DATA INTEGRATION

Generali

Real-time data streaming using Qlik solutions reduced source to target time to under 10 seconds.

Qlik Q

GENERALI

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- Christian Nicoll, Director Of Platform Engineering & Operations, Generali Switzerlands

About Generali

Generali is one of the world's largest insurance companies, operating in 50 countries with over 70,000 employees, and more than 57 million customers. Generali Switzerland, is the Swiss arm of this global insurance leader, employing 1,800 people across 56 Swiss locations with a customer base of over 1 million.

Chief Operating Officer Martin Frick was brought in to lead an IT turnaround at Generali Switzerland. "The vision was to modernise our underlying business. Getting our house in order to support our distribution network and improve how we interact with customers."

Generali took a good look at their application landscape and realised they had two speed IT in place. The core legacy business application landscape had become more and more complex over time, and as a result had lost agility. On the other hand, newer customer facing and channel applications like portals were fast and serving different expectations. The answer was Generali's innovative Connection Platform (CoPa) which is powered by Qlik data integration solutions, including Qlik Replicate Change Data Capture (CDC) technology.

The task was two-fold. Firstly, to remove the complexity that had become visible to customers and enable them to independently access accurate information in real time, in a channel of their choice. The second strand was establishing new IT processes and improving development efficiency.

Built for business outcome

"We needed to build something based on the business value outcomes it would provide. Our legacy applications work well but they're not suited to new ways of interacting with customers.

OBJECTIVES
• Create data architecture that integrates core and new applications.
• Provide up to date, high quality data to the right people, at the right time, via multiple channels.
• Improve effectiveness of IT service delivery with adoption of agile development methodology.

VISION
Modernise data architecture to improve customer engagement and enable faster, more agile development.

SOLUTION
Hybrid Connection Platform, powered by Qlik Replicate®.

The CoPa Platform was the solution," says Chief Operating Officer Martin Frick.

From the beginning the project had three key success criteria: Build it for the cloud; make events and data the first priority; and keep the focus on organisational transformation. "We also had to weigh up whether to go for the ease of having a single vendor or go for flexibility and pick the best vendor for each job. We decided on the latter as it was the best way to achieve our success criteria," says Thomas Peter, who is Head of CoPa at Generali.

From the outset the team knew there was a great deal of data to replicate, and this meant significant integration ahead. "We've integrated data before, using bespoke builds, but this approach takes significant resources and then can't

be reused across contexts. Integration requirements then start to pile up, batches grow larger and it's not possible to sustain this approach." Instead they needed a clear view of how they could make this happen.

"In essence, we needed to connect two worlds to make them work more efficiently and cohesively for the business. We wanted up-to-date data, faster, to meet customer expectations," explains Thomas Peter. "For example, when a customer calls, we need to know if an online claim or even a change of address has been made in the past few hours, otherwise we can't deliver on our vision for customer service."

Real time understanding is the key: "In an omni-channel environment, it's very important to correlate what the customer did in one channel with another, immediately," says Martin Frick. Providing the data in the way any system wants and in real time mean that Change Data Capture (CDC) was obviously of interest.

Data extraction, no disruption

"There were two approaches on the table, API or data replication, and we chose the latter." Christian Ehlert, Director Enterprise Architecture explains, "We evaluated various options, Qlik has a simple yet rich user interface which makes it very clear how things need to connect," and it also meant minimal impact on the data sources, there was no software or agents to install, no shadow databases. "Without disruption Qlik (Attunity) gave us the ability to extract data in real time. After the initial download there's no downtime- it's done at the click of a button." Qlik sits between the data sources and target destinations, it reads and understands the information and acts as a memory channel, sending it to Generali's target of choice.

Christian Nicoll, Director of Platform Engineering & Operations, comments that, "Data streaming with Qlik means we can replicate and stream data in just a few seconds. This could have taken days before. It's of significant value to our business."

"Alongside Qlik Replicate, we chose the Confluent platform because Apache Kafka is a proven solution that is fast and scalable. Confluent has valuable features, scheme registry and robust support," continues Christian Ehlert, "Part of our selection process was how the components work together, we chose vendors that are flexible and agile."
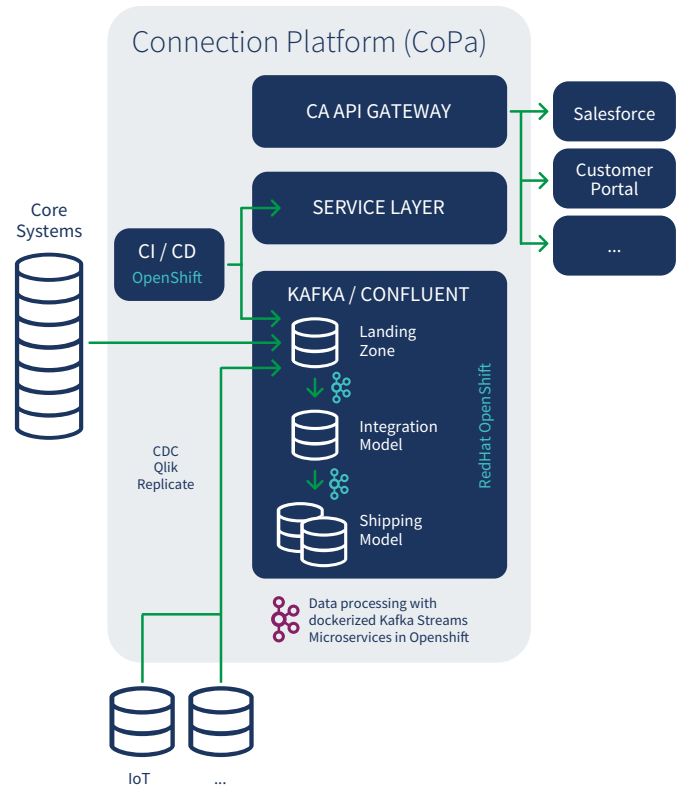
CoPa now keeps legacy complexity private and serves customers in real-time. "We can also 'plugin' partners and third parties to augment what we do. The platform will also be fundamental for us to develop new applications which makes it core to our business. We're not just talking about SCRUM and DevOps, we're actually doing it," adds Martin Frick.

Integration with salesforce.com

After an intensive journey the CoPa is now at the heart of Generali Switzerland's application landscape, "We've created the vehicle, and completed the first project – connecting salesforce.com to our core applications, having an immediate project in mind kept the platform relevant," says Martin Frick.

Generali had already decided to move to salesforce.com, explains Thomas Peter. "It was ideal to have a new CRM strategy coming into play too so we could integrate the data from core system to the new CRM from the outset." Working in the Cloud, "the most difficult thing is moving the data – so having the platform available – in real time, with portable data was a significant attraction." Generali has three main databases, which are the master systems for data which
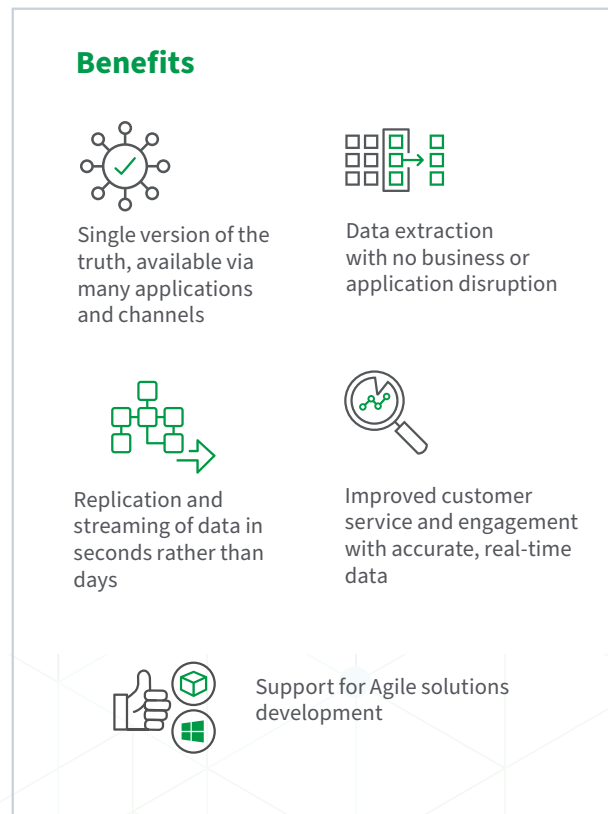
is then transferred, in the first instance, to salesforce, "This is where Qlik plays an important role, by tapping into Generali's core systems, monitoring the databases and around 60 tables, capturing data change when it happens and transferring it onto Kafka topics."

Thomas Peter goes on to explain that once data is on the platform, it's processed in two steps. "The integration model is firstly a data normalisation layer and then it's passed into shipping models which curate data for the target system." The data set will now be provided to other channels. "This access to real time data is becoming more and more important – we can now digest all kinds of data to give the best answers to our customers."

Big data, big plans

The Generali team have big plans for the platform as it scales and matures across the enterprise, "We have an exciting road map stretching far ahead. We'll continue to leverage the platform to increase integration of our data, currently distributed across and within our core systems and also to build business orientated solutions using the new DevOps and agile based working we have created. It's a game changer," said Christian Ehlert.

"Data is everywhere and for our business it's actually money. We have always been in the data industry because our specialty is using data to price risk, now we can also improve customer engagement and be a relevant lifetime partner for our customers," says Martin Frick, the COO concluding that, "Data replication into CoPa has been a big success enabling us to capitalize on existing valuable data and to achieve this new customer centric approach."

Benefits

Single version of the truth, available via many applications and channels

Data extraction with no business or application disruption

Replication and streaming of data in seconds rather than days

Improved customer service and engagement with accurate, real-time data

Support for Agile solutions development

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- Thomas Peter, Head of Copa Generali Switzerland

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About Qlik

Qlik's vision is a data-literate world, where everyone can use data and analytics to improve decision-making and solve their most challenging problems. Qlik offers real-time data integration and analytics solutions, powered by Qlik Cloud, to close the gaps between data, insights and action. By transforming data into Active Intelligence, businesses can drive better decisions, improve revenue and profitability, and optimize customer relationships. Qlik serves more than 38,000 active customers in over 100 countries.

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