

## SAFECO'S SAFE BET ON ARTINSOFT'S VB TO .NET MIGRATION

### SOLUTION TO INSURE THEIR TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT

SAFECO, Microsoft® and ArtinSoft Corporation partnered to convert a large scale, real world application to Visual Basic .NET. Safeco looked into .NET to enhance performance and take advantage of the platform's improved development environment.

#### Company Overview

SAFECO is a FORTUNE 500 diversified financial services company based in Seattle, Washington. SAFECO has been in business since 1923 and has grown to be a premier provider of insurance and financial products. Its products include auto, home, life and business insurance, investments such as mutual funds, annuities and stock purchase plans; retirement plans for business, trust services and surety bonds.

SAFECO has more than 17,000 partners, including independent insurance agents, brokers, investment advisors and wholesalers. For 2001, its annual revenue was \$6.87 billion.

#### Business Challenge

All the independent agents who sell personal Auto and Home products use SAFECO's current software, Personal Lines Rating Software (PLRS), developed in Visual Basic 6.0. The company has maximized the use of its software by having remote quote and sale of its Home and Auto products. Even though the current software allows download and upload of the updated transactions using standard internet connections, the new .NET framework offered additional benefits highly desired for the superior client server services.

The PLRS software is provided to more than 10,000 agents. Thousands of quotes are done on a daily basis using PLRS, and thousands of sales are uploaded to SAFECO monthly. More sales are received at SAFECO through PLRS than any of its other sales channels or technologies.

Agents applaud the PLRS software for its ease of use, automatic self-updating, and the use of standard Internet technology. PLRS can also bridge information from a number of the popular agency management software systems that are often used in an insurance agency, making sales tracking and servicing even easier. Recognizing the great value of the current application and the need to evolve to a higher technological platform, the company decided to investigate migrating to .NET and leverage the knowledge and capital embedded in its software.

The migration was a challenge. The PLRS software consists of approximately 230,000 lines of code, 462 classes, and 580 designers. In addition it has approximately 258 reports. SAFECO wished to migrate this application to Visual Basic .NET in order to take advantage of anticipated performance enhancements on the server side, utilization of web services, better change management vs. COM, and the ability to run multiple copies of code. On the client side, SAFECO feels that .NET offers a more stable development environment than ActiveX. These two benefits added will substantially reduce Total Cost of Ownership by simplifying deployment and maintenance for more than 10,000 agents.

The challenge for SAFECO was to determine the viability of upgrading this strategic application to take advantage of the technological advantages .NET offers while retaining the valuable business logic and functionality of the PLRS software.

### **The Solution**

SAFECO, in conjunction with Microsoft, turned to ArtinSoft, the industry leading enterprise software migration and upgrade specialist. ArtinSoft developed for Microsoft the Visual Basic 6.0 to Visual Basic .NET Upgrade Wizard that is included with Visual Studio.NET, and has been working with Visual Studio .NET and the .NET framework for years.

ArtinSoft in consultation with SAFECO developed a project plan to achieve full functional equivalence of the PLRS software in Visual Studio .NET in 101 calendar days. The application port was essentially completed with an effort of 4 man-months of work. This is just a fraction of the estimated 4 man-years it would have taken to manually re-write the application from scratch. In order to optimize performance, VB6 string manipulation functions were converted to their equivalent functions in .NET and COM interop for User Controls was eliminated. A conversion project of this size (230,000 lines of code) shows the robustness of the ArtinSoft automation, and the experience of ArtinSoft's engineers to handle a "real world" application.

### **Benefits**

For SAFECO, the opportunity to migrate PLRS to the .NET platform will provide several key business benefits, including support for web services, more rapid response time, better change control to enhance to development process, and a more productive development environment. The elimination of DLL version conflicts and simplified deployment will substantially reduce TCO and downtime.

Utilizing ArtinSoft's expertise and rapid migration methodology and technology provided significant savings in both dollars and time over new development of the PLRS functionality in Visual Studio .NET.