



## Case Study: Dimension Data Support

### About the Company

Dimension Data (DD) is a global IT services and solution provider that helps customers plan, build, and support their IT infrastructures. The company is listed on the London Stock Exchange [DDT LSE] and operates in 30 countries on five continents. DD applies its more than 23 years of experience in technology infrastructures, networking, security, operating environments, storage, and contact center technologies and its unique blend of skills in integration, consulting and managed services.

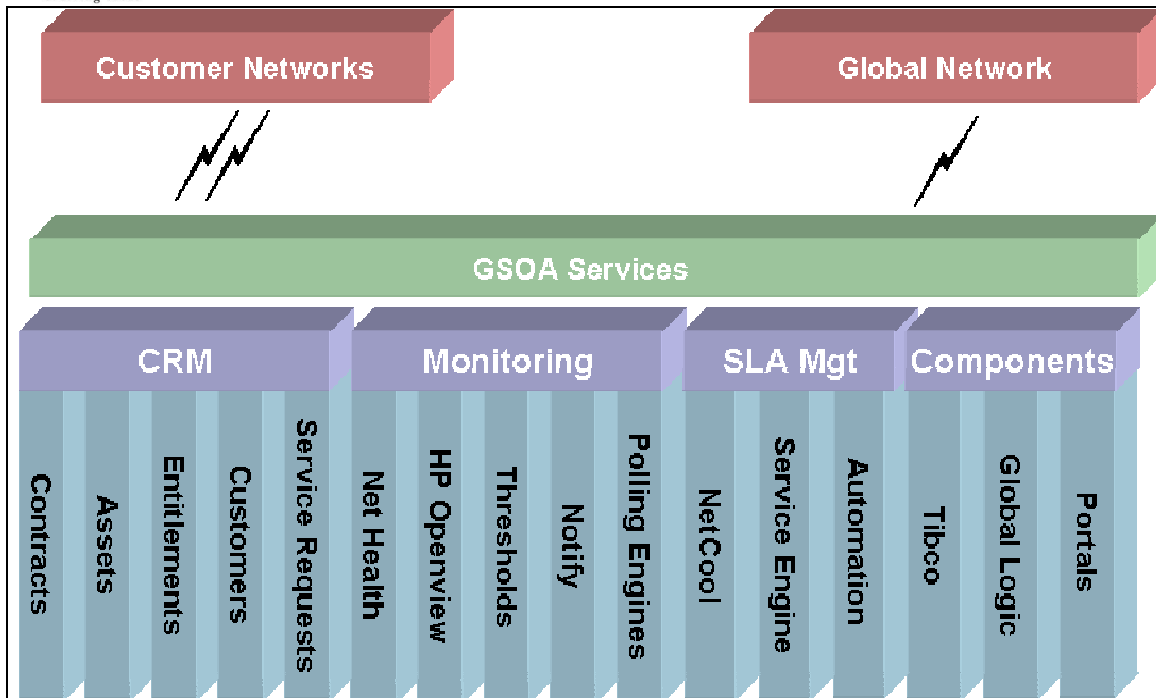
The aim is to create solutions that can help clients to realize a greater return on their IT investments. To achieve this, Dimension Data (DD) delivers solutions using its proprietary **Application Network** architectural framework.

### Project Description

Global Services Operating Architecture (GSOA) is a Services Operating System Platform for all DD's Global Online Services initiatives. It is a complex eco-system consisting of commercial software tools, in-house software and application-to-application integration modules that allows all of the various system components to interact as a single system.

The components of the Global Services Operating Architecture include:

- CRM component in Siebel Systems
- Global Logic Engine
- A set of correlation and event management tools from Micromuse/Netcool
- Performance management and reporting tools from Concord
- Active agents
- An advanced Poller mechanism
- Automated diagram generator
- Automated systems configuration module
- Advanced integration modules
- A customer services portal



The Global Logic components are the logic and platform for replication, handling and transferring of faults and service calls around the planet. This layer comprises:

- Global WAN Internetworks connecting Regional Operations Centers
- WAN connecting intra-country Service Hubs to these Centers
- Global Replication Server
- Global Mail Notification Server
- Firewall and Security Logic

GSOA has three levels of support.

- **Level 1 Support** involves administering and monitoring systems, handling end user queries and doing various setup activities
- **Level 2 Support** involves problem resolution, new development of support nature; apply various patches and liaising with 3rd level support
- **Level 3 Support** involves expert level support that involves in-depth analysis and code bug fixes

Nihilent provides third level application support for GSOA and 2nd and 3rd level support for Siebel and Tibco.



## Business Challenges

- The substantial growth of DD's customer base for IT Infrastructure support revealed many deficiencies, including a patchwork of technologies with no defined integration methodologies and built on a weak technical foundation. Due to this, the response to following business needs was being impacted:
  - o Pursue new business opportunities
  - o React to competitor actions
  - o Comply with changing regulations
- With aggressive near-term business initiatives, GSOA operations needed to be built upon strong development and deployment methodologies to ensure high system availability. DD further struggled to standardise GSOA architecture across different regional instances. Due to setups in 5 different locations, management was unable to consolidate organizational level statistics for improvement and strategizing
- DD struggled to retain the varied skillsets required to maintain and enhance GSOA, due to the complex mix of technologies and lack of enterprise architecture
- One of the key strategies to increase DD's revenue is providing ITIL compliant services, and Security standards and architecture best practices. Technology obsolescence of the existing solution, and heavy customization in commercial products like Siebel, meant a substantial effort and cost to upgrade components as per market needs

## Nihilent's Role

- ITIL compliant support processes, encompassing incident and problem management, change and release management, as well as configuration and knowledge management.
- Nihilent currently provides the following Production Environment Support
  - o L1/L2/L3 for Siebel and Tibco components at the central hosted site in UK, and regional deployments at Australia and South Africa
  - o L2/L3 for Back-end environment Applications at 5 regional locations – US, EU, Asia, Australia and South Africa
  - o Incident Management and Problem Management under SLA Management - 24/7 for S1 issues and 8\*5 for S2 to S4 issues
  - o Guaranteed response times on root cause analyses
  - o Onsite support through staff augmentation where required to provide specialist GSOA skills to regions
- QA Environment Support
  - o 4 QA environments in the UK hosted environment with 8\*5 support, with 24/7 S1 support



- o L1 through L3 support of environment
- Admin Tasks
  - o Siebel Administration tasks, for production and QA environments
- Pro-active Maintenance of the GSOA architecture
- Training and Documentation
  - o Bi-annual Systems Overview training for new DD hires
  - o Ongoing GSOA Components Training Sessions for Regional Staff (1 session every 6 to 8 weeks)
  - o Case-study based training
  - o Support to write User Guides, Templates and Training material
- Reviews and inputs for Architecture and Infrastructure improvement
- Follow a well defined Change Inception process to rollout GSOA release and patches to production.

### **Platform and Technologies**

- Platforms: Microsoft, Linux, Sun Solaris
- Packaged Applications: Siebel, Micromuse Netcool, Concorde NetHealth, SAP
- Integration Applications: TIBCO, Siebel - SAP Integration, XML, Biztalk
- Programming Technologies: Java, C, Perl, Shell scripting, CGI, PHP, dotNET
- Web Servers: Apache, Tomcat, IIS, Axis
- Databases: MS SQL Server, Oracle, Mysql
- Networking Protocols: TCP/IP, SNMP, ICMP, Telnet, SSH
- Automation Tools: Mercury, Empirix

### **Business Benefits Delivered**

In this engagement, Nihilent has been able to provide the following key benefits to Dimension Data:

- The resolution progress of each incident is closely monitored, to ensure SLA compliance and to demonstrate overall improvement in the mean time resolution for incidents
- OLAs have also been defined for keeping end users informed of the incident resolution and root cause analysis. Known Error Documentation is provided to improve L1 analysis thereby reducing resolution time
- By aggressively implementing problem management to identify root causes of business critical incidents, Nihilent has managed to bring down the system outages and incident levels, leading to improved system availability and SLA compliance to DD's end customers



**Nihilent**  
evolving ideas

- Proactive improvement efforts originating from support reviews have led to architecture improvement initiatives. These have helped in the scalability and performance aspects of the entire solution, enhanced usability, and security to end users
- Nihilent has aligned the complex mix of diverse technologies, to an enterprise architecture, thereby, realising further reduction in the support management effort and cost
- Steady reduction in the support team size annually, while the GSOA solution has been growing in size and functionality
- Overall reduction in support costs and reduced service delivery management effort has led to DD being able to focus more on new solutions and functional enhancements, including ITIL implementation and security