A Case Study in Entitlement Management

THE CLIENT
The client is a major player in a highly competitive, global industry that drives almost every facet of modern life and commerce. With more than 100,000 employees worldwide, this company generates tens of billions in revenue each year. The company is active in building global standards, funds extensive research and development, and is a leader in driving sustainability and socially responsible business practices.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE
Both hardware and software offerings are major segments of the company’s core business and it has grown based on the continuous, fast-paced changes in those closely-tied industries. However, several years ago the company recognized the growing importance of their software business and saw an opportunity to define a vision that would help transform the company. This came at a time when hardware margins began to steadily decline and the demand for highly customized hardware offerings, which were a mainstay of the company’s business, began to give way to standardization as the industry norm.

One issue the company faced was their customer satisfaction, which at times was tenuous. This was based in part on a highly intricate order process that, by necessity of the customization, required heavy planning and input from customers and a judgment call on exactly what features would be needed and in what configuration to meet far-reaching future needs. Due to the build-to-order model, customers typically waited weeks for each order to be processed and delivered.

The Poetic database has become a source of almost unlimited improvement opportunities.
Leaning on the high integration of its products, it became clear that one option could be to shift much of the customization of its products from build-to-order hardware to software-controlled features. In fact, after closer examination of the overall software business, it became clear that there were many untapped opportunities in that segment.

Not only could they solve much of the hardware margin issue through software, but by shifting focus to better controlled management of their software unit, there was great potential for significant growth and long-term stability in that portion of the company’s business.

The question quickly became how to achieve a smooth migration from the custom hardware model to commercial-off-the-shelf, or “COTS,” equipment that would arrive out-of-the-box with all available features, to be selected at will by the customer and activated via software.

THE SOLUTION

ModusLink’s Entitlement Management Solution was an ideal fit for implementing and managing this change. Based on use of ModusLink’s proprietary Poetic software, the client was able to offer highly configurable and interchangeable software-based products that their customers could turn on and off in a self-service manner.

Several key attributes of Poetic helped this client fundamentally change their business operations and drive growth. First and very important is the streamlined, global nature of the software entitlement management solution. This gave the client a centralized point from which to efficiently manage all access to their valuable software-controlled product features, at anytime from anywhere. In addition to streamlining access for the client, the client’s customers also benefit from a single point of contact, no matter where around the world their hardware may be deployed.

Another key factor that makes Poetic such a solid solution for this and other clients is its highly flexible nature. The platform is easy to integrate with existing IT environments and business practices, including various commercial and homegrown security and locking technologies. It supports numerous enterprise-based operating systems, browsers and database platforms and is highly scalable according to business demand.

Finally, it’s important to note that Poetic is a proven, trusted, enterprise-class solution. With mission critical applications forming the backbone of billion-dollar businesses, there can be no doubt about the reliability of a software solution.

The introduction of Poetic has strengthened our ambition to have a unified setup and handling of our software products.
THE RESULTS

Poetic entitlement management software has enabled the client to shift to COTS hardware and reap the savings associated with across-the-board standardization on common components and configurations. They have simply eliminated the enormous expense in time and material that comes from a unique build-to-order model.

With this common hardware platform in place, all the same features that were available hardwired are now available to be turned on and off by software, giving the client’s customers far more flexibility to meet changing market demands. For the client’s customers, the solution means there is no guesswork about what features may be needed now or in the future, nor is there a need for engineers to be physically present to manually configure systems on the fly.

There are also major improvements in customer satisfaction. The client’s ability to process and deliver on software orders has decreased from several weeks to satisfying customer requests in less than an hour. Buying relationships and the ease of doing business have also changed for the better, with more flexibility and the ability to offer creative business terms for the client’s largest customers.

ModusLink’s Entitlement Management Solution based on Poetic software has quite simply helped change the client’s business model to one that is less expensive, more agile and better able to meet the dynamic requirements of its market.