

Integration
 in action



Businesses in Victoria get seamless access to government services

CUSTOMER

- Victorian State Government, Australia

INDUSTRY

- Government

CHALLENGE

- Integrate online services to simplify business-government interactions

OFFERING

- Transaction integration and a Single Account Framework
- Content management and collaboration system
- Content discovery and aggregation tools

BENEFITS

- Seamless access to multiple government services with single login
- Reduced operational costs and manual processing

Master Key for Businesses ■ The Victorian State Government in Australia is pulling out all stops in its efforts to make it easier for businesses to access government information and services in a timely and seamless manner. Spearheading this drive is the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD), which is responsible for encouraging business growth, securing investment, and promoting exports and tourism in Victoria. DIIRD delivers industry, investment and business assistance programmes. With offices across the state and in key cities overseas, it serves as the first point of contact between businesses and the Victorian Government.

The Victorian Business Master Key (VBMK) project was announced in 2004 as part of the Victorian Government's policy statement "Victoria: Leading the Way," to enable some 300,000 small businesses in the state easier access to the government departments they need. Led by DIIRD, with NCS as the systems integrator, the VBMK is a fully-integrated online relationship and case management system which enables businesses in Victoria to interact seamlessly with all government departments through the Business Victoria website (www.business.vic.gov.au). The AU\$6 million project, which involves one of the largest single sign-on deployments in Australia, was launched in 2004. It has since been expanded with the announcement of an additional AU\$18 million in funding through 2010.

The Challenges ■ Before the VBMK project, dealing with government departments was often confusing and time consuming for small businesses, particularly start-ups. With more than 250 government departments involved in business-related interactions, businesses may not know their compliance obligations or how to find out about them. They also encountered difficulties relating the information to their circumstances and applying it to their businesses.

To add to their difficulties, businesses often had to access content from multiple sites to gather the required information. This meant having to remember multiple logins and maintain separate accounts in order to conduct transactions with multiple departments on multiple systems.

“Government regulation is one of the major issues that small businesses raise when they talk about their concerns,” said Dominic Feik, Director of Business Services within the Office of Small Business in DIIRD.

The Solution ■ NCS developed a Single Account Framework which allows secure, seamless service delivery across all levels of government, using online technologies to simplify and streamline small business interactions with government departments.

The VBMK's single sign-on application authorisation solution is built around the complex integration of Novell e-Directory and Entrust GetAccess user authentication. It allows all user accounts associated with the Business Victoria website to be managed centrally, with the administrator maintaining control over disparate access rights. Details of authorised users of a business are stored within the Novell e-Directory and the users are authenticated for access to particular government services

Compliance-related government transactions are now made easier and seamless with a central point of access across all levels of government.

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using the Entrust GetAccess framework. The services supported by the authentication framework range from business registration to the lodgement of key information and regulatory enquiries, and may involve any or all of the three levels of government – federal, state and local.

The VBMK system is also able to make use of user information to customise the user's experience and provide personalised updates and/or alerts when there are information changes or renewals. These capabilities are built around Acumentum's Scenario Builder collaboration tool, the Netcat content management server, and Recommind's MindServer content discovery and aggregation system.

The open standards-based solution allows the VBMK to integrate with existing infrastructure while providing a platform for future system development. Using the Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) approach, standards-based applications which are developed in Java and .Net can be reused by other agencies' applications over the Internet, with very little integration effort. The agencies involved in the initial VBMK roll-out include the Australian Taxation Office, the Victorian WorkCover Authority in charge of workplace safety, Consumer Affairs Victoria, the Victoria State Revenue Office and the Victorian Small Business Commissioner.

The Benefits ■ The VBMK paves the way for the creation of a business-centric government, through providing a single point of access to more than 250 government departments and enabling businesses to interact with the various departments without prerequisite knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.

New businesses that need to leverage on the services of government departments can now do so via a single login. Web forms are also automatically filled in with user information where provided.

Compliance-related government transactions are now made easier and seamless with a central point of access across all levels of government. What this translates to, for both government departments and businesses, is increased efficiency and a reduction in operational costs and time spent on manual processing.