

"From a technology standpoint, we have taken a best of breed approach"

*- Shmulik Volkenfeld
Head of Information Technology,
Elbit Systems, Inc.*

Corporate Process Improvement Case Study



Elbit is a multi-national defense and secure systems contracting company based in Israel. This highly competitive market is, by its very nature, project based. Projects include refurbishment and creation of military vehicles, or development of new technology platforms delivering wholly new capabilities to clients around the world. While these projects may often appear similar, has its own unique set of requirements. Moreover, although the underlying applications such as ERP may be common, the needs of each company in the group are different as each operates in a different country with different accounting and regulatory requirements. As a result, the IT maintenance burden consumes a lot of resources, as they build and manage systems to support the varied requirements of project teams and management teams in different parts of the world.



AgilePoint has developed the first comprehensive BPM solution for the Microsoft platform. AgilePoint's deep enterprise experience and its utilization of the latest Microsoft technology enable it to provide the first secure, reliable, scalable, and affordable BPMS solution on the market. AgilePoint's solution is designed to enable business users to quickly implement and deploy cross-functional and cross-organizational business processes in the form of process-based applications, all while in an easy-to-use process-modeling environment running on their desktops using reusable business activity modules and executable functional parts built by IT.

The Challenge

Head of IT for Elbit, Shmulik Volkenfeld outlined the issues: "We wanted to improve the processes in the organization. The companies and their infrastructure are complicated. We want to be able to make each company more agile, allowing them to continuously improve business performance based on more efficient operational processes."

Elbit was looking for a tool that would fit in smoothly to their existing Microsoft-based infrastructure. "We wanted the solution to work effectively with SharePoint, VB and .NET. From the functionality point of view, we wanted a 'whole' solution that would cooperate with our existing infrastructure and support the distribution of new application functionality to all the relevant companies" continued Volkenfeld. The organization was intent on reducing its ongoing maintenance costs through the development of discrete, re-usable components. "From a technology point of view, we have taken a best of breed approach. That means that we are concentrating on enabling more effective connections to our underlying systems to allow us to leverage them in new process enabled applications," explained Volkenfeld.

During the selection exercise Elbit had two fundamental different types of users in mind. "We needed a tool that gives us the ability to work in two different ways. On the one hand I have a group of people who will build these components (to access to the various applications). On the other hand, we want to then enable the business analyst to build process enabled applications for the end-user, without any need for specialized knowledge of the back-end applications."

Elbit selected AgilePoint to underpin this initiative. Developers could work with the AgileStub and AgilePart functionality of the product, developing a component library that wraps and encapsulates the ERP system and other functional applications. For the Business Analysts, AgilePoint's use of Visio and SharePoint allowed them to develop new applications that leveraged these components without needing to know anything about the underlying functional application. From the maintenance point of view, Elbit realized that they could then make changes at either the component or the process level, without affecting other parts of the system. Furthermore, when it came to meeting the needs of an extremely varied user base, they could leverage the Business Rules capability of BizTalk to govern the functionality of a given component, effectively customizing it to the needs of the local business.

The key point is that AgilePoint has enabled Elbit to break the reliance on software developers in delivering functionality to their users (which is still a problem in most SOA scenarios. Developers now encapsulate the required functionality. Its deployment and delivery is under the control of managers and analysts who are more closely aligned with the needs of the business. The end result-a lower cost of ownership.