MAINSTAY SALIRE

Electronic Arts Sets Course for Digital Future, Builds in Ongoing Proof of Platform Effectiveness with Mainstay Salire Performance Scorecard

With online gaming options changing everything from how players play to how they pay, Electronic Arts created a "data integration factory" to align its IT architecture for the future. And to keep the factory on track, EA turned to Mainstay Salire to create a scorecard solution to monitor and measure the initiative's effectiveness over time.

Finding an IT Architecture for Digital Play

The generation that grew up playing Electronic Arts' "The Sims" on home computers has given way to the generation that now plays "The Sims Social" on their mobile devices. The shift underscores the sea change brought about by the fusing of digital technology and social media, which has altered everything from the way gamers play to the way they pay. Indeed, "The Sims Social" currently ranks as the fastest-growing game on Facebook, generating a new revenue stream for the company, the bulk of it in 99-cent transactions from individual gamers.

"Gaming has undergone a huge transformation," says Deepak Advani, vice president of enterprise applications at Electronic Arts. "We have new business models, new interactions with our customers, and new models for customers that have shifted from products to services." The evolving marketplace has put new pressures on EA's enterprise IT teams, which are called upon to support the company's strategic moves into new business and technology areas.

Recently EA has focused on building a single global IT platform for efficiently managing trade relationships with distributors, retailers, and customers, and creating systems that can accurately forecast product demand. Projects have ranged from enabling micro-transactions

> "What Mainstay Salire brought were the brainpower and measuring tools — and they applied them in a completely unique way."
>
> – Deepak Advani
>   Vice President of Enterprise Applications, Electronic Arts

Customer Profile

Electronic Arts Inc. is a leading global interactive entertainment software company. EA develops, publishes, and distributes interactive software worldwide for video game systems, personal computers, wireless devices, and the Internet.

Headquarters:
Redwood City, California

Revenue:
$4.1 billion (FY2012)
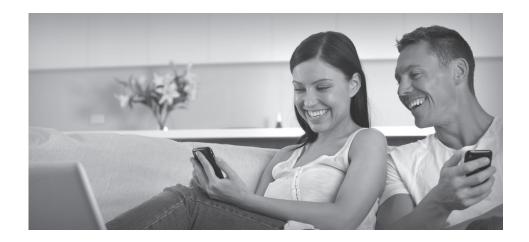
Employees:
9,000 worldwide

Mainstay Salire Solution:
Target, Track and Measure IT Value

Benefit Highlights:
- Enabled tracking of short- and long-term benefits of data integration factory
- Built scorecard with baseline and target metrics for key performance targets
- Supported optimization of key processes, including template reuse, interface production, and resource utilization
- Enabled best practices throughout worldwide operations
- Led to 30% savings through improved delivery model

with online gamers to establishing electronic data exchanges (EDI) that streamline financial transactions with partners. These complex integration projects have demanded close coordination among IT teams spanning several continents.

Until recently, however, EA's approach to running technology projects had been somewhat piecemeal. The building blocks for projects — data models, software code, and integration strategies — were created from scratch each time, which meant that the company often missed opportunities for improving efficiencies, like re-using software components and techniques and standardizing on a common data model.

Enter the Data Integration Factory

The situation changed a couple years ago when EA, under Advani's direction, set up a "Data Integration Factory" — similar to a center of excellence — tasked with delivering high quality, efficient integrations for enterprise services, online enablement, and other business requirements. Staffed with engineers and project managers, the Data Integration Factory would oversee each integration project and capture efficiencies by promoting a common data model, reusing code, and consistently applying best practices. Higher quality integrations, cost savings, and expanded business capabilities were among the top benefits EA hoped to realize by adopting the factory model.

For the Data Integration Factory to succeed, EA knew that it would need to closely monitor its performance. "Our charge was to target, track, and measure Data Integration Factory benefits," Advani said, adding that delays weren't an option. "We needed to build a framework, but we also needed to start delivering at the same time. The transition needed to be seamless. Our whole approach was, we want to do it right."

Doing it right meant having solid metrics — metrics that tracked pivotal benchmarks even as the project was unfolding. "We needed a framework that would answer several questions," Advani said. "What are the key drivers? What are the challenges? We also wanted to track both the build part and the run part, with the expectation that we would run the system at the same time that we were building it."

"Our charge was to target, track, and measure Data Integration Factory benefits. We needed to build a framework, but we also needed to start delivering at the same time. The transition needed to be seamless. Our whole approach was, we want to do it right."

– Deepak Advani
Vice President of Enterprise Applications, Electronic Arts

A Month of Brainstorming

Because there was no ready-made formula for measuring infrastructure initiatives, EA turned to Mainstay Salire to help define these metrics and track success over time. "We had hundreds of programs depending on our data integration factory," he continued. "So we put metrics and measures around the build. Once we had the metrics, we were able to start working and adjust the process."

"A lot of companies do ROI studies after the fact," Advani said. "It is far more difficult to measure ongoing ROI progress on an infrastructure," he continued. "But Mainstay Salire was willing to apply its intellectual horsepower to a novel situation. There is no already-assembled team you can go to for a project like this."

The result was a month-long, three-way conversation among the integration team, Mainstay Salire, and the implementation partner Oracle. "What Mainstay Salire brought were the brainpower and measuring tools — and they applied them in a completely unique way."

Tallying the Score

The end result of the conversation was a Mainstay Salire target-track-measure scorecard that established baseline and target metrics in six pivotal categories: executive metrics, planning and demand management, project execution, maintenance and support, business impact, and data integration governance.

"The scorecard is extremely useful because it derives its information from existing project management systems as well as manual measurements," Advani said. "Executives like it because the executive metrics worksheet will roll up and collate across a project and provide a consolidated view."

Savings and Efficiency Gains

Both the process and the system have paid off, as Mainstay Salire's ongoing metrics continue to show. Code reuse is up 20%; template reuse is up 60%; time to production of interfaces is 15% faster; and resource utilization has improved more than 90%. Together these efficiencies have enabled EA's Data Integration Factory to boost output by running several integration projects — or "assembly lines" — concurrently, with teams easily sharing and reusing components, interfaces and best practices across lines as needed.

The hoped-for savings have been realized as well. "From the first, we wanted the executives to know that we are spending the money wisely," Advani said. Documented savings the group can point to include a 30% percent cost reduction due to improvements in the delivery model and an additional 15% reduction in integration project and support costs by 2013.

But perhaps the most important contribution is the Data Integration Factory's quantify-as-you-go approach, which has become a conceptual model for other major projects at Electronic Arts. "There is a lot of interest in the factory concept — how to do it, how to make it happen, and how you measure progress," Advani said.

"The capabilities we have with the new system enables us to do an array of new things," he continued. "We have consolidated all our EDI transactions with 400 trading partners. We can track real-time demand. We know what people are buying. It has to be acknowledged that Mainstay Salire's contribution helped us achieve this."

For More Information

To learn more about Mainstay Salire's solutions, contact sales@mainstaypartners.net or visit www.mainstaysalire.com.

Mainstay Salire
2929 Campus Drive, Suite 150
San Mateo, CA 94403

www.mainstaysalire.com
p. 650.638.0575
f. 650.638.0578
sales@mainstaysalire.com

MAINSTAY SALIRE