ACTIVITY TRACKING FOR INCREASED BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

Activity Tracking is the application designed by Fiat Group Automobiles (FGA) and developed by Cluster Reply in order to manage events tracking mostly concerning requests for evolutive, corrective and support activities between the IT departments and the Client and/or the Help Desk teams managed by third parties. The solution, designed as a simple and intuitive "general purpose" tool which may be configured according to the Client's need, may be applied to a large number of industry areas. As a matter of fact, the Activity Tracking logics have been subsequently applied also to other clients.

SCENARIO

Sem Nowadays more and more businesses are looking for optimum solutions with regards to productivity, business development and cost containment.
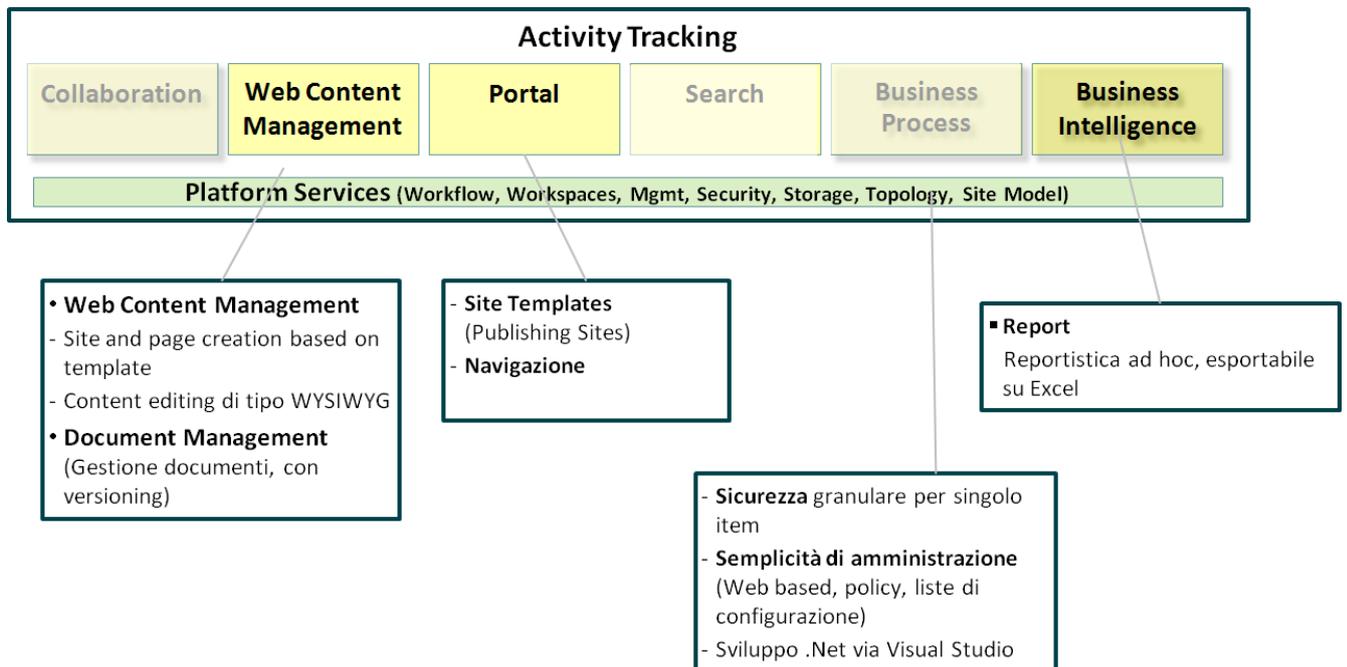
In order to best satisfy the staff collaboration and communication requirements within companies, Cluster Reply developed a profitable and cost-effective solution, able to better monitor event tracking.

SOLUTION

This tool, partly based on the native functions made available by the Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 platform, and utilizing the features of document management, security and integration with Microsoft Office, was optimized for events tracking management.

This *Activity Tracking* solution satisfies general tracking needs while being simple, intuitive, easily configurable and with low installation costs.

Some function macro areas provided by the MOSS 2007 platform (*Web Content Management, Portal, Business Intelligence, Platform Services*) were used and duly customized, in order to manage the request of evolutive, corrective and support activities between the IT departments and the Client and/or the Help Desk teams managed by third parties.

Activity Tracking

Collaboration	**Web Content Management**	**Portal**	Search	Business Process	**Business Intelligence**

Platform Services (Workflow, Workspaces, Mgmt, Security, Storage, Topology, Site Model)

- **Web Content Management**
- Site and page creation based on template
- Content editing di tipo WYSIWYG
- **Document Management**
  (Gestione documenti, con versioning)

- **Site Templates**
  (Publishing Sites)
- **Navigazione**

- **Report**
  Reportistica ad hoc, esportabile su Excel

- **Sicurezza** granulare per singolo item
- **Semplicità di amministrazione**
  (Web based, policy, liste di configurazione)
- Sviluppo .Net via Visual Studio

This solution was developed in a .Net environment, through Microsoft Visual Studio 2008. Administrator users may opt to use the Microsoft Office SharePoint Designer 2007 tool to design simple workFlows, mainly alerting workflows, which may be integrated within the solution.

WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT
This section includes all functions to create, publish and manage contents, whether they are contained in a document, or published on a web page.

With regards to content management (ticket) in particular, the Activity Tracking solution entails the use of three duly customized MOSS2007 Lists (hereinafter called "Custom Lists").

The first list, which is the core of the application, is used for filing data relating to each ticket type; each ticket is associated to an overview screen (containing only the attributes visible in the list) and a screen for data entry, where the operator may insert all ticket data (common and specific attributes).

The single attributes of the ticket list are implemented as Custom Fields, duly shown on the Input Page in different ways, according to the group to which the user belongs.

This means that some fields may be viewed and edited, others may only be viewed, and others, like value lists, may offer different options according to the group to which the user belongs.

Such field viewing modalities within the ticket input screen are set up by the system administration through the same Activity Tracking application.

As a matter of fact, through a second Custom List, the administrator may define each ticket attribution for each user or user groups and choose whether to:

- View that attribute or not
- Make the attribute editable or not
- Reduce the assignable values (out of a list of assignable values)

Moreover, the administrator shall have the option to decide, through a third Custom List, whether to define viewing and operation rules per user group which shall apply to the whole ticket (i.e. to extend the standard MOSS 2007 functions which may be used for list proliferation).

In particular, always through the activity Tracking interface, administrator users shall have the option to include rules such as, for example:

- Establish that certain users or user groups may modify or cancel only tickets that belong to them
- Establish that tickets may be modified or cancelled only by certain groups or users and only at specific times, according to the ticket status;

The end result is that all the ticket's list viewing fields may be customized; in addition, according to the specific requirements, it is also possible to define the number and type of parameters to view and modify. Moreover, is possible to define viewing and operation rules for all parameters and all tickets, according to the client's requirements.

PORTAL

This section includes all functions to customize the user experience of a web site, allowing the most appropriate content viewing for users connected at that particular time, based on a series of pre-defined rules and possible users' rights on the contents. Through this section it is possible to define an intuitive and comprehensive navigation.

The Activity Tracking application may adopt the same graphic paradigms of the Intranet in which it is included, thus ensuring its contextualization within the company Intranet.

The Activity Tracking application was devised as a site whose basic features are rapidly initialized at each installation.

Therefore, an organization may define a number of Activity Tracking sites, each one characterized by its users, as well as the attributes of each ticket types and the relating viewing and management rules.

This allows each organization, to decide whether to use a single interface (i.e. one single site), by possibly differenciating tickets through specific fields for the different business areas involved, or a number of interfaces (i.e. more sites) dedicated to one or more service areas (this possibility may be particularly suitable for organizations which need to manage the Tracking of many applications, independent from one another for the type of users they involve as well as for ticket types).

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

This section includes all functions required to ensure easy and fast access to business critical information, ranging from Excel worksheets for real-time access to business data, to the most sophisticated analysis on Key performance Indicators (KPIs).

Each application provides Custom Reports which may be exported to Excel; the aim is to provide statistics on open ticket types and on their status.

PLATFORM SERVICES

This section includes all the platform macro-function cross-section services, like the management of administrators and users profiles.

The Activity Tracking widely uses the security tools made available by the platform and by the integration with the business Active Directory (AD). The aim is to ensure proliferation by users' groups:

- ICT-ADMIN: IT administrators of all applications
- PRJ-ADMIN: administrators of single applications
- END-USER: end users divided by application

Moreover, thanks to the integration with AD, the alert management, which allows to highlight critical parameters or status changes for a specific ticket, may be addressed to any person mapped in the Active Directory.

BENEFITS

Activity Tracking, developed by Cluster Reply, does not require previous installation on the company PCs and has no license costs since, once it is installed on the company SharePoint infrastructure, it is accessible from any workstation having access to the internal network.

This solution is highly configurable, both with regards to defining fields and values, and with regards to the management of the reporting output. It offers total freedom when assigning privileges to users and may be integrated within the electronic mail for alert management.

The use of this product allows correct priority assignment and effective claim management, with progress and resolution time being carefully monitored. The result is a reduced response time with regards to recurrent problems and an overall improvement of productivity (fast and detailed information).

BEST CASES EXAMPLES

FIAT GROUP AUTOMOBILES

Scenario
FIAT GROUP AUTOMOBILES (FGA) is the largest industrial group in Italy, and one of the founders of the automobile industry in Europe.
It operates with its companies in over 50 countries with a commercial network covering over 190 countries.

The Activity Tracking project falls within the Fiat Group Automobiles initiatives aiming at using the company Intranet, developed on a Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (or MOSS) platform, as a single business communication, cooperation and service delivery tool.

In 2007, FGA decided to stop using the tool which had been utilized up to that date to track requests for corrective or support measures between the IT department and the business areas (9 at the time) involved, with the objective to adopt the MOSS2007 platform.

This choice was due to the FGA's intention to improve the user-friendliness of the tool, by integrating it with the new FIAT Intranet (already on the MOSS2007 platform), though respecting its functional features and ensuring the existing data security and access security defined by the previous application.

Therefore, the disuse of the product which had been previously utilized for the *trouble ticketing* of 9 business applications gave FGA the opportunity to adopt a solution which enabled to satisfy the following requirements:

- Request management speed and efficacy;
- Data proliferation according to accesses;
- Improved support productivity with fastest and more accurate information delivery;
- Ergonomics improvement

The solution

The Activity Tracking application, used at FGA adopted the same graphic paradigms of the FGA Intranet.

FGA chose to manage each application as a separate site, whose basic features are rapidly initialized through the Site Template concept and users are divided by site (i.e. application), as well as the attributes of each ticket types and the relating viewing and management rules.

Thanks to its easy configuration, FGA was able to apply the Activity Tracking model to different areas, like for examples:
- trouble ticketing application fields
- extra-ordinary approvals
- travelling approval
- "Workstations" management tracking

Volumes

Today, at FGA, 28 applications use this tool, not all in the field of Trouble ticketing but also in the field of Activity Tracking, for a total volume of 7,000 tickets generated in the first 8 months of activity by about 750 users.

ITALCOGIM

Scenario

Within the Italian market of gas sale to end-users, Italcogim Energie is the third operator per gas volume sold to end-customers (3.5 billion cubic meters) and the fifth per number of customers (about 900,000), with a presence throughout Italy.

Italcogim Energie groups 8 companies operating in the sale of natural gas (Italcogim Vendite, Arcalgas Energie, Camgas, Pitta gas, Doragas, Idrogasmetano and Sagas blu) which form part of the Gruppo Energie Investimenti, together with the commercial brand Gaz de France energY.

Italcogim chose Activity Tracking as a tool to track claim tickets for the sales and distribution business areas, particularly for:

- The integration with the business Active Directories, which enabled the use of all data relating to Italcogim own users;
- The customization environment which allowed the solution high adaptability;

The Solution

To date, Italcogim chose to manage one single application for both areas (sales and distribution).
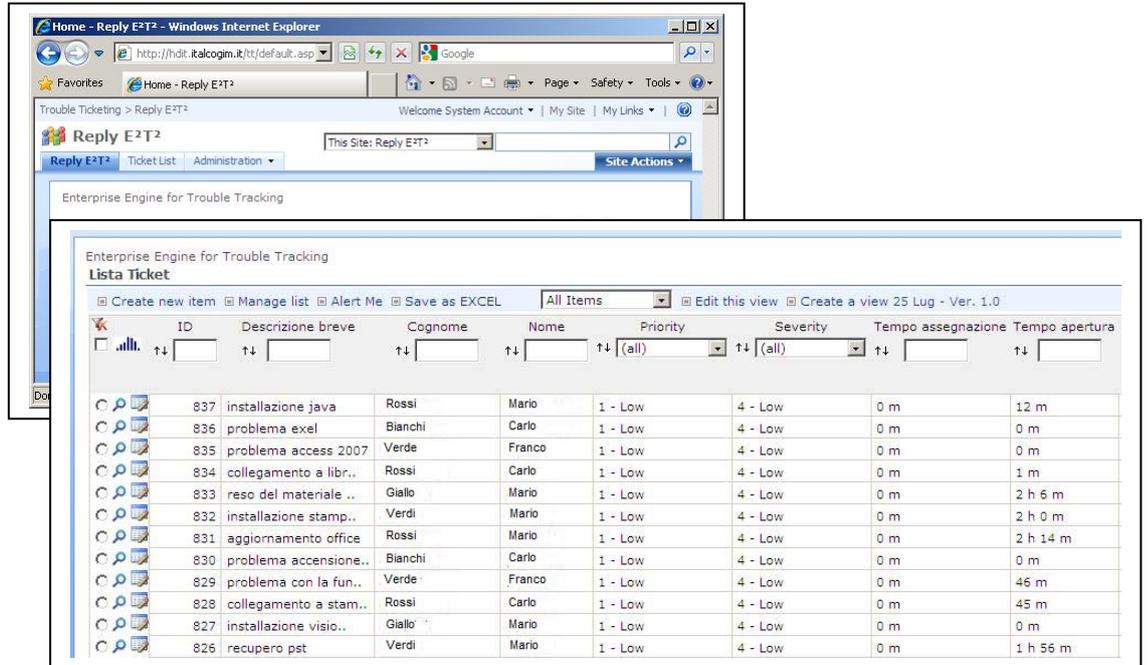
Moreover, the installation at Italcogim features timers, made available in order to calculate the time (in working hours) needed to assign the ticket and to solve the query, on the basis of configurable tables.

The volumes
To date, at Italcogim, one sole application generated and managed about 1,000 tickets.

REPLY VALUE

Cluster Reply helps companies analyze and develop systems by identifying flexible, adaptable and cost-effective solutions which may be perfectly integrated in different contexts. For this very reason, Activity Tracking is not a "closed" product, but rather a simple and easy-to-use Tracking solution which may be configured according to each business needs.

Cluster Reply's value is in guiding and supporting its customers in the implementation of projects, combining excellence and innovation with a consolidated knowledge of Microsoft applications, technologies and infrastructures. At Cluster Reply competence specialization is a recognized value, nourished and transferred into all projects with great professionalism and methodology.

Leveraging its in-depth competence and experience, Cluster Reply boasts a team of professionals that support customers in each phase of a system design and deployment: from initial assessment to requirements analysis and architecture definition, including the drafting of functions and technology requirements as well as the development, deployment and evolution of systems.

Cluster Reply
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