

Citrix Systems— A Global Company with a Mission



About Citrix:

Citrix Systems, Inc., the global leader in access infrastructure solutions, is one of the top 15 software companies in the world. Headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Citrix has offices in 22 countries around the world and conducts over half of its business outside the United States.

With 2003 revenues of \$588 million, Citrix has set an aggressive goal of growing to \$1 billion in revenues and positioning itself for sustainable growth. Citrix aspires to own the access infrastructure software market, whose potential is estimated at \$8 billion to \$10 billion, and the company is building out its MetaFrame® Access Suite of software in order to do just that. The company also acquired Expertcity, the market leader in Web-based access services. Suffice it to say, whether information is located on the server or the desktop, Citrix solutions provide secure, easy and instant access to it.

Using Technology to Meet Growth Objectives

An important part of Citrix's strategic growth plan is to use systems to scale the business, rather than merely increasing the workforce. The company wants to reduce costs within its core business operations and redirect those resources to growth areas. "We have been engaged in finding out how we can make the engine at the core of our business run better, so we can invest resources in the emerging areas of our business," said John Gardiner, Senior Director of Finance at Citrix Systems.

One way to accomplish this is to put automated business processes in place to reduce workload, accelerate cycles and provide enhanced support to customers, distributors, resellers, business partners, and other groups that the company interacts with. According to Gardiner, "We want to put our people into roles where they can think creatively and add value instead of performing routine functions. By automating these functions, we can ensure maximum consistency and efficiency, while freeing up staff for strategic projects."

The Global Systems Integration Project

Citrix sells its software through an indirect channel of distributors, value-added resellers and integrators. At the outset of 2004, Citrix had 120 distributors worldwide, all of whom send purchase orders to the company by either fax or email. Citrix employs people to process those orders. These employees must manually check orders for accuracy, distribute them to obtain various signature approvals, and then input them into the company's SAP system. "This is a highly inefficient process that is labor-intensive and time-consuming," notes Gardiner. "At the same time, our distributors are asking where their orders are." Typically, an order works its way upstream from the purchasing agent, to the distributor manager, and then to the order entry team at Citrix corporate headquarters. Once an answer is obtained, the process is reversed, and the order slowly works its way back downstream.

"We want to implement a clearly visible process that people can access on demand, and see what is going on at every stage of the transaction. Trading partners want to see whether Citrix has the order, whether the company has accepted the order, why the order was rejected - if indeed it was - whether the order has been sent to manufacturing, if the order has shipped, what the tracking number is, etc.," explained Gardiner.

Citrix launched a global systems integration project and turned to Microsoft and Covast for assistance. Citrix selected the Covast EDI Accelerator to provide connectivity to its 120 distributors worldwide and to enable the exchange of EDI documents. The Covast EDI Accelerator in conjunction with Microsoft BizTalk Server provides the technical foundation for an all-digital infrastructure, offering both EDI functionality and support for XML transactions. The EDI Accelerator sits on top of Citrix's existing solution for BizTalk Server, which interfaces with its SAP enterprise resource planning solution.

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Dan Nicolaison
Senior Manager Information Technology
Citrix Systems

Architecture At-a-Glance

Citrix Systems runs on a complete Microsoft environment. A Microsoft operating system is running on BizTalk Server 2003. Covast EDI Accelerator runs on BizTalk Server. BizTalk Server interfaces with Citrix's SAP enterprise resource planning system.

Currently, Citrix is tackling the purchase order process with a worldwide rollout slated for 2004. The system will ultimately process 80 percent of orders placed by distributors. Next year, the company will use that infrastructure to automate even more processes, such as invoice management, partner list authorization and price changes. For smaller partners who may not have the IT staff or infrastructure to support trading with Citrix through either EDI — electronic data interchange (as supported by Covast) or XML (as supported by Microsoft), Citrix intends to use Internet commerce and enable them to order online.

Citrix recognized early in the evaluation process that this project required a significant effort in terms of EDI expertise. With so many EDI formats available, Citrix wanted a provider that had built its business on developing EDI solutions. During the initial discovery phase of the project, a Microsoft account manager recommended Covast for a full-featured EDI solution that could support purchase orders, advance shipment notices, invoicing and point-of sale inventory.

“If you look at BizTalk, it is a really good messaging software and BizTalk Server 2004 is particularly impressive,” said Dan Nicolaison, Senior Manager for Information Technology at Citrix Systems. “The logic to handle all of the hundreds, if not thousands, of EDI documents, between the standard X12 and EDIFACT, is enabled in our system through Covast’s solution. The BizTalk-Covast partnership is a great marriage for us,” continued Nicolaison.

In the all-digital infrastructure for purchase order processing that Citrix is implementing, the company will get the information it needs in electronic format from its distributors via EDI, XML or the Web. Those electronic documents will get processed through Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server and sent to SAP. “Through our all-digital infrastructure, we will be able process an order 24 x 7, three-hundred and sixty-five days a year, and every clean order we receive will be processed without anyone having to touch it,” said Gardiner. “That is what we are driving to.”

But how will Gardiner’s team deal with human error, such as entering the wrong product number or forgetting the contract number? The real benefit to Citrix is that employees who are currently focusing on processing routine orders will have the time to help distributors get those orders right. The order processors of today will deliver more value-added service, as well as better customer service, because the Covast-BizTalk system has automated a manual function. “This will fundamentally help drive the business to the one-billion-dollar goal,” noted Gardiner.

Citrix did put some numeric stakes in the ground as to precisely how much value the global systems integration project would deliver for the company, both in terms of cost savings and productivity increases. Savings stem from lower turnaround time on orders, whereas increased productivity will grow top-line revenue across the company. “The tangible benefits we tied to deploying this system are in the millions of dollars,” explained Gardiner.

Intangible benefits of the system are numerous for Citrix’s partners. With automated ordering, if there is a problem with an order, the partner knows of it immediately. In addition, the product ships to partners the same day. “Partners get a lot more visibility through functionality like order confirmation, advanced ship notices and shipment confirmations,” said Nicolaison.

Beyond the purchase order benefits for Citrix, the all-digital infrastructure will enable point-of-sale reporting and inventory reporting on distributors. As Citrix brings partners online with EDI and XML, Gardiner and his team will have distributor data available on a daily basis and the Citrix team can see exactly what is happening in real time. At the close of each business day, the team will know whether demand is going up or down, and how to adjust and react to trends and changes. The system will show Gardiner’s team, and all of Citrix management, whether marketing initiatives are working and whether new products are taking off. “By enabling us to put a better set of headlights on our business, this initiative will enable us to manage our business in a much more proactive way,” concluded Gardiner.



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