

Business Opportunity: Streamline Payment Processing to Improve Financial Results

Goal: Upgrade legacy applications to .NET, accessing customer healthcare data in DB2 on the mainframe.

Why they chose DataDirect:

DataDirect Connect *for* .NET was the most streamlined solution available, allowing them to meet their goals for data access performance, scalability, and security.

Business benefits: Using Connect *for* .NET, Beverly Enterprises was able to launch the first phase of .NET applications quickly, to over 500 users. Business benefits of this project were seen immediately.

Technical benefits: DataDirect Connect *for* .NET was only .NET data provider that completely eliminates the client library middleware layer – increasing performance significantly.

“Building a .NET Framework application on a DB2 mainframe database is a challenging job, but DataDirect Connect *for* .NET was the missing puzzle piece that saved us a lot of time and money.”

Conrad Wolf
Systems Architect and Database Administrator
Beverly Enterprises, Inc.
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For more information, visit:
www.datadirect.com

Technology Problem: Finding a simple, stable way to connect a new .NET application to a legacy DB2 mainframe database

Beverly Enterprises Inc. and its operating subsidiaries provide healthcare services to the elderly across North America. For Conrad Wolf, a systems architect and database administrator for Beverly, this means managing a tremendous amount of data for over 350 nursing facilities, 18 assisted living centers, and almost 50 hospice and home care centers. As with any major healthcare provider, the ability to bill and collect payments quickly is critical. Beverly has been in business for more than 20 years, and the time had come to update some legacy applications that managed their financial and other critical systems transactions. Executive management at Beverly believed that updating these systems would directly affect their collections processes, and thus improve their bottom line results.

The first phase of this technology update was a custom-built application designed to accelerate the payment processes and streamline cash flow. Called “Service-to-Cash (S2C),” this home-grown .NET application facilitates and speeds up the accounts payable (AP) and accounts receivable (AR) processes for all of the nursing homes and other healthcare institutions in the Beverly network. Providing users a GUI front end allows them to improve workflow and accomplish more work faster and more accurately.

Conrad Wolf knows better than anyone that data management practices are under a microscope in the healthcare industry. That’s why he likes to keep things simple and streamlined, wherever possible – including in the data connectivity layer. For accessing his DB2 mainframe data from S2C, he wanted a transparent solution. Says Wolf: “I just want to be able to go out, make the call, and get the data I need. That’s all.” That meant that he did not want extra layers of middleware adding to the complexity and performance.

In searching for a streamlined connectivity solution, Wolf and his team had three additional issues in mind: Performance, Scalability, and Security. They evaluated various options, but quickly learned that the IBM offering for DB2 was not a 100% managed .NET data provider solution, and it required client library software. This added an unnecessary tier of complexity, which in turn, had negative effects on performance. “The other alternatives all added another layer to the solution. We only considered them because of the name recognition.”

Solution: High-speed access to DB2 data on the mainframe with DataDirect Connect *for* .NET

Wolf was already familiar with DataDirect, as he had been a MERANT customer in the past. He also knew that IBM has chosen DataDirect drivers for many of their other products (including IBM WebSphere, MQSeries, and Rational products), evidence that DataDirect drivers and providers are designed for critical systems like Service-to-Cash.

DataDirect Connect *for* .NET is the only ADO.NET data provider that allows the user to completely circumvent the client library layer. By operating entirely within Microsoft’s .NET CLR (client runtime library), all calls from

.NET applications to DB2 enjoy the security, stability, and performance benefits inherent in the .NET framework.

Conrad Wolf and his team are backed by DataDirect's award-winning SupportLink technical support staff. At any point in their deployment, Conrad Wolf and his team can pick up the phone and reach a technician trained specifically in .NET connectivity.

Results

Beverly Enterprises found DataDirect Connect *for* .NET easy to install and maintain, providing the speed, simplicity, and scalability to run S2C on a daily basis. The driver was such a success at streamlining payment processes that it contributed to a 22% reduction in accounts receivable, a 34% reduction in credits and a 17% reduction in days sales outstanding.

Currently, S2C application has 500 active users, and they will be scaling to 1000 users in the future, and S2C will be their business's main system. "This is a very cost efficient solution," says Wolf. "Building a .NET Framework application on a DB2 mainframe database is a challenging job, but DataDirect Connect *for* .NET was the missing puzzle piece that saved us a lot of time and money," said Wolf. "DataDirect Connect *for* .NET is truly the backbone of our S2C application, accelerating payment processes, reducing collection time and directly benefiting the bottom line."