InSite Portal Solutions
for
Banking Customer Support

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The Case for Banking Customer Support Portals

Executive Summary

Problem

Customer Service is a strategic battleground for financial institutions. Banks of all sizes are trying to differentiate themselves based on unique service and customer experience (e.g. Washington Mutual). The complexity and cost of customer service is becoming a major issue as the volume of customer service transactions increases. The widespread merger and acquisition activity in banking further complicates the picture.

Opportunity

What is needed is a way to pull together all the information about a customer into one place with the tools that banking customer support staff need to resolve that customer's issue right away. This solution should also enable the support staff to provide the right service to the right customer, regardless of banking channel (branch, commercial, online or telephone). Traditional CRM solutions can do this, but they require extensive customization and enterprise application integration with numerous banking applications to pull all the information into one place.

InSite provides a faster, better and far less expensive alternative. **InSite** uses web based portal technology designed to provide customer service with the information and tools needed to deliver the right service to the right customer, right away. **InSite** quickly integrates back office applications, providing customer information, account information and transaction history. **InSite** brings your customer information and business applications into view, so you can focus on solving your customer's problem.

The portal can be easily customized to fit the unique requirement of contact center agents, loan officers and account executives: anyone who touches your banking customers. The solution can be designed and implemented in a fraction of the time, and at a fraction of the cost, of client server applications. The portal can be quickly modified or expanded as new applications come on line or customer processes change.

InSite provides additional value as a rich source of collaboration, communication and knowledge management tools. These can be applied to customer support training, routing, escalation and problem solving. The solution developed for customer support can also provide web-based self-service directly to banking customers. The solution continues to expand, adapt and add value long after the initial implementation.

Benefits

InSite Portal Solutions improve performance, reduce operating costs and extend the value of existing applications. These results can begin to be realized almost immediately after implementing the **InSite** solution. The benefits of the **InSite** solution can be immediately extended across the enterprise, to any personnel who touch your customers.

Improve Performance of Customer Support Personnel

The key to performance in customer support is the ability to provide the right service to the right customer, right away. Any delay in accessing customer information will create errors, waste time and detract from the customer's experience. The **InSite** Portal brings all of the relevant customer information together into a consistent and usable format. Customer support personnel can access customer profiles, account information and special service instructions from applications and data sources across the enterprise.

The **InSite** Portal provides knowledge management tools for researching, identifying and solving customer problems. If other personnel are required to resolve the issue, collaboration tools quickly bring them into the process and provide real-time communications. Customer support personnel can rapidly escalate issues to management, and track the progress of each case through to completion.

Content management provides answers to frequently asked questions, libraries of cases and solutions and numerous self-service features that improve support effectiveness. Customer support training on new services, programs or tools can be provided over the same user interface. This dramatically reduces the cost of training, while it provides continuous improvement of support personnel.

Reduce Cost of Customer Support Operations

Performance improvements have a direct impact on support costs, which are driven by volume, time and personnel. High volumes of long duration incidents requiring highly skilled personnel generate the highest operating costs.

InSite Portal solutions drive down call duration by brining together all relevant information on the customer, including their accounts, their profile and their total relationship with the bank This information is displayed to support personnel immediately when the customer contacts the bank. This eliminates time consuming and annoying questions, the customer and the support staff can begin working on the issue immediately. In addition, service instructions and protocols can indicate the types and levels of support appropriate to each customer based on their value to the bank.

Rapid problem identification, escalation and resolution further reduce call duration. The goal is to resolve each incident on the first contact, and to the customer's satisfaction.

Incidents that require multiple contacts, repeated escalation and lengthy resolutions cost three times more than incidents resolved on the first contact.

Personnel costs are the most difficult to control in banking customer support. Support personnel with banking qualifications and training cost considerably more than entry-level call handlers. Ongoing training on products and procedures can consume up to 25% of support staff time. **InSite** Portal solutions can improve support staff productivity, and provide Just In Time training, which continues to enhance their performance.

Improve ROI on Existing Applications

Most financial institutions have already made significant investments in applications to support banking services, Customer Relationship Management and customer support. The issue facing banks today is that these applications do not, in themselves, provide integrated access to information and functions required for customer service. Attempts to integrate the applications themselves are hindered by complexity, control issues and cost.

InSite Portal solutions extend the functionality and the information from these applications to the Customer Support Portal. This gives support personnel just the amount of information and functionality they need to provide support, without giving them too much access. This functionality is immediately available to all bank personnel who have secure access to the bank's Intranet. No expensive client licenses or cumbersome deployment projects are required. This greatly enhances the value of the applications to the enterprise.

Enterprise Application Integration is an expensive and time-consuming process, particularly when mergers and acquisitions continue to bring new applications into the mix. In many cases this level of integration is overkill, when the real requirement is to share information and transaction processing functions. **InSite** Portals solutions provide a faster, better and significantly cheaper way to integrate applications at the "presentation" layer.

InSite Portal solutions can be quickly changed to adapt to changing business requirements. It is relatively easy to integrate new applications, develop new functionality or change presentation formats by creating new "portlets" or utilizing the personalization functions native to the Portal. The solution can rapidly scale from pilot to full production mode, and extend to new user groups.

Technical Concept

InSite Customer Support Portal

From a user's perspective, a portal is just a personalized web page that contains all of the functionality, tools, information sources and links they need to do their job. As a customer support tool, the **InSite** Portal provides these personalized pages to a number of user communities.

The primary community would be the customer support specialists working in the bank's contact center. Through a single sign on, these agents would access web pages with customer information supplied through CRM and customer account repositories. They would access contact management functions, call queues and response management functionality from service management applications. Filtered access to commercial services (e.g. merchant transaction, line of credit or lock box accounts) would provide transaction history or adjustment information.
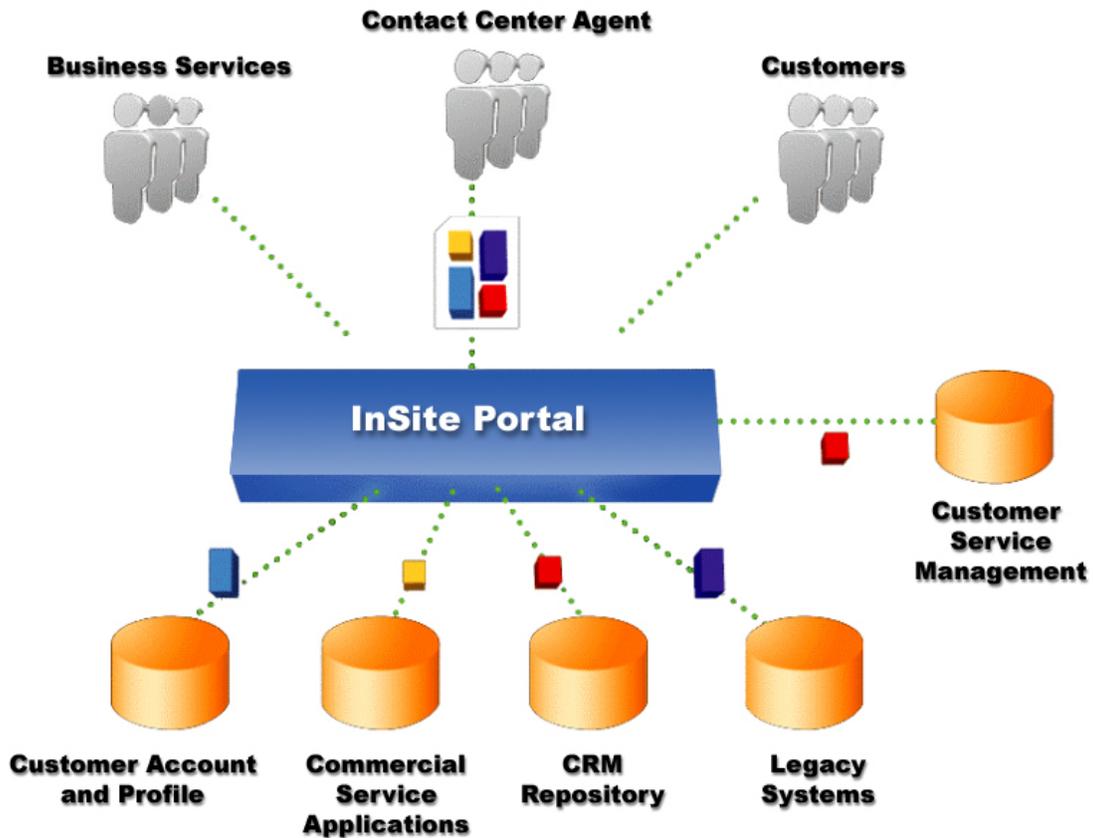
Other user communities could include business services groups such as loan officers, corporate account managers, investment bankers or payment services. These users would access customer account and profile information, review open service requests or participate in problem resolution. Each user would access portal resources through web pages customized for their job function and personalize to meet their preferences. All user can share information service, knowledge management and collaboration features which allow them to work together to solve customer problems.

Potentially, the most important user community could be banking customers. They would use their own secure version of the Portal to communicate with bank personnel, review their account information, research issues and solve problems through self-service features. Customer support personnel can monitor customer activity and intervene as needed to provide assistance.

Portal Server Architecture
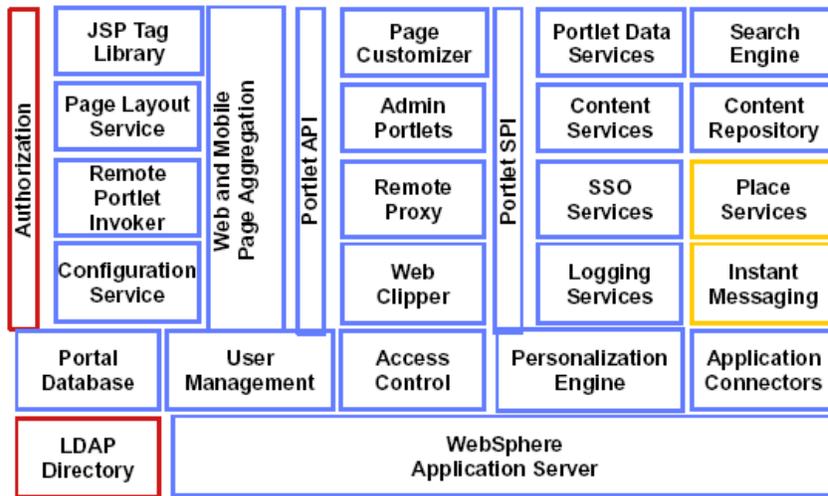
The **InSite** Portal solution is based on industry leading portal application servers such as IBM's WebSphere. The WebSphere architecture, pictured above, provides the foundation for portal functionality. Single sign on, security and administration functions provide access control and user management. Personalization functions tailor portal content and function to the needs of the user and their role. Content and collaboration services allow community members to share information and work together on customer problems. Web publishing and subscription provides users with web services and information sources.

Enterprise Application Integration

Integration with applications can be provided in numerous ways. Where applications are web native services user can subscribe to them directly from the portal. Where application support web interfaces users can access data through html "screen scrapes". Where transaction level integration is required, portals support custom developed APIs or application "portlets".

Many commercial applications, such as Siebel have APIs or portlets already developed and available for subscription. The following graphic indicates just a few of the interfaces already available for IBM's WebSphere:

Enterprise Application Interfaces
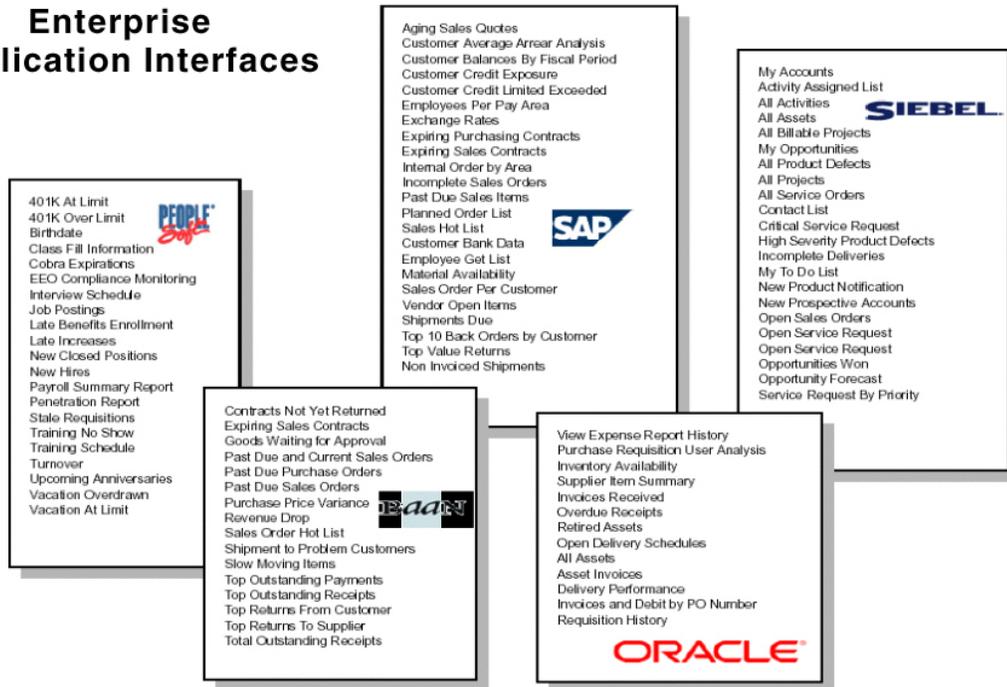
The **InSite** Portal solution takes advantage of any existing APIs, and provides custom API development for any commercial or legacy applications.

InSite Portal Solution Process

Every **InSite** Portal solution is developed to meet the unique requirements of the banking client. We begin by rapidly assessing and analyzing the client's business objectives, information needs, support requirements and applications. We design a unique, branded look and feel for the portal, as well as a knowledge map and architecture. Then we integrate the portal with the client's network infrastructure and applications.

We train portal users, administrators and developers, transferring the knowledge required to make the client self-sufficient. We provide on-going maintenance and support, as well as additional development as the portal solution scales from initial implementation to enterprise operations.