hp success story

Fortis is an international financial services provider in the insurance, banking and investment markets with assets of EUR 483 billion and 69,000 employees.

Already a leading insurance company in the Netherlands, Fortis increased its share of the Dutch insurance market to 12 per cent when it merged its AMEV subsidiary with the ASR group to form the ASR Insurance Group (ASR).

The merge of AMEV operations with the ASR companies Stad Rotterdam, De Amerstoortse, De Europeesche and Woudsend has made Fortis the biggest insurer in the Benelux region and the Netherlands’ second largest insurer operating through insurance intermediaries.

hp consulting puts leading Dutch insurers on the middleware track
**large integration task**

However, merging so many companies also required the integration of many different applications running on a broad variety of platforms located in different offices around the Netherlands and serving over 10,000 employees.

“Since the ASR-group has grown by taking over other companies, every application was at least doubled which meant double maintenance and double development,” said Rolf Boers, team manager of the middleware competence centre at ASR. “It became hard to develop new product lines and there was a lot of new technology so we needed a means of opening up the systems to communicate which each other and with new technology such as Web applications and services.”

The answer chosen by ASR was to use middleware, specifically IBM MQSI and MQ series techniques.

**middleware implementation**

HP Consulting in the Netherlands was called in with a brief which included forming a middleware competence centre, establishing various procedures, setting standards for the implementation of different components, ‘selling’ the middleware solution to internal staff and running many individual projects.

“We had already used HP Consulting at both ASR and AMEV before they were merged because they offered the best quality of consulting,” added Boers. “At ASR-old (i.e. before merging with AMEV), they provided advice, architecture, project management and development services and in the beginning, this middleware project was almost entirely run by HP people.”

HP Consulting established a project team consisting of a project manager, two architects, four developers and a business consultant. The project manager and the business consultant joined the Middleware steering committee that was established within ASR. At the moment a middleware group of eight internal people, who are still supported by two HP consultants, are running many middleware projects and implementation of many forms of communication.

**set for the future**

“Having set up the middleware group, HP Consulting are still coaching our people to carry this on,” said Boers. “We have taken over most tasks ourselves and we now have a growing number of internal people who are competent, but we still lean on the experience of the HP people to develop our standards and improve our skills.

“HP Consulting know what they are talking about. They have vision and were good at positioning the technology in an organisation that was not familiar with it. They worked hard, had good ideas and really gave me the impression of an organisation that is helping you. Their work was excellent and I am very satisfied with the result.”

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**challenge**

- When Fortis group insurance subsidiary AMEV merged with the ASR insurance group, it inherited many different applications and platforms at several sites throughout the Netherlands.
- This at least doubled the IT maintenance and development burden.
- It needed to open up the systems, allowing them to communicate with each other and act as one.

**solution**

- A middleware solution was the answer and the company chose IBM MQSI and MQ series techniques.
- Training staff in the use of middleware, setting up procedures and running early projects was a huge task and HP consulting in the Netherlands were called in.
- An HP consulting team set up and ran the new infrastructure while establishing and training a middleware competence centre that could carry on the work.

**results**

- ASR now has a growing number of internal people with middleware skills.
- IT maintenance and development times will be cut in time.
- This will make ASR a more agile company, better able to meet its business goals and the needs of its customers.

**why HP?**

- The customer had already used HP consulting and were pleased with the result.
- HP consulting offered ‘the best quality of consulting’.

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Rolf Boers, team manager of the middleware competence centre, ASR Insurance Group.
customer at a glance:

industry sector: Insurance
name: ASR Insurance Group
headquarters: Rotterdam, Netherlands
founded: 2000
telephone: +31 10 448 8922
number of employees: 10,000
annual revenue: €2.6 billion (Fortis Group)
url: www.fortis.com

technology highlights:

• hp consulting services
  in the middleware space,
  including advice, architecture,
  project management and
development skills

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