

Atturra achieves seamless webMethods upgrade for Aurizon

Client

Aurizon

Scope of work

Data & Integration

Industry

Transportation



About the Client

Headquartered in Brisbane, Queensland, Aurizon is the world's largest rail transporter of coal from mine to port. The company was established in 2004 when the coal, bulk, and container divisions of Queensland Rail were brought under one banner as QR National.

Following a shareholder vote in 2012, QR National was rebranded as Aurizon. Each year the company transports more than 250 million tonnes of Australian commodities, connecting miners, primary producers, and industry with international and domestic markets.

It provides customers with integrated freight and logistics solutions across an extensive national rail and road network traversing the nation. The company also owns and operates one of the world's largest coal rail networks, linking approximately 50 mines with three major ports in Queensland.

The opportunity

Aurizon relies on the Software AG webMethods enterprise integration platform to manage its operations across Australia. The platform acts as a cohesive layer that integrates hundreds of software applications and databases used to support daily operations.

The company's existing webMethods Integration Platform, version 9.9, had reached the end of life. This meant it was no longer supported by Software AG and was becoming increasingly difficult to manage and maintain. After consulting with technology partner Atturra, a decision was taken to upgrade the company to the new version 10.11 of the webMethods platform. It was clear this would solve the support issues and ensure the company received the level of performance and support to underpin its critical IT infrastructure.

Working closely with Atturra would also ensure Aurizon avoided some of the key challenges associated with such a critical upgrade. One of the most significant was the need to adhere to a very tight schedule as any slip in the timeline would have incurred additional licencing costs. Also, because the company's IT infrastructure comprised more than 500 interfaces, there was considerable complexity that needed to be closely managed to ensure no outages or disruptions occurred.

The upgrade project also covered a variety of webMethods components including Integration Server, Trading Networks, and My webMethods Server. Each had to be upgraded from version 9.9 to 10.11.

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The solution

Atturra played a leading role in the upgrade from start to finish. Careful timeline planning was undertaken to ensure that each step was completed in a logical and non-disruptive manner. This ensured minimal downtime and seamless planning, testing, and cutover processes.

The upgrade project was divided into nine stages to be completed over a period of 32 weeks. Considerable time and effort was spent on planning and executing each stage to ensure a seamless process. A decision was also taken to continue to operate the legacy platform while the new platform was being deployed and configured. This reduced the chances of disruption and allowed a seamless handover once the new environment was fully operational.

The project's initial stage involved installing and configuring the new greenfield webMethods environment. Once this was stable, a bulk migration of interfaces from the legacy platform to the new environment was undertaken.

During each of the subsequent stages, the team undertook a series of carefully planned steps. First, new interfaces in the greenfield environment were lit up, before the corresponding ones were disabled in the legacy platform.

Rigorous testing was conducted at the conclusion of each stage to guarantee stability. Efficient cutover process were then followed together with Hypercare support. Documentation of the 'As Built' platform was provided to Aurizon for future reference before the completed new resources were officially handed over.

Outcomes Achieved

Completion of the complex upgrade project has delivered some significant business benefits to Aurizon. These benefits have included:

- **Platform life extension:** Completion of the upgrade has resulted in the platform's operational life being extended by approximately six years. This results in significant savings and ensures business support is maintained.
- **Ongoing stability:** The upgrade has ensured continuing stability and support for critical infrastructure across the company. This has been achieved with no disruption to business activity.
- **Support for future improvements:** The new platform will allow Aurizon to undertake future improvements while also enhancing security for planned B2B integrations.
- **Clear documentation:** Aurizon now has access to updated and accurate 'As Built' platform documentation, which will help with ongoing maintenance.
- **Test cases:** The company also now has a complete set of Jira regression test cases. These will provide valuable support for future developments.

Overall, Atturra was able to complete the webMethods upgrade project on time and within budget. It was also able to deliver some powerful business benefits including improved platform longevity, stability, and support for future enhancements.