

CASE STUDY

ESB Keeping the Lights On and Innovating with Business Automation

ESB

CLIENT PROFILE

Electricity Supply Board (ESB)

Industry: Energy and Utilities

ESB was established in 1927 as a statutory corporation in the Republic of Ireland under the Electricity (Supply) Act 1927.

CHALLENGES

- Migrate legacy data to new IT systems
- Manage SAP and other business processes
- Automate backup and other IT housekeeping tasks
- Integrate SAP IS-U, Oracle and other applications

BROADCOM SOLUTIONS

- Intuitive end-user interface
- Certified SAP integration
- Reusable process templates
- Automated error handling
- Granular security controls

RESULTS

- Increase staff productivity and operation efficiency
- 75% of IT operations team released to focus on innovation
- Improved levels of customer service

Business

Bringing Sustainable Energy Solutions

ESB was established in 1927 as a statutory corporation in the Republic of Ireland under the Electricity (Supply) Act 1927. With a holding of 95%, ESB is majority owned by the Irish Government. The remaining 5% is held by an Employee Share Ownership Trust.

As a strong, diversified, vertically integrated utility, ESB operates right across the electricity market: from generation, through transmission and distribution to supply. In addition, ESB extracts further value at certain points along this chain: supplying gas, using their networks to carry fibre for telecommunications, and developing public charging infrastructure.

With a regulatory asset base (RAB) of approximately €8.3 billion, 43% of electricity generation capacity in the all-island market and supplier of electricity to approximately 1.5 million customers throughout the island of Ireland, ESB is a leading Irish utility focused on maintaining its financial strength. As of December 31, 2013, the Group employed approximately 7,500 people.

ESB's mission is to bring sustainable and competitive energy solutions to all customers.

Challenge

Migrate Legacy Data to New IT Systems

In order to compete in the newly deregulated Irish retail electricity market, ESB needed to streamline its processes and consolidate system information. Legacy systems requiring specialized support and maintenance, and the extensive user training needed, were due for replacement. ESB also wanted greater visibility of business processes across the entire business application landscape.

Implementation of SAP IS-U to manage business workload also created a major migration challenge. ESB identified that its go-live date could not be met if it relied on staff to manually convert and transfer data from multiple systems—including an IBM mainframe—over to the new SAP-based configuration. To meet these challenges, ESB sought an appropriate workload automation solution.

There are 60 stages in our DR process. Prior to implementing the Automic, a site switch would take 24 to 48 hours—now it completes in two hours.

PETER VEALE
TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION
MANAGER, ESB



Solution

Intuitive End User Interface

After a thorough review of several solutions and consultation with IT analyst Gartner, ESB selected Automic® Automation because it best matched their requirements. The Broadcom® team's strong product knowledge and implementation expertise convinced ESB that Automic would be most able to provide a customized solution to meet its IT challenges.

"Our legacy customer systems needed to be replaced if we were going to continue supporting ESB's Network and Supply business operations," said Adrian Northage, ESB's Senior Enterprise Automation Specialist. "We chose SAP to achieve this objective but were concerned about the scheduling of our legacy batch processes. We initially introduced Automic software to automate this activity and also to manage our SAP processing."

Automic is also supporting ESB's business continuity plans by helping to manage data center site swaps. Automated procedures allow the live operations environment to be quickly transferred to an alternate host with minimal impact on end-user service. Switching data center locations has become a part of normal IT operations with over 40 site switches for the production service occurring each year. A wide range of housekeeping, backup, and restore, as well as database maintenance tasks, have also been automated.

"There are 60 stages in our DR process. Prior to implementing Automic Automation, a site switch would take 24 to 48 hours—now it completes in under two hours," said Peter Veale, ESB's Technology Innovation Manager.

Deregulation of the wholesale energy market has led to the introduction of Oracle Utilities (formerly Lodestar) to manage wholesale trading. Automic Automation controls the movement of trading information between systems. Payroll and other sensitive information is encrypted prior to managed file transfers to banks and other clients.

"We've also completely eliminated the need for an overnight operations shift. We want to provide complete transparency to our IT operations. With Automic Automation, we can hand off the monitoring of jobs to our users. They can work with their own jobs in a secure environment when submitting requests or dealing with failures."

Results

Increase Staff Productivity and Operation Efficiency

The implementation of Automic Automation has ensured that ESB's business processes, from the recording of meter readings through to billing and customer care, now run smoothly integrating SAP, Streamserve and database requests, and other IT workloads. Application failures are minimized by managing contention for resources such as database or disk space availability.

ESB no longer has operators manually ticking checklists. There's no need to phone or email other support teams to notify them of failures. Checking SAP systems before releasing workloads past breakpoints has been eliminated. Operators no longer have to be available to do out-of-hours server reboots.

**Automic Automation
is embedded into
our IT architecture
and supports us in
delivering resilient IT
service to our business**

PETER VEALE
TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION
MANAGER, ESB

Results (cont.)

“ESB has been at the heart of deregulation of both wholesale and retail energy markets in Ireland in the last few years,” Veale summed up. “Automic Automation is embedded into our IT architecture and supports us in delivering resilient IT service to our business by removing the possibility of human error and freeing up IT staff from doing daily operation tasks. With Automic Automation, we’ve managed to reduce our enterprise operations team staffing levels by 75% while achieving over a ten times increase in the processes we have automated.”

ESB has managed to transform its IT operations into a new business-oriented service platform. Automation is used to gain competitive advantage as well as drive greater operational efficiencies. Automic Automation supports ESB in leveraging its information assets and new levels of agility in response to rapidly changing business demands. The story continues as ESB looks to apply automation into new areas of its business.

Ten Years of Automic at ESB

One initiative to accomplish this is ESB’s Innovation campaign which captures ideas where innovation based on automation can add business value. “At ESB, we are challenging the status quo,” said Veale. “We want to identify opportunities where business processes involve tasks that are repetitive or time consuming that could be done differently. With Automic Automation, we can free up time to do other things which helps us meet customer service expectations and maintain operational excellence.”

For more information, please visit [broadcom.com/products/software/automation/automic-automation](https://www.broadcom.com/products/software/automation/automic-automation).