

# SOA Helps Polk Improve Efficiency, Speed and Quality

**R.L. Polk & Co. turned to Capgemini to assist in the implementation of an Oracle-based grid and Service-Oriented Architecture as the basis for its business process re-engineering program**

## **The Situation**

R.L. Polk & Co. has served the automotive industry since 1922. As the premier provider of automotive information and marketing solutions, Polk provides business value by helping companies make better business decisions through the collection, compilation and interpretation of information from over 240 different sources, including state agencies, automotive manufacturers, finance companies and a variety of providers of lifestyle and demographic information.

Polk's CEO, president and executive committee held a series of strategy meetings to discuss how Polk could first maintain and then improve its competitive advantage amid significant industry, regulatory and technology change. Never wanting to "rest on its laurels," Polk has continually improved its data management methods over the years.

Given today's environment, in which privacy compliance is introducing even tighter restrictions on how data can be used, the time was right to move beyond

continual improvement to develop an innovative approach that would revolutionize Polk's core foundational data management activities and data warehouse.

## **The Solution**

The Polk board of directors approved a comprehensive business process re-engineering program and the creation of RLPTechnologies, a wholly owned subsidiary of R.L. Polk & Co., to develop a new solution for use by the parent company.

The project team decided on a standards-based Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) as the foundation for the new system. Polk and RLPTechnologies (RLPT) turned to Capgemini to assist in the implementation of an Oracle-based grid and SOA.

## **The Result**

The grid and SOA solution provided Polk with significant benefits relative to protecting legacy investments,

**“Capgemini’s skills and experience ensured that we delivered what we promised, on time.”**

**Kevin Vasconi,  
CIO, R.L. Polk & Co.**



reducing costs and providing accelerated time to development. The business vision that was delivered to Polk enabled the company to be 50% more efficient and 50% faster while focusing on delivering 100% quality.

### How Polk and Capgemini Worked Together

Traditionally, Polk had utilized a mainframe system, supported by an Oracle9i software stack, coupled with a variety of legacy systems that had applied the company's rich automotive expertise to managing very complex data.

In essence the project team was given the rare opportunity to take a clean-sheet approach to designing the new systems, processes and organization. The team evaluated and eventually embraced a standards-based SOA as the foundation for the new system. Polk and RLPTechnologies turned to Capgemini to utilize Capgemini's proprietary Accelerated Solutions Environment (ASE) to gain executive alignment, manage risk and develop the program plan. Capgemini also assisted in the implementation of a grid and SOA on Oracle 10g with RAC and TIBCO.

The key motivations in Polk's adoption of grid based on Oracle technology were its high availability, scalability, fault tolerance and performance. Oracle components used in the solution include Oracle Database 10g, RAC, Portal and Identity Management. Polk processes large amounts of complex data to create its data warehouse, so the company needed a solution that supports huge amounts of data processing and can hook into SOA.

The grid and SOA solution provided Polk with significant benefits relative to protecting legacy investments, reducing costs, and providing accelerated time to development:

**50% more efficient** – The re-engineering program transformed the structure and size of Polk's Data Operations group, creating a more cost-efficient and focused unit. Renamed the Data Factory, the group is now 43% smaller and is structured more efficiently, with roles that align directly to the functions of the solution (Data Capture, Standardization & Enhancement, Reference Data Management, Single Source of Truth/Operational Data Store, Assembly and Operations Management).

The implementation of RLPT's grid computing model will result in significant

savings for Polk. By moving away from a mainframe-based system, the company will lower its hardware costs by more than 50%.

**50% faster overall** – Tests to date show improvements of up to 70% in data-file processing speed (on average). For example, an average state registration file that previously would have required manual processing by as many as three full-time employees (FTEs) and four or more hours of processing time now is processed in an automated fashion in roughly 23 minutes.

Further, RLPT's approach to grid computing has allowed the solution to scale to process 42 transactions per second, nearly twice as fast as Polk's design goal of 25 transactions per second, providing headroom to accommodate future transactions or business growth.

**100% quality improvement** – The standardization and enhancement functionality of the solution measurably improve the accuracy and completeness of the data, preventing quality problems that might impact customer satisfaction. Automated data-quality checkpoints allow for earlier recognition of problems and enable the team to resolve issues before the data is delivered to Polk's business intelligence and operational applications.

This functionality drives a focus on preventing issues or, at worst, recognizing them earlier. This follows the rule of thumb that "It costs \$1 to prevent a problem, \$10 to identify a problem, and \$100 or more to fix it."

Quality is a critical element of the solution, enabling Polk to protect its rich heritage as the industry standard while providing improvements to identify problems earlier in the process.



### About Capgemini and the Collaborative Business Experience

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In collaboration with



R.L. Polk & Co. is a privately held provider of automotive intelligence based in Southfield, Michigan, USA, with over 1,300 employees globally. Polk has enjoyed a position as the market leader, and as the "gold



standard," its automotive vehicle and consumer data is used by every automotive brand to make critical decisions about their businesses. Further, many automotive suppliers, dealers and other automotive-related businesses utilize Polk solutions.