

# IP Communications (IPC)

## Delivers broadband services faster and undercuts competition

Industry: Telecommunications

Product(s): BEA WebLogic® Integration Solution (BEA WebLogic Server™, BEA WebLogic Integration™)

### Summary

IP Communications ([www.ip.net](http://www.ip.net)) delivers broadband communications to residences and business customers throughout Southwest USA, and has automated its entire customer provisioning with the BEA platform.

### Problem: Streamline business processes

To remain competitive, IPC needed to reduce the time it takes for customers to get broadband services, and reduce the costs to provide them.

### Solution: Integration platform

BEA platform integrates front and back office systems and automates business processes in order to deliver customer services efficiently.

### Results

- 522% annual ROI with payback in 10 weeks
- IPC saved over \$2 million due to increased process efficiency.
- IPC has reduced the cost of its operations and can *under-price* its competitors for its services.

### Benefits

- “We can handle twice as many orders with the same amount of people.”
- IPC reduced the time it takes to deliver services to a customer from an average of 45 days to an average of 15 days — giving it significant competitive advantage.
- Comprehensive support for industry standards and the BEA WebLogic foundation enabled scalability and flexibility for reliable growth.



## THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

IP Communications (IPC), founded in 1999, delivers broadband communications (DSL, VPN/IP, etc.) to businesses throughout Southwest USA. A key hurdle in delivering broadband network services is extending connectivity over “the last mile.” To do this, the company has to maintain working relationships with incumbent carriers that may also be competitors. For example, IPC’s network competes with that of incumbent carrier Southwestern Bell Communications (SBC) but still has to work with SBC to get access to the local loop. In addition, the company needed to integrate front and back office systems and manage a complicated, multi-step process, in order to deliver customer services efficiently.

Key to competitive advantage was the efficiency of IPC’s provisioning process: the customer signed a contract, then underwent a credit check, and then IPC requested local line access from the incumbent carrier. The technology the customer needed was then installed and tested, and other customer processes such as billing, trouble ticket management, and any partner communication were launched. Interaction with the incumbent carrier took at least 10 steps for each new contract. The entire process took IPC about 45 days and involved considerable human intervention because there was no integration between the company’s front office, provisioning, and billing applications.

“Our orders are implemented via complex processes, which are in turn supported by numerous systems and people,” said Rick Utley, senior manager of development for IP Communications. “We needed the ability to centrally view, manage, and process an order from a single, unified infrastructure.”

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IPC’s business involves managing high transaction volumes, which necessitates a stable, reliable and highly scalable system that can support thousands of transactions running concurrently. “At the time we were manually processing an average of 50 complex, multi-step transactions each day,” said Utley. “We needed a platform that could easily get us up to four or five times that quickly, while decreasing operational cost or at least keeping them flat.”

## THE BUILT ON BEA™ SOLUTION

IPC was already attempting to use another integration product to try to meet the challenge, but a slow and cumbersome development process left IPC concerned about its reliability and usability over the long term. “We knew that an integrated, process-driven system that could enable real-time process monitoring and management would be the ideal solution,” said Rick Barry, vice president of information systems at IPC. “We needed a high-level system that business people could understand and work with.

The technology had to represent processes in business terms for our analysts. Our customers demand quick service, and BEA WebLogic is able to meet and exceed our customer's requirements. IPC relies on this system to help us deploy new processes quickly and take our new products to market."

IPC required an e-business infrastructure that was reliable, scalable, based on standards and built for the Internet. The company was looking for a standards-based solution with Java 2 Enterprise Edition (J2EE) compliance and full Extensible Markup Language (XML) support. After considering a number of different solutions, IP Communications selected BEA WebLogic Server and WebLogic Integration, largely because of its reliance on open standards and its simplified development and deployment. "It was a no-brainer," said Utley. "BEA WebLogic Server was clearly the leader in the application server space. We brought it in, configured it, and got it up and running in a matter of hours."

Just 60 days after purchase of the BEA software, the company launched the DSL billing application and by the end of that same month, IPC had created a WebLogic-based EDI / LSR application. "After we implemented billing, the first new process, we saw a drastic productivity improvement. Within this short period, BEA WebLogic Integration enabled us to eliminate re-keying of data and to consolidate multiple steps. This doubled productivity and virtually eliminated errors." The second process to be deployed, EDI /LSR, provided IPC an even greater return.

## THE RESULT

Today, BEA WebLogic Integration manages the business process across IPC's entire value chain: from customer request, to back-end billing applications and customer information databases, to its network provisioning systems, and across IPC's network of partners.

During the first year after BEA WebLogic Integration was deployed, IPC has saved over \$2 million due to improved productivity and the elimination of the need to buy additional application software. That in turn has enabled IPC to under-price many of its competitors for its services by as much as 50 percent.

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**IPC has saved over \$2 million due to improved productivity. "We have more than exceeded our ROI goals."**

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"We can handle twice as many orders with the same amount of people," said Utley. He added that, with new, large contracts in the works, order volume could easily double. "We don't anticipate having to hire additional people, and we won't have to redesign our applications to handle that," he said confidently.

IPC has also reduced DSL order cycle times from 45 days to fewer than 15, a key advantage in a market otherwise known for frequent delays in delivering new service.

“That has become a major selling point for us,” said Utley, who noted that, in many cases, IPC is now frequently beating its 15-day service delivery promises.

Rick Barry added, “We have more than exceeded our ROI goals.” IPC experienced significant direct savings as a result of deploying the BEA platform, by reducing the number of employees it needed to manage the process and simultaneously integrating the entire process and tripling the volume. Relatively low project costs and extremely rapid development enabled IPC to quickly achieve benefits from each stage of its deployment. Nucleus Research Inc. (<http://www.NucleusResearch.com>) calculated IPC’s annual return-on-investment (ROI) at 522 percent with a payback in 10 weeks, and a total cost of ownership (TCO) of \$294,439.

These results can be attributed to the benefits of automating its customer provisioning process with WebLogic Integration. These include reduced human intervention, reduced transaction errors, and faster and more cost-effective delivery of services — benefits that gave IPC a significant competitive advantage over other providers. IPC is also now able to make information available to provide the exact status of a customer’s request within the lifecycle.

IPC has more than doubled productivity, cut order fulfillment lead times by a factor between two and three, and thanks to reliance on the proven BEA integration platform, has an open application architecture designed for growth and staying power.

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