerCenter for the legacy conversion and migration. PowerCenter passed the most challenging of internal tests, and offered ubiquitous data access, an intuitive GUI with point-and-click capability, and prebuilt templates and mappings suitable for reuse.

In addition, Accenture and Informatica had been partners since 1999, with more than 200 shared customers and experience at over 150 joint data integration projects. The partnership resulted in reduced cost for hardware and software because of Accenture's SolutionWorks, an integrated system based in St. Petersburg, Florida. Focused on the utilities industry, it is comprised of PowerCenter, HP hardware, and skilled Accenture professionals.

A joint eight-member Accenture/Ameren conversion development team found PowerCenter to be an ideal environment to migrate 90 tables, based on more than 150 mappings, from CILCORP's IBM OS/390 mainframe and its DB2 database. Roughly 100GB of CILCORP production tables were extracted as flat files to an Oracle-based staging area prior to loading into a target Oracle database.

In the staging area, developers used PowerCenter to build business rules that filtered unwanted data, such as old written-off accounts. Compared to earlier COBOL processes, PowerCenter's superior data visibility enabled the team to refine the data and reduce volume from 100GB to 48GB, for a total of 80 million source rows and 100 source tables.

"PowerCenter was vital in enabling Accenture to minimize cost and risk for Ameren, and bring this challenging project in under budget and within our allotted 11-month timeframe," said Eric Middleton, Accenture senior manager. PowerCenter integrated easily with Accenture's methodologies for data mapping, conversion suite development, testing, and deployment, and helped reduce "lag time" by enabling multiple steps to be executed in parallel. PowerCenter also provided:

Flexible Performance Tuning: PowerCenter's rich set of performance tuning technologies enabled the team to optimize performance at the mapping and code level. Using only some of the tuning options available, the team realized a 20 percent improvement in load times.

Improved Data Quality: PowerCenter error handling mechanisms and a set of customized controls let the team easily and rapidly pinpoint data problems and reconcile across common business metrics such as meters, customers, and accounts receivable.

Data-Driven Business Alignment: PowerCenter supported creation of "code tables" in which the team communicated to business users in Excel spreadsheets all possible values for data elements, such as billing rates. Business users could then define the elements and map inputs to outputs to ensure standardization between IT and business.

After the success of the CILCORP project, Informatica PowerCenter has become the enterprise data integration standard for Accenture engagements at Ameren and plays a vital role in leveraging enterprise information to drive revenue, build customer loyalty, and meet new regulatory requirements. With it, Ameren can respond with speed, agility, and precision to future data integration challenges.

The Results

Reduced Data Migration Costs by 30 Percent

With PowerCenter and Accenture's SolutionWorks, Ameren has reduced by 30 percent the costs of data migration compared to hand-coding COBOL modules. PowerCenter's intuitive point-and-click GUI and short learning curve mean that fewer developers can create more migrations in less time. The Florida-based SolutionWorks, with PowerCenter on an HP server, spared Ameren software and hardware investment and minimized on-site consulting costs.

Established Repeatable, Automated Migration Processes

In 2004, Ameren again leveraged PowerCenter and Accenture when it acquired the Illinois Power Company for \$2.3 billion. Reusable mappings and processes developed for the CILCORP migration were easily modified to convert and migrate some 50GB of data on Illinois Power's 650,000 electric and natural gas customers to Ameren's CUSTOMER/1 customer information system. The initiative, achieved under budget and within an allotted 11-month timeframe, reinforced the value of a repeatable, automated data migration system.

Delivered Reliable and Highquality Converted Data

With PowerCenter, Ameren realized a significant improvement in data integrity compared to COBOL processes. In the past, errors would often be detected late in the process, or worse, after conversion was complete. This could jeopardize datadependent functions such as billing, metering information, and customer communications. The Informatica-driven system generated data that was fully auditable to help meet internal standards and regulatory demands.

Improved Customer Service, Marketing, and Field Operations

By rapidly integrating customer information from newly-acquired utilities, Ameren realizes tangible bottom-line dividends by enhancing its customer relationship management initiatives and reducing churn in a deregulated marketplace that allows customers a choice of several utility providers. PowerCenter-driven data quality efforts help ensure that customers receive accurate, consistent information that fortifies Ameren's credibility and brand. The integrated legacy data also supports the merger of duplicate operations between Ameren and its acquired companies.



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