

Swisscom Strategic order management for large companies



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CONSOLE

Allegro – Strategic order management for large companies

How does an Information & Communication Technology (ICT) service provider manage to meet new customer requirements for modern communication services? Swisscom Corporate Business took up this challenge in partnership with Ergon with the goal of bringing solutions for large companies to the market more quickly and more efficiently than the competition.

Innovative solutions – quick to the market

One of Swisscom Corporate Business ambitions is to always bring innovative solutions to the market. They choose from the broad range of services in all Swisscom and partner business fields through selection, combination and enhancement. The services should be introduced efficiently and made available regardless of device or network, interruption-free and across all access networks. An example for this is the “Managed Service” offer UCC (Unified Communication & Collaboration) for unlimited communication and cooperation including voice and video telephony, instant messaging and desktop sharing.

From the idea to the solution

How do you go from an idea to a platform in keeping with the demands of a state-of-the-art and agile ICT service provider? To react to market changes or even stay a step ahead of the market, products and services must be tailored to the individual needs of the customer and at the same time production must be highly automated as with an assembly line.

The model industry here is the car industry. Different model series are manufactured using standard components and modular assemblies which the customer can then individually configure. Standardisation and component reusability make this possible in the first place.

The main challenge with this approach is to bring together the different services and offers from separate production silos. The following aspects were especially important for the solution:

- **Organisation:** The gradual conversion of your own delivery organisation towards an ICT factory
- **Product management:** Simple expansion and combination of offers
- **IT:** The introduction of a powerful and flexible Business Enablement Suite (BES), which contains design/modellings in addition to a central product catalogue.

Central product catalogue as common reference

To realise a Business Enablement Suite to cover the areas mentioned, Swisscom entered into strategic partnership with Ergon Informatik AG at the beginning of 2010. The cooperation began with preliminary studies and architecture workshops. During this process, Ergon brought to the table its experience with the business support system “Taifun”, a system used by several ICT service providers in Europe. Taifun is based on the idea of a product catalogue which serves as a common reference across all phases of the end-to-end process.

In the first phase the conceptual work for Ergon was to identify and standardise the basic functionalities of the overall solution (internally called Allegro) and to integrate it into a common overriding architecture.



“Allegro is the order management platform for Swisscom’s corporate business division. It is responsible for continuous processes from the quote to the bill which can be processed in a single system without changing format. The customer is the focus – and Allegro makes it possible for new and innovative solutions such as Managed Communication & Collaboration (MCC) to be offered and produced.”

Urs Lehner, Head of Marketing & Sales

Three principles have been followed right from the start:

“**Configuring instead of encoding**”: This allows Swisscom to configure all elements of the product design independently without having to rely on a software release.

“**Modular design**” means that Swisscom can continue to develop new high-quality services from a set of standardised and high-quality re-useable service components. At the lowest level of the hierarchy a service component is a delivery object of the ICT factory that contains information for controlling the value added chain.

The “**separation of commercial and technical aspects**” of a product: By doing this, the commercial quote to a customer can be created and changed regardless of the technical implementation. The principle also takes into account the different time involved for a change process, which is much more at the level of a production unit than on the marketing and sales level.

What came out of it was a modular business enablement suite focussed on the service fulfilment process and consisting of the components Product Management, Order Entry and Order Management. The solution is based on eTOM (enhanced Telecom Operations Map) and SID (Shared Information and Data) – both are recognised and widely supported components of the TM Forum Framework. eTOM is a generic process model to standardise and categorise process elements in the sense of a service-oriented architecture (SOA).

SID, also known as Information Framework,

- contains a common vocabulary from the business standpoint to describe management information
- covers all information necessary to implement the business processes of an ICT service provider
- reduces the risk and costs of integration through common terminology, standardised interfaces and by using standardised information and data models
- accelerates and simplifies the market launch (time-to-market) for new products and services by eliminating data conversions and separating product aspects (marketing, order management and production).

Product Management is the core of the software solution. It is a product lifecycle management system with one central product catalogue enabling real time processing of product information. The product catalogue implements and expands the SID reference model and offers a versatile and high-quality expandable building kit for the product manager. The hierarchical product model comprises all commercial and technical aspects of a product – in short, everything necessary to successfully offer, order, produce and invoice the product on the market.

“Ergon’s challenge was to determine the complex business logic of Swisscom Corporate Business and to incorporate it into one overriding business process across the entire value added chain. This required a very clearly structured process, both analytically and technically.”

Hans-Jürg Schneider, Chief Operating Officer at Ergon

Self-service for customers

One of Swisscom’s requirements was to integrate its customers into the value added chain: Customers can enter and change their master data and orders on their own in the self-care portal as well as check order statuses. Thanks to product and configuration rules, the software solution created by Ergon guides customers through the order entry process, creating complete and validated customer orders.

Then, each customer order is broken down into service components with the help of decomposition rules. The individual service components are built, configured, activated and delivered by different service platforms, production operations and suppliers (“factories”). An orchestration process ensures the coordination of internal and external factories in the service delivery process. Once services have been activated, all relevant information is stored in one commercial inventory where customers can view it directly. The commercial inventory is the basis for the change process and foundation for correct and transparent billing of services to the customer.



“Ergon decided on a technologically new edition of the tried and true Taifun components and uses the Java™ Enterprise Edition based on many years of experience. The information, data and process models are based on the established industry standards SID and eTOM.”

Martin Rechsteiner, Allegro Head Architect at Ergon

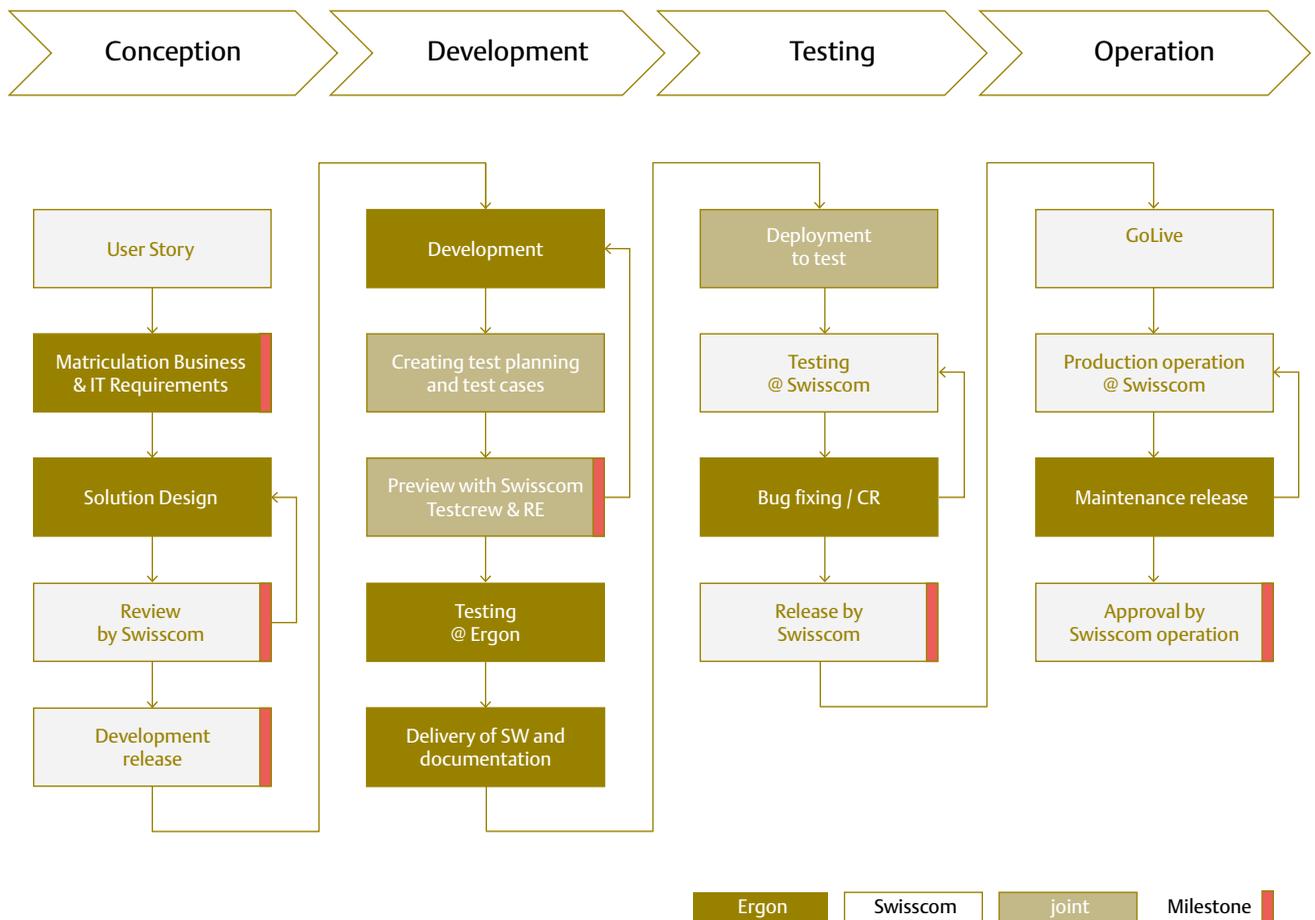
Well organised – much achieved

In partnership with Swisscom, Ergon managed to implement the ambitious goals and meet the high expectations through mutual project management characterised by professionalism. Since the start of the project in 2010 Allegro has developed into a superb software and organisation development project.

For its projects, Ergon uses an established project methodology, comprehensive quality assurance measures and a clearly defined change and risk management. Project handling takes place in close cooperation with the customer. At all times, the Ergon project information system shows the current situation of the project and what measures are necessary.

Today, Ergon has around 40 employees working for Allegro. They are organised into agile teams throughout the project phases conception, development, testing and operation. For each phase there is a clear division of roles between Swisscom and Ergon. Clear conditions (quality gates) are defined as to how a delivery object may be passed on to the next phase.

Photo 2 Martin Rechsteiner, Allegro Head Architect, for the design of the data model



Project phases

In the conception phase, solution concepts are developed from the requirements (user stories) of Swisscom. They describe the subsequent delivery objects and together with Swisscom are compiled into releases and put into the schedule. Developers are involved right from the conception phase. This leads to a solid understanding of requirements and a strong relation to the solution.

In the development phase, Ergon relies on a structured method, open, active communication as well as comprehensive quality assurance measures. In addition to version control for the software code, workflow-supported communication (ticketing system) and regular reviews, Ergon relies on constant monitoring of the functionality with unit tests, performance tests as well as system and regression tests. Ergon tests based on the acceptance criteria defined in the solution concepts through automated tests (continuous integration) and manually by an internal testing team. Ongoing monitoring of interim results guarantees that the final result fully corresponds to customer requirements.

The releases developed by Ergon are checked and approved by the customer with the delivery to the Swisscom test system. Swisscom is involved in the quality assurance process. Thanks to constant and direct contact between the Ergon and Swisscom testers, problems can be detected early on and efficiently resolved.

Once the approval comes from Swisscom, the releases are applied to productive operation. Ergon makes available documentation for the operation and configuration of the supplied systems for each deployment.

Customer benefits

- Thanks to Allegro, Swisscom Corporate Business can
- efficiently manage products and services based on different types of basic services,
 - massively shorten the time period leading up to the market launch for convergent offers,
 - and improve efficiency in production.

“The ICT service provider of the future must see himself more and more as a service enabler for his customers’ businesses. In this role the focus is on the aggregation, integration and enhancement of products and services provided by the ICT Service Provider as well as by external partners.”

Dominik Moser, VP Telecom Solution at Ergon



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smart people – smart software

Ergon Informatik AG is a leading Swiss software development company for customised applications and advanced software products. Ergon employees are excellent IT specialists who focus intensely on customer benefits. They anticipate technology trends and develop solutions that provide a distinct competitive edge.

The company was founded in 1984 and has 190 employees. In 2012 Ergon was presented with the “Swiss Employer Award” and the “ICT Education and Training Award”. In 2008 it was the first company to receive the “SwissICT Champion Award”.

For more information visit: www.ergon.ch