# BAE Systems Creates New Revenue Stream with Customer Service Portal

**Customer:** BAE Systems
**Website:** www.baesystems.com
**Customer Size:** 107,000
**Country or Region:** United Kingdom
**Industry:** Manufacturing
**Partner:** Eurostep

## Customer Profile

The world's second-largest defense company, BAE Systems develops advanced defense and aerospace systems. The company reported sales of U.S.$36.2 billion in 2009, and employs 107,000 people worldwide.

## Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft BizTalk Server 2006 R2
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Enterprise
- Microsoft Visual Studio
  - Microsoft Visual Studio 2008 Standard Edition

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BAE Systems Global Combat Systems Vehicles, a business unit of BAE systems, wanted to expand its after-market business by servicing the vehicles it manufactures throughout their entire lifecycle. By using an array of Microsoft products, including Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 and Microsoft SQL Server 2008, the company created an information portal that has significantly increased the support it offers to customers and its corresponding revenue.

## Business Needs

BAE Systems Global Combat Systems (GCS) Vehicles, a business unit of BAE Systems, the world's second-largest defense company—manufactures and markets military vehicle systems to customers in more than 40 countries. As the economic downturn reduced sales of military vehicles, the company sought new revenue opportunities within the service side of its business. In the past, BAE Systems GCS Vehicles had only supplied ad hoc spare parts to customers. It wanted offering complete fleet management contracts over the lifetime of each vehicle. To do so, it needed to find a way to easily collect and share detailed information about each military vehicle purchased by each customer, including the vehicle's design and operational information.

"We wanted to have more of an after-market business," says Håkan Sundell, Head of Information Management & Technology (IM&T) Shared Service Sweden, BAE Systems, Global Combat Systems. "We were looking for more ways to establish closer connections with our

customers, but we really didn't have the information to do that."

## Solution

Since 2000, BAE Systems GCS Vehicles had already been using Share-A-space as a central information repository to store and share vital product information with its suppliers. Developed by Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and software developer Eurostep, Share-A-space is a highly secure product lifecycle management (PLM) collaboration tool that manages information from heterogeneous information systems.

To track detailed information about each military vehicle, BAE Systems GCS Vehicles wanted to expand its use of Share-A-space to house more detailed information about the military vehicles it manufactures and sells. The problem was that this older version of Share-A-space, which was built using software from multiple manufacturers, could not be easily scaled to hold the vast amount of information required to track each military vehicle sold to customers.

To create a more scalable information repository, BAE Systems GCS Vehicles and Eurostep implemented a new version of Share-A-space built completely on Microsoft technology. BAE Systems and Eurostep built the solution with the Microsoft Visual Studio 2008 Standard Edition integrated development environment using Microsoft SQL Server 2008 as the database software. To make it easy to access vehicle information from the repository, they created the Through Life Capability (TLC) portal, a web-based user interface built using the Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 collaboration platform. Microsoft BizTalk Server 2006 R2 controls the transfer of files to and from disparate systems. Depending on the

specific contract negotiated with each customer, both BAE Systems GCS Vehicles and the customer can use the TLC portal to access detailed design and manufacturing information about each vehicle. In addition, field engineers can update the portal with operational information such as the vehicle's mileage, oil changes, and repair history, including upgrades to onboard software.

BAE Systems GCS Vehicles and Eurostep began developing the solution in October 2009 and completed it six months later, in April 2010. "When we showed the information portal to customers, they were amazed," says Sundell. "They had never seen anything like this. They could now easily look up a specific vehicle and then drill down into the engineering specs and technical documentation. It enabled us to capture and expand several contracts."

## Benefits

Creating Share-A-space and the TLC portal to track individual vehicle information has helped BAE Systems GCS Vehicles to develop a new revenue stream, improve its efficiency, and provide a highly secure collaboration portal that was quick and cost-effective to deploy.

### Added Revenue

Whereas, before, BAE Systems GCS Vehicles sold spare parts to customers on an ad hoc basis, with Share-A-space and the TLC portal, BAE Systems GCS Vehicles now offers a complete fleet management program for the entire lifecycle of each vehicle. This has made it possible for the company to develop a new revenue stream during a bad economy. "Our aftermarket business, completely powered by the TLC portal, is making a significant contribution to our bottom line," says Sundell.

### Increased Agility and Efficiency

In addition, by having up-to-date vehicle information in a central repository, BAE Systems GCS Vehicles has been able to improve both the service and design of its vehicles. If a particular engine needs servicing in more than one vehicle, for example, the company can suggest preventive maintenance to other customers who have purchased vehicles with the same engine. Moreover, the ability to create workflows using Office SharePoint Server is an added benefit that has enabled BAE Systems GCS Vehicles to respond more quickly to customer requests for vehicle support. "With the TLC portal and the workflows in Microsoft Office SharePoint Server, we have gone from weeks to days in resolving an average customer support request," says Sundell.

### Security-Enhanced Collaboration

Sharing data, especially defense information, is a sensitive issue. With the built-in security features of Share-A-space combined with security solutions used by BAE Systems and the role-based user interfaces of Microsoft Office SharePoint, collaboration takes place in a highly secure environment.

### Quick, Cost-Effective Deployment

By basing Share-A-space and the TLC platform entirely on the Microsoft platform, BAE Systems GCS Vehicles and Eurostep were able to build the solution at 5 to 10 times less cost than if they had incorporated competitive software. "By selecting a complete Microsoft product line, we've been able to build this in a very cost-effective and rapid way," says Håkan Kårdén, CEO and Founder of Eurostep.

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